

Jennifer Banzet teaches Skills for Adolescence. She has a BSE from Emporia State University and has an ESL endorsement. This is her eleventh year teaching and her eighth year at French. Outside of school she enjoys spending time with friends and family, traveling, reading, and relaxing on the beach.

Tanya Arévalo Bingham is our school social worker. She has a BA in Spanish and social work from K-State and an MSW from KU. She has worked eleven years as a social worker, four of those as a school social worker. This is her third year at French. She loves to play volleyball and enjoys watching her kids' activities.

Shakiyya Bland teaches Math 6. She has a BA from the University of Kansas and is working on a MEd at Baker University. This is her second year at French. Miss Bland enjoys reading, singing and writing poetry.

Angela Branson teaches 7th grade math. She received her degree from Washburn University. This is her 8th year in education and her first year at French. She enjoys spending time with family- fishing, camping, going to the park, and just having time together.

Meg Braun, Ed.S., our school psychologist for thirteen years, has an EdS in school psychology. Prior to serving as a school psychologist, Mrs. Braun taught social studies for ten years. She loves to go the beach and is an avid reader and sports fan.

Michele Burt teaches English 7. She received her BS in English language arts education from the University of Central Florida. She has taught for six years. This is her second year at French. She enjoys reading, playing with her pets, arts and crafts, and being involved in community service. In addition, she has been dog sledding and taken improvisational comedy classes.

Sue Byrd teaches sixth and seventh grade special education. She received both her BA and masters in education from Washburn University. She has taught for eight years. This is her fifth year at French. Her hobbies include art, reading, and camping.

Leslie Chapman teaches Math 8 and Algebra 1. She has a BA from Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, NC and masters in secondary education from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. This is her 27th year teaching and her second year at French. She enjoys gardening, yard decorating, crafts, thrift, flea and antique market shopping, collecting dolls, oriental decorations, Garfield and taking care of a pond with fish.

Michael Chavez teaches Art 6, 7, and 8. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Washburn University. This is his fifteenth year teaching. Mr. Chavez enjoys cooking, drawing, painting, and spending time with his wife and six children.

Pam DeFries teaches English 7. She has a BA degree from Ottawa University and earned an MA and a reading specialist degree from Washburn. She has taught for thirteen years – six years at French. Mrs. DeFries enjoys reading and music and is active in her church. She is married and has 2 children. Her son graduated from St. Olaf College and is living in Minneapolis. Her daughter and son-in-law live in Topeka.

Mary Dodson teaches FLEX 7/8. This is her first year at French.

Rebecca Downs (formerly Pekrul) teaches science and math. She has taught 18 years, 9 at French. She has a BS in English education, a BA in life science from KSU and a masters degree in science education from Wichita State University. She

loves reading, sewing, needlework, and gardening. She is a Boy Scout leader, teaches Mid-High Sunday School, sings in the church choir, and plays in the hand bell choir.

Lisa DeWitt teaches Social Studies 6 and Science 6. She has a BA in elementary education from Washburn University. This is her twelfth year as a teacher in USD 501. Mrs. DeWitt has two children-- Chelsea, twelve and Tyler, nine. She enjoys reading, scrapbooking, traveling, and playing volleyball. She loves to collect snowmen.

Barry Evans teaches Band 6, 7, and 8. He has taught for 15 years. He has a BME from KU. His outside interests and hobbies include golf, woodworking, family, computers, working outside, and playing the trumpet.

Lucinda Evans teaches US History 8. She has taught for 18years all at French. She earned a BA from Saint Mary of the Plains College, Dodge City, Kansas. Mrs. Evans loves reading, playing volleyball, spending time with her family, and traveling. In the last two years she has traveled to Massachusetts, Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, California, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Texas, Alaska, and the United Kingdom.

Julia Flach teaches Math 7 and Social Studies. She received her degree from Sterling College. This is her third year teaching and second year at French. She enjoys spending time with her family, hunting, playing sports, and doing outdoor activities.

Andrea Frey teaches Math 8. She received her degrees, a BSE and masters in education, from Emporia State University. This is her tenth year teaching and her fourth year at French. She enjoys sewing and cross-stitching. She also likes to swim, exercise, and travel as much as she can to see family and the world.

