

# New Teachers 2016-2017



**Rebekah Kelly**  
Fourth Grade Teacher

## Rebekah Kelly

Rebekah Kelly has been a long-term substitute for KayLynn Baldwin's fourth grade class. She enjoyed the challenge and grew to adore the students and staff at Rockford. That experience awakened a love of teaching children and led her to secure her teaching certificate.

Mrs. Kelly wants her students to remember her class as being a place where they felt like they were important, respected and loved. She wants it to be a place where they were excited to learn and experience new things, being happy and having good experiences.

Mrs. Kelly's hobbies include creating with the mediums of fabric and wood. She loves to piece quilts and make costumes. She has a secret passion for power tools and loves to cut, drill, rip and sand. She also has a fascination with history. In studying for her teaching certificate she realized she didn't know much about history; world, U.S., or otherwise so she decided to dive in and now can't get enough!

Rebekah is married to Aaron Kelly, both graduates of Snake River High School. Together they have three sons, Jared, Matt and Ryan and a daughter, Sophie. Jared graduated from Snake River High School in May and is now serving an LDS mission in Brazil. Matt and Ryan will be a Junior and Sophomore at the high school. Sophie is in second grade at Riverside.



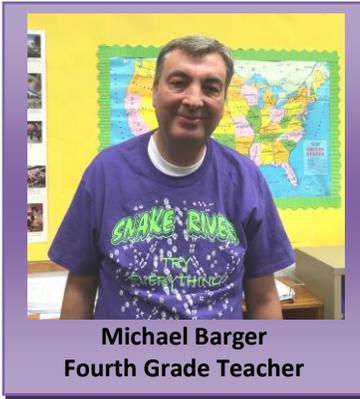
**Melanie Grant**  
Fifth Grade Teacher

## Melanie Grant

Melanie Grant began substituting in Salmon, Idaho when she realized teaching was the most rewarding career ever! She sought a degree in education attending the University of Phoenix, thus moving to Arizona. Upon completion, she taught sixth grade for three consecutive years in Queen Creek, Arizona.

Mrs. Grant wants her students to know that math is fun and that she is always there for them showing support and understanding their needs. Her goal is to know all of the names of each student at Snake River Middle School and she wants to be a part of the Snake River Family. When asked how parents and patrons can best help her in her job, she said, "Encourage your child to teach you what they learned."

Melanie's hobbies include golfing, snow-skiing, and camping. She also enjoys traveling, which she has done a great deal of, compliments of the Armed Forces. Melanie is married to Alan Grant and they have five children. She says that family is the reason why they chose to move back to Idaho. Happiness is being surrounded by family.



**Michael Barger**  
Fourth Grade Teacher

### **Michael Barger**

Michael Barger was born and raised in Pocatello. He has one older brother and two younger sisters. He is married to Susan Green Barger. She is the Director of Development at an area hospital. They have one son, Alex, who is a nurse.

Mr. Barger graduated from Highland High School and Idaho State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education. He started teaching 6<sup>th</sup> Grade in Rigby, Idaho. He then began teaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade and taught in Rigby and Menan for many years until moving to Pocatello for a brief time and finally here to Snake River where he is excited to be teaching 4<sup>th</sup> Grade!



**Sarah McKibben**  
Jr. High Math Teacher

### **Sarah McKibben**

Sarah McKibben is teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math at Snake River Junior High. She almost has her Masters in Mathematics Education from BYU. She has finished all of the coursework and will be taking the Masters exam this year.

As part of the staff at the Snake River Junior High, she is excited to learn about how technology can be used to emphasize mathematics learning goals within the classroom. She hopes that her classes provide students an opportunity to become active learners as they enter the world of math. She believes that math is a way of thinking about the world to uncover properties and solve puzzles.

The best way that parents and patrons can best help her do her job is by asking your student what they did in class and if it made sense to them. If he or she cannot describe what was learned, sit down and help the student think of some questions that could be asked to classmates or her that could help the students fill the gaps.

Mrs. McKibben is also a percussionist. In her spare time, she loves to play Rockband Wii Guitarist and cook. Sarah is originally from a smaller city in West Virginia but she has spent the last several years in Utah finishing her degrees at BYU. Her family moved to Pocatello recently and they have enjoyed the shift back to a more relaxed way of life that Idaho provides.



