

I always thought I was going to be a high school teacher. When I look back on my K-12 education, I can recall the names of my elementary teachers, but I remember the impact of the adults who guided me through my high school years. The coaches that encouraged me on the cross country course and the basketball court. The math teacher who wouldn't let me phone it in. The Language Arts teacher who would throw the lesson out the window to pontificate about the wonders of superheroes if we asked. The journalism teacher who gave me creative freedom to nurture my writing and subject it to the critics of the student body. I can draw a line from them to me now without many meanderings.

However, I couldn't tell you a single name of any teacher I had in middle school. It's as if I just blacked out during those years, which in a way, I kind of did, as my brain was rewiring itself as I figured out who I wanted to be. The middle school years are barely even a blur to me, so if I wanted to make an impact in the lives of young people, why would I subject myself to a demographic that may look back on my lessons with vague recollections?

But then I was hired at Rowe Middle School in 2012 to be a long term sub the same spring that my best friend and roommate died, and when they asked me to come back in the fall to teach Digital Citizenship and Literacy Workshop, the lost, confused young man that I was had no other choice but to say yes. It was the best decision I've ever made in my entire life.

I've been on SE Lake Road ever since, and I've accomplished a bunch of different things I never would have dreamed of as an educator. Over the years, I eventually moved out of Language Arts into the world of electives, teaching media arts and journalism classes, and the basic tenets of my educational philosophy have shifted and grown along with me.

Back in 2014, I was asked to head a program called the Shamrock News. It was to be a weekly news program that we watched as a school every Wednesday morning to get updates on things like Cross Country registration, after school programs, conferences, family nights, etc., as well as provide some entertainment and community for our building. We're currently in our 9th season, and this June we will air our 300th episode. That's a 15-25 minute episode every Wednesday, even during the pandemic, for 300 weeks over 9 school years. In this program, we've got four rules that are essentially my educational philosophy:

- 1. It is our job to make it so that every single person in this building feels like there is a place for them here.**

That's why we hold staff vs students sports events like 3v3 basketball, soccer, football 1v1s, and volleyball, but we also organize events like paper airplane contests, chess and Connect 4 Tournaments, typing competitions, Kindness Weeks, and evening school dances. We also publicly celebrate our students of the month, we give Barnes and Noble Gift Certificates away to students who've been reading, and we run groups like the 1 Million Word Club. We produce Shamrock Surveys where we go around the school and ask people questions like "What part of any movie is guaranteed to make you cry?" or "What is the best water fountain in the school?" We want our entire community to watch our news program and find belonging in some way,

shape, or form. I think it happens, too, because every year, 7th grade students of all different gender identities, ability levels, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and perspectives apply. They do so because they want to be the one who talks about the Black Student Union, or read the Land Acknowledgement, or film the Trans Awareness Week segments.

One of the most important things we've done over the years as a Shamrock News program is create our "Ins, Outs, and All-Abouts of Rowe Middle School" presentation that we show to 5th graders in our feeder system. The presentation features videos of 6th grade students talking about their 6th grade experience as well as videos highlighting the aforementioned events and activities. As a class, we talk about how middle school is a scary experience for 5th graders, so when we make the video, we need to have all different kinds of kids talking so that our 5th graders can watch and go, "Woah! That person is just like me, and they like the school. Maybe I'll be fine there!" When the elementary schoolers are watching the videos, I, if I'm able to go, watch them and see them audibly and visually react to finding out we have a Unity Team or that we give prizes to students who read a lot or that we play a lot of sports. When you feel like you belong to a place, not only will you feel safer and more successful, but you'll care about the place, and when everyone cares, your school community is significantly stronger.

## **2. Sometimes we have to put in some extra work, and we have to make sacrifices so that others can thrive.**

This isn't only a teaching philosophy I have, but it's a human and political ideology as well. If I have the power and capability to make something happen for somebody else who can't make it happen, then it's on me to do so, even if it costs me some energy and/or a little bit of loot. This particularly is on full display when we organize our school dances.

About six weeks before each dance, students submit their names to be a part of the dance committee. I then pull one name from the bucket, and that person gets to assemble a 4-5 person team responsible for all the different aspects of preparing the upcoming dance.

They first must choose a theme, and then they must pick out decorations using what we have from dances past and a \$200 decorations budget. Our most recent dance committee made a Pinterest board complete with color palettes and certain aesthetics to match their theme, which was The Butterfly Ball.

Dance committee members must also decide what kinds of concessions and refreshments we will sell. The students look at price points and difficulty of mass production to determine what food and drink we have on hand. The Cozy Cabin Dance had hot coco and stickers in addition to pizza, pop, and popcorn. The Blossom Bash last year had cotton candy.

The committee members also hit up the DJ to confirm that the company will provide their services on the specified date, and they also submit a playlist to the DJ.

The students then are responsible for writing the scripts, filming, editing, and producing multiple commercials leading up to the dance to be aired in our Shamrock News program.

My favorite part about all of this though is the day of when our entire Shamrock News program, and some of their friends, stay after school on Friday from 4:20 - 6:00 to set up the dance. About 50 students gather in the room with me, and our dance committee goes over what needs to be done in the gym, cafeteria, hallways, and lobby. They also confirm that those who signed up to work concessions will be there at the designated times, and then we get to work.

