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# RITON VOICE

Triton High School

Triton's Student-Produced Newspaper

October 29, 2021

## MEET THE TEACHERS

Forty-plus new teachers joined the district this year. Here are some of their stories.

### Adjusting to the Job

Yespy joins THS Adjustment Counselor Staff

By Harry Goblitz  
Staff Writer

In a humble office inside the Triton library, Ms. Carrie Yespy takes up the role of social worker for students at the high school.

Being a social worker is a daunting task, particularly at a school. This new school year brought an opening for the job at Triton and the new hire Mrs. Yespy has stepped up to the plate.

"I've always liked helping kids and making a difference," said Yespy.

Having a social worker for Triton is of great importance to the students. With 600 students at Triton, it is by no means an easy task taking up the role of the main social worker at Triton. Despite this, Mrs. Yespy looks forward to working with students.

Mrs. Yespy said she has wanted to be a social worker since 5th grade, and that she has always liked helping people. She has both a bachelors and masters degree in her field. While she has many years of experience working in schools, she started by working with homeless people, abuse victims, and others who might need to see a social worker.

As is generally essential for the job, Mrs. Yespy enjoys working with kids. When asked what she would change, she said "I don't want kids to feel embarrassed. If someone needs to see me, I don't want them to hesitate."

Mr. Celia, current vice principal and former social worker at Triton was part of the interview team for her. "She brings a lot of unique experience to the table," said Celia. "What stood out was how much kids liked her," said Celia, which is a major factor in being hired at Triton, since the students are part of the interview process.

Will Beaton is a Triton Senior and member of the interview committee responsible for hiring Yespy. "She kept it smooth and simple," said Beaton. He also said that Yespy "had the best attitude" for the job, and that the second applicant of the two "kept talking about death, which doesn't make a good impression."

At the end of the interview Yespy was asked if she wanted to tell the reader anything. She replied, "I or someone else is always available."

### A Change of Plans

Triton and Pine Grove Grad Returns to his Roots After Discovering a Love of Teaching

By Ellie Gay-Killeen & Sofia Savino  
Staff Writers

A noticeable room in the upper left wing of Pine Grove Elementary School is Mr. Cam Atherton's sixth grade classroom, where lights dim for reading time with a few students sprawled out, hidden behind an art easel. On the other side of the room, children with their eyes laser focused on their desk complete a basic algebra test.

"He's really funny and not really strict," said Jake, a student in Atherton's class, "You can trust him, like you can say 'Hey I don't think I'm really good at math' and you can say stuff to him and he'll always help."

Several of Atherton's students were very excited to share their thoughts on their young and lively sixth grade teacher. The enthusiasm for Atherton's new position was reflected by others around the school who have taught him as well as the ones he teaches.

While attending college in Boston at Emmanuel as a criminal justice major, the dream of going into the federal justice system shifted for Atherton when he started filling in for teachers throughout Pine Grove. He eventually earned a teaching degree and a spot as a sixth grade teacher.

Atherton himself attended Pine Grove as a kid, familiar with the school although major renovations have been done since then. When his mom told him he needed a job towards the end of his college years, she was able to draw him into substituting at the school. Little did he know that his temporary position would quickly become teaching a class for the whole year because of a medical leave.

"I was thrown into the fire, I wouldn't have had it any other way," said Atherton. "Even though I was a substitute teacher, I came in every day as if I was that group of kids' teacher."

Atherton adapted easily to the situation he was thrown into, having to teach during the pandemic, a very unexpected and ever-changing year. This meant virtually teaching to students he had not been familiar with and dealing with the technological struggles that came along with it. Nothing could stop his passion and determination to become a full time teacher and his work ethic paid off, quickly making a strong impact in the 6th grade classroom.

"I had wanted to be a teacher. I was a little bit up in the air between criminal justice and teacher, and I chose criminal justice, so I already had the desire to teach," said Atherton. Becoming a teacher was not an unfamiliar idea to him as he had previously thought about this career path but didn't follow through until his senior year of college.

The staff at Pine Grove proved to be extremely supportive to Atherton, seeming more like a family than a group of coworkers. He thinks of it as the perfect spot to be and work for, especially the



Cam Atherton, shown above, has found a passion for teaching sixth grade after a college major change (courtesy Atherton).

lead administrators at this school.

"The dedication that he had and the passion that he had for helping students was something that stuck out to me," said Nicole LaPerriere, the principal at Pine Grove. "Because I saw in him his dedication, his knowledge, his work ethic, just how he was able to build relationships with students, I felt as the principal it was time to give him the chance to shine in a classroom."

LaPerriere made it very clear how passionate she is about hiring Cam as a full time teacher as well as how positive he is that he will make a difference in the lives of his own students as well as others throughout Pine Grove.