Mike Haire is our assistant principal. He has been in education for fifteen years. This is his first year at French. He has a BS in secondary education and an MS in educational administration. Mr. Haire has three children, Griffin-6 Carson-4, and Connor-4. He enjoys golfing, being with his family and, and church activities

Nathan Hamilton teaches Science 8. He has a BS in science from Pittsburg State University. He has taught for four years. This is his second year at French. His hobbies include football, wrestling, hunting, fishing and baseball.

Susan Hamilton teaches Math 7. She has a BS in psychology and elementary education from Creighton University. This is her fifth year teaching and her third year at French. She is married and has three children --two daughters in college and a son, who is a freshman. She loves spending time with her family.

Kelli Hoffman is our principal. She has a BS from Kansas State University and an MS from Washburn University. A classroom teacher for eleven years, this is her fourth year in administration. This is her second year at French. She loves to read, boat, and enjoys spending time with her family and two poodles.

Sean Hubbard teaches sixth grade and eighth grade mathematics. He has a BS in Elementary Education and a MS in Educational Administration from Emporia State University. This is his eighth year teaching and his fifth year at French. He enjoys spending time with his family, reading Stephen King, playing video games, watching movies, and listening to music.

Beth Johnston teaches Physical Education 6, 7, and 8. She has a BEd from

Washburn University. She has taught for twenty-three years. This is her thirteenth year at French. She enjoys walking, playing tennis, watching KSU athletics and watching her son play tennis for Washburn University.

Pam Johnston is our media specialist. An educator for thirty–four years, Mrs. Johnston has a BA from Bethany College and media certification from Kansas State University. Her favorite activities are reading, going to garage sales, riding in her convertible, walking, but most of all, spending time with her granddaughter, Shailey, who is 8 months old.

Tamara Kessler teaches Computer 6, 7, and 8. A teacher for 15 years, she received both her BSE and MS in business education from Emporia State. This is her first year at French. She enjoys fishing, gardening, scrapbooking, and spending time with her son, Riley, who is ten.

Eli Kiru teaches 7th grade special education. She is originally from Kenya. This is her second year at French

JoAnn Kibbee teaches Language Arts 6. She has a BS in elementary education from Emporia State University and masters degrees in adaptive education and special education. This is her thirteenth year teaching and her ninth year at French. She enjoys gardening, reading, biking, hiking, swimming, boating and water skiing.

Michelle Lucht teaches English 8. She received a BA in English education from the University of Minnesota in Morris. This is her fourth year teaching and second year at French. She enjoys walking, playing softball, joking, playing the piano, watching movies, reading, and relaxing in her backyard.

Pilar Mejia teaches ELL Language Arts. She has a BEd from Washburn University. She has taught for four years in 501. This is her first year at French. She enjoys traveling, snow skiing, reading, watching TV, spending time with friends, music, dancing, singing and movies.

Bruce Mellen teaches Physical Education 6, 7 and 8. He has taught for seventeen years. Mr. Mellen earned his degree while playing football at Washburn University. He enjoys Washburn & K-State sports, collecting movies, and spending time with family. He is one of 12 Mellens, nine of which are also teachers.

Hamid Nadiruzzaman teaches Special Education in 6th grade. He has a masters degree from Emporia State University. This is his sixth year at French. He presently coaches Volleyball and Track & Field at French. His hobbies include soccer, photography, and the outdoors.

Linda Nightingale is one of our school counselors. She has a BA from Bethany College and a BA from Emporia State University. This is her third year at French. In her spare time, she enjoys photography, gardening, baking, quilting and beading. She and her husband (Scott) have been married for 10 years and have two daughters, Audrey (8) and Abby (7), a dog, Biscuit, and an assortment of fish, snails, and frogs in the aquarium.

Kathryn Northway is the curriculum coordinator. She has taught for twenty-seven years at French. She has a BS in biology from the University of Miami and a MA in administration from Washburn. She enjoys reading, gardening, bird watching, biking, and swimming. She and her husband, Dan, have two married daughters, Kara and Megan.

Dean Ramcharan is our ELL teacher. He teaches 6th, 7th and 8th grade ELL

Language Arts. This is his first year at French.

Anne Shallenberg is our eighth grade special education resource teacher. She has a BA in German and education and a MS in special education from the University of Kansas. This is her third year teaching at French. Her hobbies include reading, writing stories, playing tennis, baking, and baking.

Michael Renfro teaches US History 7. He is a graduate of Emporia State University and has a BS in secondary education. This is his ninth year at French. He enjoys farming, fishing and whatever his wife tells him to do.