String is strung between basketball hoops and wrapped with Christmas lights and adorned with paper lanterns. Banners our artsy students created hang from the bleachers and walls. The popcorn machine is warmed up. Sodas are thrown in coolers. Cups and coolers filled with ice and water get placed in the center of the cafeteria. Photo booths are decorated, pizza from Costco gets divvied up onto paper plates. Streamers hang from ceilings. Change and bills are counted and put into different register drawers. A whole group of 8th grade students work their tails off for about 70 minutes before they are allowed to get ready themselves.

From 6:00 - 8:00, the dance goes down. The line of cars to enter circles around the parking lot, extends through the side road, and reaches the main road. Some students show up in suits and ties or prom dresses. Some students show up in Care Bear onesies or shorts and crocs. The environment is one where anyone can be as serious or as goofy as they would like. Most importantly for many of the kids attending, there is no parent telling them what to do and \$5 burning a hole in their pocket, which means the concession stand line is out the door.

The news kids organize assembly lines and move all the Mountain Dews to one cooler for easier access. They pop extra popcorn to get ahead of the rush. They collect the money, and they are kind to all the excited 6th graders waiting to buy their crush a Pepsi and a slice of pepperoni. Some of the kids are back there the entire 2 hours even though they only signed up for a 30 minute shift.

When the night is over, we all come together before we clean up, and we talk about how the dance committee worked for weeks to make it happen and how some of the kids didn't spend a minute on the dance floor so that others could get soda and popcorn. We discuss how some of the kids got to school at 9:00 am and won't leave until 9:00 pm, and we talk about how sometimes, if we are able to, we may have to make sacrifices and work a little extra in this world so that somebody else can have fun and feel happy. Lastly, we talk about how them putting all that effort into the night has inspired a whole crop of 6th and 7th graders to want to do the same when they get to 8th grade. Ideally, the kids learn this lesson now, and it translates into how they view the world when they are adults with some extra time, money, and/or energy.

### **3. Let's make it happen!**

All the different events and projects take a lot of planning, and one rule we have during the planning process is that we figure out a way.

When a group says, “We want to have a Home Run Derby where we ask a former Rowe student and current Major League Baseball player to come and throw whiffle balls, and have a local business donate money to our binder closet for every home run,” we say, “Let’s make it happen.”

So the group sits down and envisions their perfect scenario, and then we all meet together and go, “Now where could this go wrong?” In this particular situation, we had to figure out what we would do if it rained (it did!). We had to consider that Keynan the baseball player might not be able to make it (he came!). We wondered if some people wouldn’t be able to hit (we brought a tee!), and we thought about all the different local businesses who might be interested in donating (the local ice cream shop!). Additionally, we had to get whiffle balls and bats from the high school baseball team. An event for the school turned into something where the students organizing it had to reach out and get the whole community involved, and it all started because we said, “Let’s make it happen!”

Other times, we’ve had to change our plans in order to make it happen. We once wanted to have a talent show during a school wide assembly. Because of lack of time, a lack of participants, and other logistical hiccups, that wasn’t going to happen. So the committee and I sat down, and we asked ourselves what the purpose of the talent show was. One student expressed that she wanted to hold the talent show so that talented kids got a chance to perform and live out their singing or instrument playing dreams. We then realized we didn’t need a whole school audience to do that, so we booked the gym for a weekend, and we held a small talent show that about 50 people showed up to. It was tiny and quaint, but it still meant a lot to the individuals performing, and the whole thing went down because we started the conversation by saying, “Let’s make it happen.”

This also works when we’re creating media arts films. We use Final Cut Pro, and while I can access most of the capabilities that the program has, I don’t know how to do everything off the top of my head. Occasionally a student will be like, “In my fake movie trailer, I want someone to get Thanos snapped and disintegrate.” Rather than be like, “Nobody here knows how to do that,” we go, “Let’s make it happen,” and the kids brainstorm and watch tutorial videos on YouTube, and they find a way to make it work.

Identifying your ideal and working backwards on some “Let’s make it happen” mentality allows everyone to give it a shot. Sometimes you reach the ideal, and sometimes you don’t, but you still end up doing something amazing that you hadn’t even considered because you put your problem solving skills to the test.

#### **4. Embrace the Cringe!**

We have a saying in our film and news classes. “Embrace the cringe!” It is a reminder to not take ourselves too seriously. If we need to grab some pom-poms and cheerleading uniforms and go perform some routines in the upstairs gym to advertise for Ms. Larson’s upcoming cheer

camp, then we grab some pom-poms and cheerleading uniforms. If we're telling people that they can access free breakfast before school starts every morning, we're going to sell that free breakfast news like it's a free million dollars or the Shamwow towel.

In middle school, it's very easy to be concerned about your cool. Is what I'm doing cool? Will other people think it's cool? Will my teachers think it's cool? If my teachers think it's cool, does that mean it's not cool? Those thoughts, only amplified by social media, can paralyze students and even staff members, so I start the year giving the same speech.