"He blew me away with how well he adapted to teaching sixth grade, and also if you take a step back it was during Covid," said LaPerriere. "He was thrown into a classroom where it was the middle of Covid, he was teaching hybrid, he didn't know any of these students, he didn't know the curriculum, yet he nailed it."

A supportive teacher who creates a fun and productive environment for their students is exactly what every young student dreams of. Atherton continuously strives for bettering himself as a teacher and is also reflected through Erica Geyer's words, his mentor at Pine Grove and a well-loved fifth grade teacher there.

"There's a lot of great things that he's actually given me great insight on", said Geyer. "It's definitely going to be one of those experiences where I'm going to learn just as much from him."

### From Rival to Friend

Port Grad Turns to Leading PGS Library

By Emma Campbell & Emilia Joyce  
Staff Writer

Once a student at Triton's rival school, now every student at Pine Grove Elementary's dream librarian, Anna-Kathryn Gross is making quite the impression with her coworkers and students. Library is now many students' favorite subject!

"She's the exact opposite of gross, she's so beautiful and I love her because she is so fun," said Ella, a 2nd-grader at Pine Grove Elementary School.

As a Newburyport High School alumni, Ms. Gross has joined the Triton School system as a librarian and is finding it very easy to settle into PGS. She has only been there for about 5 weeks now and is already meshing in well with the people and the culture of Pine Grove School. Students are finding it very easy to relate to Ms. Gross that the students can relate to her on her hobbies and interests of Pokémon, anime, and keyboarding.

"She loves Pikachu and her cat and I love Pikachu!" said Asa, a second grader at PGS.

Outside of school, Ms. Gross is very interested in keyboards and she enjoys making and reconstructing them. She buys all the parts and chooses the color scheme she wants, then she builds it herself.



Anna-Katherine Gross poses in front of her newly decorated sign in her library at PGS (Joyce photo).

"I have a student who mentioned keyboarding to me and I was shocked, I had never heard of anyone else who also loved building keyboards," said Ms. Gross. It was so nice that we made that connection and can talk about that."

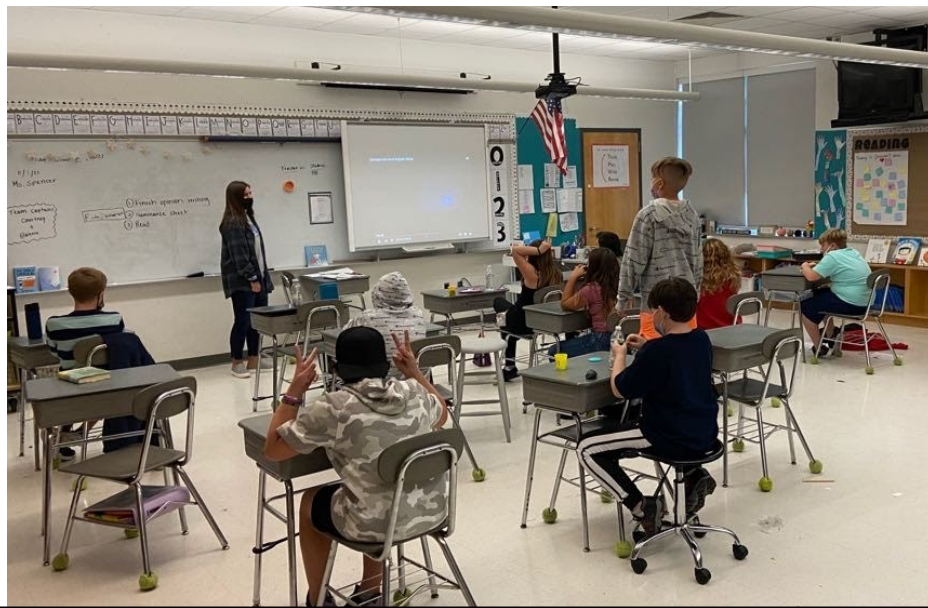
The staff is very happy about the arrival of the new librarian and some even commented on how fantastic she and her work has been over the course of the new school year.

"She really gets along with everyone, she's so warm & inviting and everyone is now enjoying Library so much that she is even starting an after school book club for the students," said Jen Dubis, art teacher and mentor at PGS.

The more the *Triton Voice* inquired **LIBRARY on page 2**



## SES Fifth grade teacher focusing on building student relationships



Ms. Jordan Spencer teaching her 5th grade class on a Friday afternoon (Marsh photo)

**By Sydney Marsh & Maddy Jacques**  
*Staff Writers*

Jordan Spencer was offered a position at Salisbury Elementary with little time to prepare, though her students and colleagues say she is fitting in well.