Gary Richmond teaches Science 7. Mr. Richmond received his undergraduate degree in science education and his masters from the University of Kansas. Despite having previously taught at French, he just recently became a Topeka resident. He enjoys the outdoors (camping, backpacking, canoeing), and of course KU sports.

Beth Robinett is one of our school counselors. She has taught for twenty years, twelve of those at French. She has a BS in education and a masters degree in counseling from Emporia State University. Her outside interests include canoeing, camping, photography, raising four children, and going to all of their activities, which include wrestling, football, dance, gymnastics, and 4-H.

Gina Scali teaches 6th grade science and social studies. She has a BA from the University of Missouri in Kansas City and a BS and an MS from Emporia State University. She has been a teacher for 18 years. This is her first year at French. She enjoys music, dancing and exercising.

Marjorie “Midge” Schmitz is our gifted facilitator. This is her 28th year in education and her 6th year with FMS. She has a BA degree and a MSE from the University of Kansas. She enjoys attending plays and music performances. She also enjoys being with her family of four children, their spouses and her eight grandchildren. She relates that the most interesting activities in which she participates are singing and traveling the state to see her many family members.

Anne Shellenberg is our eighth grade special education resource teacher. She has a BA in German and education and a MS in special education from the University of Kansas. This is her third year teaching at French. Her hobbies include reading, writing stories, playing tennis, baking, and baking.

Caroline Seals teaches Math 6. She has a BS in elementary education from Phillips University, her MS in Middle Level Curriculum and Instruction from Appalachian State in Boone, NC, and course work towards an EdD at KU. She has taught for 28 years.. She and her husband Clyde have two children, Caitlin and Cameron. She enjoys gardening and has a special interest in environmental concerns.

Dianna Shinn teaches English 7 and English 8. . She has taught for ten years. She has a Bachelor of Science degree from KSU in interior design and a BE degree from Washburn. Her outside interests include reading, biking, and swimming. She has three children – 9-year-old twins, Sara and Lora and a 13-year old son, Scott.

Komal Singh teaches TLC 6, 7, and 8. She has a masters in education. She has taught for seventeen years. This is her second year at French. She enjoys talking to new people (making friends), traveling, drawing, painting, collage, music, and dancing.

Brad Stipcak is our vocal music director. He received a bachelor of music education from Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri and a master of music

from Kansas State University. This is his third year at French. His hobbies include playing piano and singing both at home and in church, reading, doing research on musical topics, and writing.

Laura Thomason teaches seventh grade special education. She has taught for fifteen years. She earned her BS from Missouri Valley College and received her secondary math certification from Missouri Western State College. She received an MS in special education from Emporia State University. She enjoys scrapbooking, reading, and family.

Laurie Uhler teaches seventh grade English. She received her BSE and MA from Emporia State University. She has taught for 11 years. This is her first year at French. Her outside interests include reading, acting, singing, scrapbooking, watching movies and being with her husband and children.

Bobbie Vaughn teaches Reading and Read 180. She graduated from Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas and is currently working towards a masters in reading at Emporia State University. She has taught for six years. This is her second year at French. She enjoys spending time with family, raising and showing Angus cattle, boating, water skiing, and all around farm work.

Carolyn Voth is the orchestra teacher. She has a BA from Bethel College. A teacher for fourteen years, this is her sixth year at French. Her outside interests include family time, reading, hiking, and playing in Symphony and string quartet and directing the Topeka Youth Philharmonic.

Amy Wilson teaches ELL Language Arts. She has a BS in elementary education from Saint Mary of the Plains and an MS in special education from Fort Hays State University, ELL endorsement from K-state. She has taught for 17 years. Her outside interests include reading, gardening, and spending time with family and friends. She has two children, Alison (18) and Aaron (15).

Tim Wilson is our activities coordinator. This is his eleventh year at French. Mr. Wilson has a BS from Kansas State University in elementary education science. His hobbies include playing the guitar, football, gardening and home improvement. He and his wife have a one-year old son, Max.

Kristi Woestendick teaches Social Studies & Science 8 & Science 6. This is her tenth year at French. Mrs. Woestendick has a BE in elementary education from Washburn University. She enjoys traveling, reading, going to movies, playing tennis and basketball watching KU basketball & spending time with family & friends.

Margie Young teaches Language Arts 6. She has a BFA from the University of Kansas and her teaching credentials from San Francisco State University. She has taught for eight years. This is her second year at French. She enjoys reading and pastel painting.

FRENCH FACULTY INFORMATION



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