"Nobody in here is cool. I'm not cool. I'm a 37 year old middle school teacher. I'm the definition of uncool. None of you are cool. You're middle schoolers. No middle schooler is cool, but guess what? That's awesome because if we don't have to worry about being cool, then we can just be ourselves. Which means that sometimes we just have to embrace the cringe, and go over the top and be goofy and cringy and weird in our skits and segments. The best part about that is when we can be ourselves and have fun other people are going to be more okay with being themselves, and that's about the coolest thing that can happen in a middle school."

There are times when I'm walking down the hallway, and I'll hear a Shamrock News member who's behind the camera tell the person who's in front of the camera relaying the Shrook Store details, "EMBRACE THE CRINGE!" and everyone gets goofy, and the person puts on an infomercial voice, and they have fun with it. Learning is supposed to be fun, and sometimes it's hard to have fun when you're worried about being cool. That's why we embrace the cringe!

Through the Shamrock News, I've gotten to enact my teaching philosophies and strategies in a way that I never would have imagined, and the reach of the program has stretched to incredible places. I've been a keynote speaker at the 2016 AMLE national conference and the 2017 AMLE local conference because of it. I've had teachers from all over the country hit me up and ask me how we run our staff vs students basketball games or how we figure out what to air. Earlier this year, a student made a video making fun of one of the theme songs I made for our book recommendation segment, and while I was at Papa Murphy's, a parent came up to me and said, "I like your theme song, Mr. Dix." They then told me they watch the news as a family every Wednesday night so they can see what's going on at their child's school.

It's a responsibility I take incredibly seriously because I know that the role of education is to "plant the seeds of a new world while preparing students for the old one." That's why I strive to give the kids the opportunities to collaborate, plan, meet deadlines, work, struggle, and hit obstacles like they will when they have their own living spaces and jobs, but it's why I also make sure that we showcase different identities, provide services to our community, and express gratitude and compassion towards each other. Because I want them to not only envision a world where all walks of life come together in the name of the common good, but to also have touched that world for even just a split second in our classroom.

The kids may get older and one day struggle to recall any of the names of their middle school teachers, and that's totally fine. I've learned that this job ain't about being honored for your work,

it's about doing the work because it's good work to do. I just hope that even if they don't remember much about our school, they're using the skills we started developing as they sacrifice to make their community a place where everyone belongs by making things happen without worry of being anybody but who they are.



Greg Neuman, Principal 503-353-5726  
Michelle Doyle, Asst. Principal 503-353-5746  
Amie Fortuna, Asst. Principal 503-353-5727

*North Clackamas School District*

## **ROWE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

*3606 SE Lake Rd. | Milwaukie, OR 97222  
503-353-5725*

March 20, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been asked to write a letter of recommendation for Lucas Dix, our Media Arts teacher at Wilbur D. Rowe Middle School, where I serve as the principal. This is my first year as principal at Rowe, and I arrived on scene after the school year had already begun. Obviously this is a very difficult transition as to not have a summer to prepare and we most definitely hit the ground running. Lucas was one of the first teachers that I met and I had an opportunity to watch all of his Shamrock news segments prior to my arrival.

This really gave me a good idea of what the culture of the school was and I was amazed by the quality product that he and his students produced on a daily and weekly basis. The Shamrock news certainly serves as the glue that holds our school together and not only acts as a way to get information out to the students, it's also a fun activity that students look forward to every week. It is truly an honor to be a part of the Shamrock News Crew and this has everything to do with the culture and expectation that Lucas has set for his Shamrock News students.

Lucas works countless hours to support our students and goes above and beyond his call of duty every single day, to serve every member of our school community. He runs our Shamrock News which acts as our "de facto" leadership group. He also works to arrange all of our Home Room lessons with other teacher leaders, plans Spirit Weeks and Staff and Student competitions. He coaches Cross Country and Track & Field at Rowe Middle School and Basketball at Milwaukie High School. He is one of our union building representatives for the North Clackamas Education Association. Having been in the game for quite a while myself, I put great value in having close relationships with my Association reps and I can always count on Lucas to be a collaborative partner and problem solver.

Lucas is widely respected by the entire staff and students. He has a very fun and engaging personality with students and is known to make connections with even our most challenging students and works to build positive relationships in order to create successful experiences for all of our students.

Rowe Middle School is a better place because of the hard work and dedication that Lucas shows to our students and staff every single day. He is 100% committed to the success of Rowe Middle School and works tirelessly to ensure that we are holding our students to high standards and to make certain that all of our students are well cared for and have a positive and successful Middle School experience before moving them on to high school.

I give him my highest recommendation for the Oregon Teacher of the Year. Should you have any questions about Lucas, I would welcome your call.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Neuman  
Principal  
Rowe Middle School  
503-353-5726

To whom it may concern,

It is my absolute pleasure to recommend Mr. Dix for the 2023 OnPoint and ODE educator of the year award.

My name is Arlo Schmidt. I was a student in Mr Dix's classroom during my 7th and 8th grade school years at Rowe Middle school and I recently finished my freshman basketball season playing under him as the head coach of our team. Out of all of the teachers, leaders, and coaches I have ever had, I can confidently tell you that Mr. Dix is by far, the most dedicated, comprehensive, and energetic. The pure amount of love that he consistently shows for our community and everyone he has an influence on makes him the perfect candidate for this award.