"I was hired two weeks before the school year started, I'm just taking it day by day," said Spencer.

Spencer explains why she wanted to become a teacher and how she ended up at Salisbury Elementary School (SES). Her students love her and share some reasons why.

The young ambitious teacher from Ipswich, MA, spent five years at UNH, graduating with her masters degree in human development and family studies.

Even before college, Spencer said, "I have always seen myself teaching, for a long time."

Last year, she taught second grade fully online at Beverly Cove School. This gave her some prior experience coming into the position at SES, but Spencer says this year is completely different than last. She said she thinks being a young teacher puts her at a disadvantage just because the students think they can get away with more. When asked what she thinks the hardest part about teaching her 5th grade class is, she talked about the students' attitudes towards certain assignments or activities. Although the attitudes can be hard to deal with, Spencer's favorite part about this year so far has been getting to know and form relationships with her students.

A lot of Spencer's teaching is inspired by her past elementary school

teachers: Mrs. Court, her third grade teacher, and Mrs. Lacola, her fifth grade teacher, were two of her most important role models. Their kindness is what inspired her to teach and help children.

After Spencer was interviewed the students had the chance to be interviewed, and were very excited to talk to some older kids. The students said that Spencer was nice but and helpful.

The students were made aware of the fact that would also mean she would be more strict towards them, and they still agreed she should be more mean. A few of the students were asked what Spencer feels like to them. "She feels like a mom or sister who I can talk to," said Courtney.

The *Triton Voice* also heard from SES's current principal and Triton High's former assistant principal, Mrs. Kathryn Dawe about why Spencer is such a perfect fit for the school. She was asked why she chose Spencer. "She is very open to learning new things," she said.

Dawe also said Spencer is quite confident in herself and her work. She said Spencer learned about the school very quickly.

Spencer's mentor, Ms. Moriah Lucy, who has been at SES for six years, was asked how Spencer is adjusting. "She is having some trouble navigating the curriculum but she only had a few weeks to understand what she needed to do," said Lucy.

Lucy was also asked if Spencer would benefit from going back and talking to her old fifth grade teacher who was one of the ones who inspired her to become a teacher. "I don't think so, so much has changed since she was in fifth grade, I don't really think it would help her," said Lucy.

## NES Gets a Stellar New Special Education Teacher

**By Haleigh Harris**  
*Staff Writer*

Newbury Elementary School's new special education teacher has a lot to offer, and is making a big difference.

"She has a lot of great energy," said NES Principle Beth Yando. She is always willing to help in any way."

When walking into Kylie Orzulak's classroom it is easy to tell she loves her job. The classroom was decorated with care. A manifestation board was on the wall with bright colors. Manifestation is a way of self help and confidence building, sort of speaking it into existence (ex: I am strong. I am smart.) She had two students, around 10 years old, working with her as well. One student asked to show her the paper he had been working so hard on. After hearing the positive response Orzulak gave, the young boy was glowing with pride. It was then that it became clear that Orzulak was making a positive impact.

Orzulak, 26, grew up in a small town called Barre, Massachusetts. Growing up, she loved sports and was active in her community. She was a star field hockey and softball player. Orzulak grew up playing with many kids with disabilities. Even as a kid, it brought her joy to spend time with them. She acknowledged that some of the challenges that they were facing were different from the ones that she faced, but she didn't let it get in the way of having fun. Orzulak's whole family works in special education, so she was confident that she wanted to work in special education as well.

Orzulak became a substitute at Ruggles Lane, the elementary school she attended in Barre. Orzulak has a bachelors in Elementary Education and Moderate Disabilities. Orzulak also was a part of a fellowship program where she taught in Swampscott in return for paying for her masters. She graduated from this program in May of 2021.

After her experience in a city, she could tell the setting wasn't right for her. "I really like the small town community," said Orzulak. Many people who move from a suburban or rural area to the city know that it is hard to get the same intimacy you get in rural areas when you're at a large city school. After her 2020-2021 fellowship year, she moved to Newbury Elementary School to teach 4th and 5th graders. When she came to Newbury Elementary, it felt like home. "Everyone is so supportive... Everyone is so willing to



Kylie Orzulak reads a book to students during story time. (Courtesy Kylie Orzulak)

help," Orzulak said regarding her colleagues at NES.

Orzulak has 13 students on IEPs, 9 of which are in 5th grade and 4 in 4th grade. When she was asked about what the average day looks like for her, she said there was none! "Usually, my day consists of checking in with general education teachers and pulling my students out throughout the day to deliver services," said Orzulak. "Services are small group instruction to focus on what my students need help with. There are always meetings and consults but the best part of my day is always teaching my students."