During my 8th grade school year, I would always look forward to walking into Mr. Dix's classroom. He was, and still is the brain of a class at Rowe called Shamrock News. It is the most coveted class that an 8th grader could take and for a good reason. As one of the top middle school news programs in the country, there was almost no limit to what we could do if we put our mind to it. For one period every other day my peers and I got to film, edit, learn, and have tons of fun while also trying to make our school more inclusive and fun for everyone. The memories I created and lessons that I learned in that class will stay with me for as long as I can remember them. Mr. Dix has done so much for our community and is a selfless figure that almost anyone can look up to.

Mr. Dix is a role model, mentor, and hero for me, my teammates, my classmates, and almost everyone who he has taught. It is an honor to be able to recommend him for this title.

Arlo Schmidt  
Milwaukie High School  
Class of 2026



Dear OnPoint,

I am writing to enthusiastically recommend my friend and colleague, Lucas Dix, for OnPoint's Teacher of the Year Award. As his colleague and fellow educator, I have had the pleasure of working with him for the last decade at Rowe Middle School. I have been continually impressed by his dedication, expertise, and the zeal he brings to the school community.

Lucas Dix has students who come from a variety of backgrounds and income levels. Lucas is an outstanding teacher who consistently goes above and beyond to ensure that his students receive the best possible education in an inclusive environment. Lucas has a remarkable ability to connect with students. Lucas consistently shows a great deal of respect to his students, and in return, the students respect him.

In the classroom, Lucas is skilled at differentiating instruction in a way that meets students where they are, but always encourages them to grow. In the last 10 years he has taught: 6th grade Language Arts, 7th grade Language Arts, a reading intervention class, a media arts elective, a 6th grade leadership program, and single-handedly created and nurtured a student-made and student-edited News program.

In addition to his work in the classroom, Lucas Dix is also an active member of our school community. He frequently volunteers to lead extracurricular activities, serves on committees, and mentors new teachers. His contributions to the school are invaluable, and he is highly respected by colleagues, students, and parents alike. Some of Lucas's most notable accomplishments are (1) building a thriving student news program, (2) bringing back the tradition of school dances, (3) revitalizing the school's Track and Cross Country team, (4) coaching the freshman basketball team at the high school, and (5) working collaboratively with other teachers and students to create the Million Word club for avid readers.

Overall, I cannot think of a more deserving candidate for the Teacher of the Year Award than Lucas Dix. Lucas is the heart and soul of our school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Coco Vernon', with a stylized, cursive-like script.

Coco Vernon

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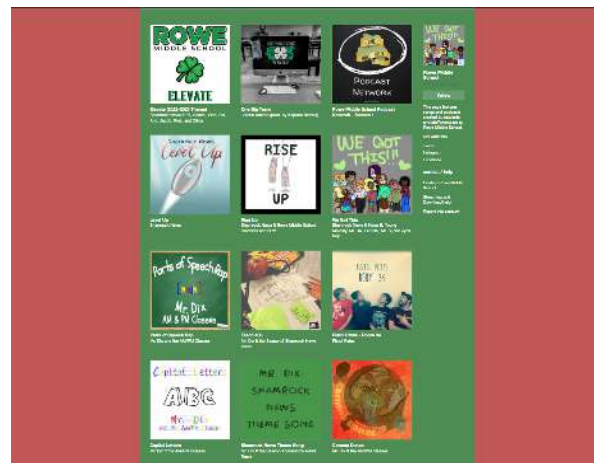
Coco Vernon

## School Songs

This is a screenshot from our school's Bandcamp page. It features all the different singles/EPs we've made throughout the last 10 years. Some songs, like the "Comma Dance", "Capital Letters Rap", "Teach 100", and "Parts of Speech Rap" feature me with some help from the kids.

However, in 2016, we started making songs based off of our yearly school motto, and those songs feature me, other staff members, and students singing, rapping, performing, playing music, etc. I teach students how to record the audio, and then we spend about a month making and recording each song. Students then also film and edit [music videos](#) for each of the songs.

We've been on the news multiple times for these songs.



## Sixth-graders at Milwaukie's Rowe Middle School look to go viral with a rap video about... commas?!

Updated: May 01, 2016 6:51 p.m.

Signed in readers now can bookmark stories to read later.



By Byron Wilkes | The Oregonian/OregonLive

A group of sixth-graders at [Rowe Middle School](#) hopes to go viral with a rap song, but what makes this song different is its topics: commas.

The song, titled "Comma Dance," features lines such as, "Then remember to use commas when you're writing a list // For example, 'When I went to the gathering last week, I brought a sleeping bag, pillows, pizza and fat beats.'"



## Social Media

We are also responsible for running our social media accounts. I create a schedule every Sunday night for what we post, and my students and I curate the [IG and Facebook](#) pages. The kids will post stories of Shamrock News or Dance Behind the Scenes, and we make sure to keep our community informed on events and projects.



## Shamrock Service Events

These are events that my past 6th grade leadership classes or Shamrock News classes have organized to promote a positive school environment and help our community!




## BETTER BUILDING BINGO

Write an X or black out each square after you've completed the task. If you successfully complete four in a row on the Better Building Bings chart, come down to room 225 with Mr. Dix and submit your form. You'll get a prize for getting four in a row, and an even bigger prize if you complete every task. Also, your card will be put into a drawing/raffle for the biggest prize of them all.

Due Friday, February 10th, 2023

<b>WRITE A LETTER TO A FRIEND</b>	<b>WRITE A SHAMROCK FOR A TEACHER</b>	<b>GIVE A SHAMROCK SHOUT-OUT</b>	<b>OFFER/GIVE SOMEONE SCHOOL SUPPLIES (PENCIL, PEN, ETC.)</b>
<b>COMPLIMENT 5 STRANGERS</b>	<b>ASSIST SOMEONE WITH CHECKING GRADES OR ORGANIZING BINDER</b>	<b>GET TO EVERY CLASS ON TIME ALL WEEK LONG</b>	<b>THROW AWAY FIVE PIECES OF GARBAGE YOU FIND</b>
<b>HELP JANITORS CLEAN UP AFTER LUNCH</b>	<b>WALK ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE HALLWAYS</b>	<b>BE KIND TO LUNCH WORKERS</b>	<b>ASK TO HELP OUT A TEACHER</b>
<b>SAY "SHAMROCK" DURING THE ROWE REMINDERS</b>	<b>HELP SOMEBODY WITH CLASSWORK</b>	<b>TELL SOMEONE WHY YOU APPRECIATE THEM</b>	<b>IDENTIFY THREE THINGS YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR</b>



## Home Run Derby



Thursday November 4th 2021

Any student who wants to participate can.

This event will be taking place outside at the baseball field

The event is about raising money for our binder closet

You can participate by going to the baseball fields during lunch



Attention 'Everyone' It's Time For The...

## ROWE RECYCLING CAMPAIGN!!!

Attention Rowe! Make sure your garbage goes to the right place!

### RECYCLABLE

Plastic Bottles

Plastic Tubs

Paper

Tin

NO GLASS!

### THROW IN THE GARBAGE

Pop Cans

Pencil Shavings

Gum

Tissue

Paper Towel

Food

Dirty Milk cartons

Wrappers

## Game Day

January 27th

To all students of Rowe.  
We are hosting a game day.

We want people to have fun and get to be more social.

We will be able to play games like Uno, spoons, and chess the board game.

Each one of us will host a game at a table.



Spoons card game



Chess board game



Uno card game

Thursday  
January  
27th all  
lunches



Pizza, Popcorn, Pop, Pajama, Pixar Party




Attention Rowe Students!

On April 8th, a 6th grade leadership group is hosting a 5P party. It's going to be hosted in Mr. Dix's room (225) where you come with your pajamas and watch a Pixar movie with your friends! We will provide soda, pop, pizza, and popcorn.

We will be having a Shrock drawing on the Shamrock News. You can drop off your Shrocks in a Shrock bin in the cafeteria at your lunch.

We'll deliver the passes to the winners on April 8th first period. The party will be during second period. Turn your Shrocks in to have a chance!

(pajamas are optional)

## Hygiene Drive

Hygiene drive, were collecting shampoo conditioner, baby wipes, lotion, and diapers.

Wednesday the 19  
until february  
The 3rd.



## Bowling Ball Challenge

Whoever wants to participate to come and play...

The Bowling Ball Challenge  
On Wednesday February 2nd  
It will be taking place in the Gym

You can go at your lunch if you want to play or watch!



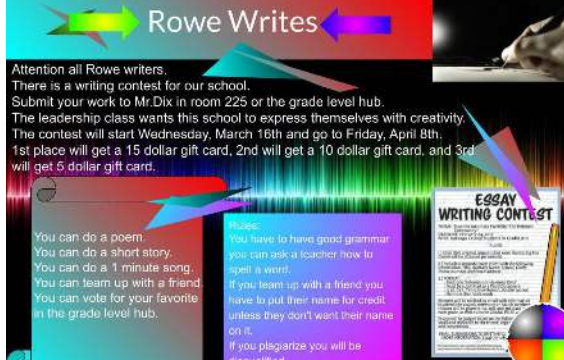
## Rowe Writes

Attention all Rowe writers.

There is a writing contest for our school. Submit your work to Mr. Dix in room 225 or the grade level hub. The leadership class wants this school to express themselves with creativity. The contest will start Wednesday, March 18th and go to Friday, April 8th. 1st place will get a 15 dollar gift card, 2nd will get a 10 dollar gift card, and 3rd will get 5 dollar gift card.

**Rules:**  
You have to have good grammar  
you can ask a teacher how to spell a word.  
If you team up with a friend you have to put their name for credit unless they don't want their name on it.  
If you plagiarize you will be disqualified.

**ESSAY WRITING CONTEST**



## Paper airplane contest

Date- Wednesday April, 6th

Any student can participate

The winner will be the airplane that goes the furthest.

The winners plane will be hung in Mr. Dix's room and win a ton of CANDY!!!