TRSD has a program where every new teacher gets a mentor to help show them the ropes and answer questions. "I have (helped) Kylie become acquainted with the staff. I familiarize her with responsibilities and technology," said Kate Snowden, Orzulak's mentor. Snowden teaches 6th grade special ed. "She's great. She's a hard worker," said Snowden regarding Orzulak.

Orzulak feels as if having a mentor has helped her greatly. "Such an incredible experience..." she said. "You don't feel like you're bothering them."

Along with the mentors, Orzulak also works with 2 general education teachers, who teach all of the subjects. "My students are full inclusion so they spend their day in the classroom and I just pull them out to work on specific skills."

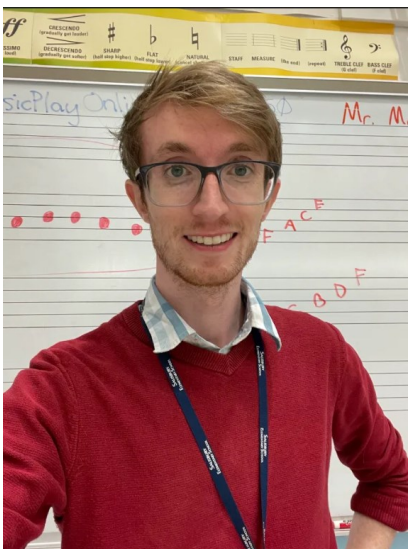
Starting a new job in general is hard, but starting a new job during a pandemic is even more difficult. Orzulak is nevertheless paving her path and is making a difference while doing so. "She forms good relationships with her students," said

## New Sound at S.E.S. McConnell

**By Colin Pearson & Griffin White**  
*Staff Writers*

From playing bass in a metal band to teaching at Salisbury Elementary school, Mr. Sean McConnell knows his fair share about music.

McConnell was born and raised in a small Vermont town called Georgia. Throughout his childhood, he learned piano and developed a love for classical music. McConnell says he had a great childhood and lived out on a lake. As he went through school, he met Mr. Messier, his high school chorus and sound technology teacher. He was what truly prompted McConnell to go to Keenes State and pursue a career in music business. However, because of his job as a camp counselor at Smugglers Notch, he realized that he really enjoyed working with children. This is ultimately what led him to switching his major to music education.



Sean McConnell in front of his whiteboard. (McConnell photo).

"He brings a lot of enthusiasm, fun and creative activities into the music classroom, and already has made quite the positive impression with his students," said Deborah MacKinnon, a fellow elementary school band teacher.

MacKinnon believes that the music department benefits heavily from having McConnell work at SES and is excited to work with him more in the future. For context, MacKinnon is

one of the teachers that is mentoring McConnell for the beginning of his time at SES, and is currently McConnell's fellow band teacher.

"He's positive, enthusiastic, and willing," said Ms. Susan Densmore, music teacher at Triton High School, and mem-

ber of the team that interviewed and hired McConnell.

Densmore also stated that parents have reached out to her, saying how much fun their children are having in McConnell's class.

When asked about his teaching style, McConnell said, "try to make it feel like a game." These games, as he says, are to make kids enjoy learning. This was apparent on a recent visit to McConnell's classroom.

"We play a lot of games," said a student in McConnell's third grade class.

Some of the games they've played include rhythm baseball, treble clef bingo, and several more. The children said they enjoy the games they play, which in turn allows them to enjoy learning about music.

"We're playing treble clef bingo," said another student from McConnell's third grade class, "I like treble clef bingo a lot."

Treble clef bingo is very simple. It's like bingo, but with treble clef notes.

"I really really... really liked rhythm baseball," said another student from McConnell's third grade class.

### LIBRARY from page 1

around PGS the more the teachers raved about Ms. Gross and her brilliant work. She has added beautiful decorations to the Library, making it look welcoming and fun.

"I feel like I'm in a college library, it's so cute and I have some ideas to make it easier for the students to find books," said Ms. Gross.

As a librarian, planning can be difficult and everyone does it differently. For Ms. Gross, she plans her day based on how the students are feeling.

"I had this whole activity planned with my kindergartners," said Ms. Gross. "I wanted them to draw the type of books they wanted to read and one kid drew his Dad, so I realized they weren't getting the right idea and we discontinued that activity and tried something new."

Ms. Gross is definitely the new, cool, and popular librarian at PGS as attested by her students and peers. They thankfully have forgiven her original roots of being a Clipper and have welcomed her to the Vikings side.

Ms. Gross plans to stay as the librarian at PGS for a very long time.

### CORRECTION

An article in last week's edition incorrectly spelled the name of the adjustment counselor working in the LIFT program. The teacher's correctly-spelled name is Rhyanna Anderson.