You can participate by going to the lower gym and make a paper airplane



## The Rowe Middle School Art Competition

Starts Thursday 13th, and ends Friday January 28th

Anyone can join

Drop your art off at Mr. Dix's class in room 225 or if digital art send to Mr. Dix email

Make sure you write your name on the back so that you are anonymous until you are announced as winner

We are mostly reaching out to artists, and ONLY TURN IN ONCE NOT TWICE and no inappropriate art



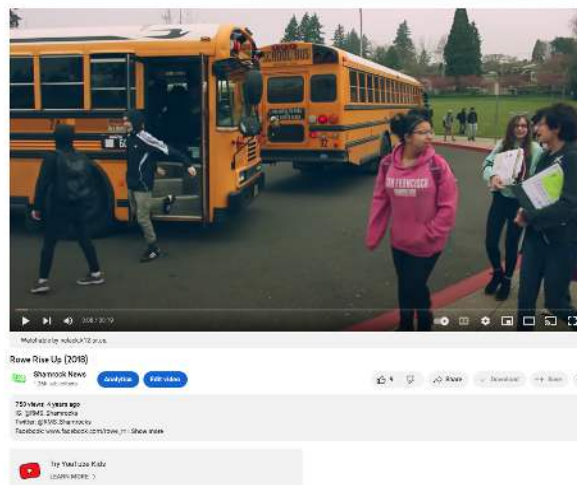
## NCEF Grants

My students and I have written and been awarded multiple grants in the past 5 years, but last year's grant was my favorite because a group of 6th graders from my leadership class collaborated with 7th grade LA teacher Mrs. Vernon, the librarian Ms. Becky, and I to write a grant to get more graphic novels into the library for reluctant readers.

- **School Library Fund: Rowe Middle School, Lucas Dix - \$3,498.30**  
**Purpose:** Reinvigorate library with purchase of books to add more relevant and engaging nonfiction, replace lost books within a series, and also purchase more graphic novels and novels in verse to give our struggling readers new content.
- **Graphic Novels: A Gateway to Reading: Rowe Middle School, Lucas Dix — \$673.00**  
**Purpose:** Over 60 graphic novels will be purchased and made available to 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Graphic novels are a gateway to stories for many young readers and help struggling readers become excited about reading. Providing more access to different kinds of books makes the classroom a more equitable environment and sets a path for students to become quality readers and quality graduates.
- **Reading in Room 110: Rowe Middle School, Lucas Dix — \$800**  
**Purpose:** This goal of this project is to add books to Mr. Dix's classroom library that would be interesting to and beneficial for 7th and 8th grade students in his Literacy Workshop intervention class, as well as other students throughout the school who tune into Rowe's It's Lit Podcast and the It's Lit book review segment on the Shamrock News program.

## Rowe Rise Up

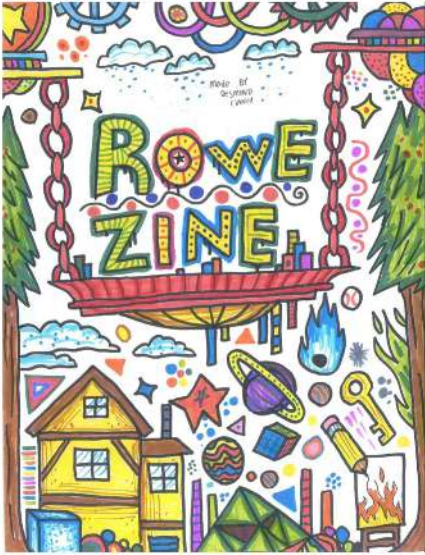
About 5 years ago, the Association for Middle Level Education asked us to create a video detailing how Rowe Middle School changed our school culture. As a result, my Shamrock News students and I brainstormed, wrote, filmed, recorded, produced, and edited a 30 minute documentary titled [Rowe Rise Up](#). Then those students presented the video to a room full of middle school admin and teachers and explained the creation process.





## Rowe Zine

One of the ways we highlight and showcase student creativity is with our Rowe Zine. We've produced about 10 or so over the years. A group of students is responsible for promoting the zine, and then curating it. We also email teachers to collect writing pieces from their Language Arts class. [Our most recent zine](#) featured over 100 pages of student art, writing, and photos.



### ROWE ZINE: FALL EDITION 2021

The Rowe Zine is a place where your art, poems, songs, and all of the above is accepted no matter who you are and what your art is. We have so many beautiful minds in this school which leads to many different perspectives and interpretations of the world. We took student submissions as well as assignments in classes to compile a zine filled with emotional poems, eye-opening photos, inspiring drawings, etc. Please take this opportunity to dive into some of the wonder that is the Rowe art community.

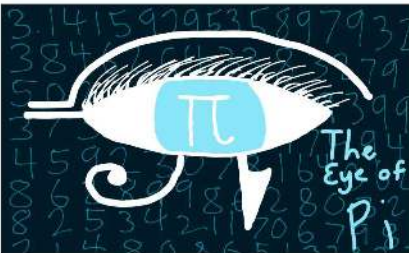
Ciara Pray, Kai Jeffrey, Rylan Cotton, Finn MacWilliams

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Joey Lanfair



Cecilia Skinner



Adrian Gutierrez



Adrian Gutierrez

By Latha 9/20

*There are people*

I didn't tell you three names because they were my friends of family but because they were unique.

**Uncle** A funny, jovial, character. That taught me how to be myself even if I'm weird. And to love who I want to. I will always be myself just like him.

**Grandma** a supportive father a funny and kind person that is different from others and someone I love he is kind to a lot of people and so I will be kind to others just like him.

**Uncle** the weird and fuzzy brother my brother is like a dog, loving and kind but his teeth just as sharp. He my cat here all my blood but he is still my brother.

**Uncle** a attention seeker who loves pets. This is like a mouse, curious to every new thing he sees but is scared as well. He may be my mouse cat but is like a brother to me.

**Uncle** she and my love to listen to songs in car when she picks me up from my house. She is my aunt who is a very mommy and physically she is my date come and is the old value sibling. She is like a mouse in a hard storm, she stands even if everything is against her.

**Grandma** a funny and good person. He loves to talk about his cat. We have been friends since 4th grade. He can be loud some times but he is friendly and that's what matters.

Why are they so different? They all have unique personalities and have different and the same in their own way.



### **1 Million Word Club**

The 1 Million Word Club consists of students who read 1 million words or more throughout the entire school year. They earn stickers and bracelets once they hit a million words, and we throw them a pizza party at the end of the year. We also take a group photo celebrating all the kids who've read!



## Coaching

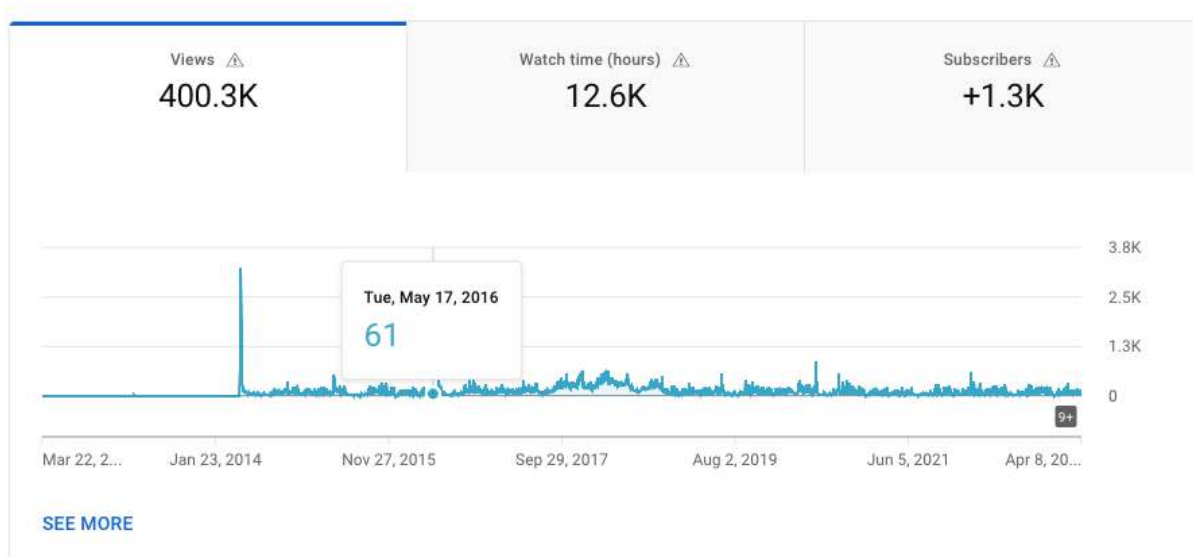
I also coach middle school cross country, middle school track and field, and high school basketball.



## Shamrock News

In the past 9 years, we've uploaded nearly 3,000 videos, and we've earned over 400,000 views!

**Your channel has gotten 400,349 views so far**



## Student Notes

Dear Mr. Dix,

Thank you for making my years here at Rowe really amazing. You've helped me grow both as a student and as a person. I really appreciate you sharing your stories, and being open about Gavin in sixth grade. Also, you taking me into the hall that day and talking with me as I dealt with the emotions I'd ignored surrounding my great-grand mother's death. That really meant a lot to me. I will always look up to you. Your quick snarky and sarcastic remarks always manage to make me laugh. Both 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade you and your class were reasons for me to look forward to school. I know I've given you plenty of attitude the last three years, but thank you for putting up with me. You're honestly one of my favorite teachers. I'm lucky to have had you as a teacher not only once but twice. Rowe is so lucky to have you. I know I'm not the only person who appreciates your efforts and the energy you've put into this school, the students here, and just improving the atmosphere here at Rowe. Thank you for everything you've done. I'll make sure to keep up with the news. I know I wasn't always the greatest student, but you were definitely the best teacher. I've learned so much from you. Things about school and also just about life. Thank you so very much. Keep in touch.

### Expressing Gratitude

Think back over the last 3 years of middle school. Pick 1 teacher who has made a positive impact on you. Write a thank you letter to them, expressing your gratitude for how they have helped you and the impact they have made in your life.

Dix,

I have so much to say. Getting to be your student for 2 consecutive years has been such a great experience and I'm so glad to have had that opportunity, same with being part of Shamrock News. Not everyone gets to be taught by the Oregon teacher of the year! From making episodes, to music, to just staying after school, it's all been so fun and it's definitely the most memorable year thanks to everything you've done to make it so fun. I've learned so many things through Shamrock News, whether it's how to work a camera or work with people and build a community. It's an experience I seriously won't forget. You're more than just a teacher to your students; you're a supporter, a role model, and a friend. Thank you for everything. Even if I'm no longer your student I'll always be your #1 fan.



### Expressing Gratitude

Think back over the last 3 years of middle school. Pick 1 teacher who has made a positive impact on you. Write a thank you letter to them, expressing your gratitude for how they have helped you and the impact they have made in your life.

Dear Mr. Dix,

(I'm sorry for my spelling)

I know I already wrote you a letter but someone as amazing as you deserves 2. You are one of the most amazing people I have ever met. You do so many things in one day no matter what is going on. I don't know how you don't get tired all the time. You are by far the most amazing, overachieving, nice, & caring teacher I have ever met. You care a lot about all your students and you're always working on things for other people. This school wouldn't survive without you and my 8th grade year would have been horrible without your class & support. Thank you so much.

### Expressing Gratitude

Think back over the last 3 years of middle school. Pick 1 teacher who has made a positive impact on you. Write a thank you letter to them, expressing your gratitude for how they have helped you and the impact they have made in your life.

Mr. Dix has help me  
Since 7th grade I was  
very shy a didn't like  
going out and being me.  
But this year he has showed  
me to be brave and has  
helped me I ran for student  
govent and thats the biggest  
thing I have ever done and sang  
in the song leek up and I want  
to thank you for that.

### Expressing Gratitude

Think back over the last 3 years of middle school. Pick 1 teacher who has made a positive impact on you. Write a thank you letter to them, expressing your gratitude for how they have helped you and the impact they have made in your life.

Dear Mr. Dix

Thanks to your Media Arts and Shamrock News class, a lot of the past two years have actually been really enjoyable, even if I had a hard time in unrelated matters. I had a lot of fun with learning to use technology better and creating all sorts of wacky stuff. You've also just been a great teacher in general. You're so nice and funny and you just act like yourself, which I think all teachers should. You are also really passionate about your class and students, and I can see how hard you work to help keep the News great and make our school community and culture happy and healthy. I'm so glad to have been able to participate in the Shamrock News, and basically be immortalized here, along with the other members. Thank you for everything and all the amazing opportunities. -Suzy D.

Mr. Dix,

Even if I may be quiet in your class at times, without you and Shamrock News I would be living without 65% of my confidence as a Rowe Middle School student. I came to this school last year, and I didn't know anything about it. In two months, I only made one real friend, and I felt totally disconnected from the Rowe community. But this year, I not only feel like I've been accepted, I feel like I've found my place and my people. Helping out with dances, being in the podcast, filming for the music video, has all helped me feel more comfortable with the community here. And it's beautiful.

But enough about me. You do so much for this school, and so much for everything that has helped me. From Day 1, ~~the~~ Media Arts was my favorite class, and if I hadn't loved it and your encouragement so much, I probably would not have had the guts to join the News and be on camera. Because that's what you do, you find what kids love, you connect to them, you pump them up, then encourage them to do more. Participate. Read. Play sports. I don't know anyone who isn't impressed with that charisma and

positive energy. You do so many events and projects, all for the good of the students, that we theorized you were a time-traveler. You care about things few others even notice.

An "old soul," as my mother would say. Authenticity. Originality. Morals. The power of words. Art. Music. Books. It's always truly refreshing when you stand up for these things, because as of now, it's rare.  
Never change. - N.S.



Mr. Dix,

If I wrote down everything that deserves to go in this letter, America would have a paper shortage.

It amazes me the amount of trust you put in your students. It helps us create deeper connections with everyone surrounding us in shamrock news. That's so important to me. You've inspired me academically, creatively, and musically. Music is the best thing in my life, and you helped me create something to show for it. level up was the best thing I've been a part of this year, I can't even tell you how thankful I am for that. Having a teacher I can relate to on a musical level was really, really cool.

Every day I, I would walk into shamrock news and get ready to find out what crazy thing was in store.. Whether it was using water balloons as a weapon, or illegally flying drones, I knew I was going to walk away with good memories. And at some point in the future I'm going to think about this place and the amazing teacher that made it real. (I'll probably also think about that time Evan broke the ceiling while you guys were recording a podcast). This experience is so valuable to every student that is lucky enough to be involved. Through shamrock news you grow and learn, you make new friends, but most importantly we get to share with the world the great things about us and the school. I'm so thankful.

I don't know how to show my gratitude to you. But thank you so much.

Each and every student in your class has found a way to better the news and the school. And that's because of you. You're the heart and soul of Rowe, Mr.Dix. I'm proud to call you my teacher, and my friend. No matter where I go in life a little part of me will always be in that crowded, broken, oven-of-a classroom we like to call the pod.

Mr. Dix,

This year has been the best year of my whole school career so far, and I have you to thank for it. From the countless laughs, to the hard work, you've taught me so much. Thank you for teaching me it's ok to embrace the cringe and embarrass yourself. Thank you for teaching me how to be a leader. Thank you for being someone I could look up to. Thank you for always putting up with me. There is a lot more I could thank you for, but that would take forever.

Your consistent dedication to the school and your students has made you the best roll model for everyone you interact with. You've inspired me to step out of my comfort zone, and I can't thank you enough for that. Shamrock news has grown me so much as a person and a leader, and I will miss it dearly. I wish it could have lasted longer, but it had to end sometime. I hope that the coming year treats you well!