**Matthew and Jeni Niu**  
Jr. High Science Teacher/  
High School English Teacher

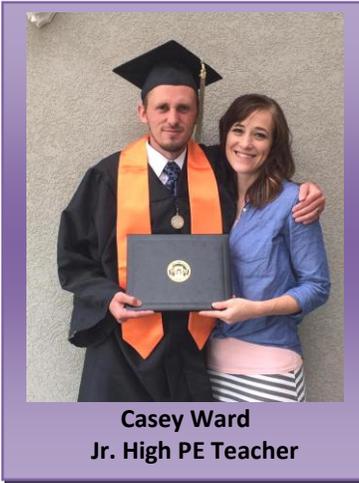
### **Matthew and Jeni Niu**

Matthew and Jeni Niu come to us from Arizona. Jeni, a native of Idaho, began her teaching career in Kimberly after graduating from Idaho State University. Matthew graduated from Boise State University in business. Upon his graduation, they moved to Matthew's home town of Coolidge, Arizona where he worked in business for about 9 years. At this time Jeni stayed home with their two boys, Anthony and Nathan, and added their daughter Jaylyn to the mix. Jeni did return to the classroom where she taught for another six years. She earned her Master's degree in TESOL during this time as well. After nine years of business, Matthew caught the teaching bug and began a Master's in education. He was able to teach while working on his degree. Jeni finished her teaching years in Arizona teaching English 101 and 102 for Central Arizona College as well as Life Skills online for BYU-Idaho. Jeni and Matthew have always wanted to return to Idaho. They are both very excited for the opportunity to work for Snake River School District and think it is the perfect place to relocate their family.

Jeni loves to read. She has an appreciation for literature and can often be found turning the pages of a new book. Matthew can usually be found at the lake or the river fishing. He may not always catch something, but he loves to try. Together we love watching movies and trying new restaurants.

Jeni will be teaching AP Literature and senior English. Her goals for this year include preparing seniors for college while incorporating project based learning. She looks forward to meeting and working closely with parents and hopes that her students will leave her class with an appreciation of literature and writing styles.

Matthew will be teaching junior high science. His goals include increasing appreciation for science while improving problem solving skills through interactive projects and research. He is excited to meet and work with a new group of students and faculty. He hopes his students will remember his class for lots of fun hands on projects.



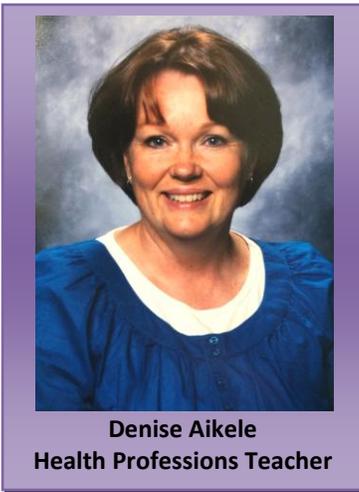
**Casey Ward**  
Jr. High PE Teacher

### Casey Ward

Snake River Junior High welcomes Casey Ward, PE Teacher. Mr. Ward recently graduated from Idaho State University in December of 2015. Casey is married to Marianne. They were married in 2012. They have two children, Bentley and Benson.

Mr. Ward's main goal is to be the best possible teacher that he can be. He wants his students to remember his class as a place where they learned new games and made new friends. He also wants them to remember that it was a place where they became more knowledgeable on how to live a more active lifestyle. Parents and patrons can help him by being patient with him as he gets settled at Snake River Jr. High.

Mr. Ward loves watching and playing sports. He also enjoys reading and spending time with his family.



**Denise Aikele**  
Health Professions Teacher

### Denise Aikele

Denise Aikele was born the eldest of eleven children and grew up in Firth, Idaho. She always wanted to be a nurse, and that dream came true when she graduated from college as a Registered Nurse. She has practiced for over 40 years in many nursing venues. One of her favorites was implementing and teaching the Health Profession classes for 18 years at Snake River High School. She retired from that position in 2013.

Mrs. Aikele has worked for Idaho State University in their health professions area for 15 years and continues to do so, along with functioning as the Medicaid Nurse for the Snake River School District.

Denise met her husband, Kurt, on a blind date and was married to him until his death in 2012. Together they have 5 children and 15 grandchildren, whom she adores and loves spending time with. They are her favorite past time activity. She also enjoys working in her yard and home, traveling, and quilting.

Mrs. Aikele is excited to work with the students of Snake River High School in the Health Professions Program again. She loves to teach about her love and passion, feel exhilarated when she sees the students get excited about their possibilities, and feels fulfilled when she sees her former students become successful in the medical field. She is looking forward to this next year.



**Haiden Siefert**  
Health Professions Teacher

### Haiden Siefert

Haiden Siefert is working as a health professions instructor teaching Sports Medicine and Athletic Training at the high school. Haiden graduated from Weber State University with her Bachelors in Athletic Training and is currently enrolled in the Masters Program in Athletic Administration at Idaho State University.

Her goal as a teacher is to help her students find their passion for learning and working. She wants to help students prepare for the college or technical college learning environment and if sports medicine is their choice of study, she would love to help them succeed and pursue their dream careers. We asked her what she hoped her students will most remember about her classroom. Haiden said, "I want students to remember the wonderful aspects of sports medicine." She hopes they will also learn to work together as students to help each other succeed as well.

Haiden has been married for two years to her husband, Nate Slagowski and they have lived in Pocatello for three years. They are both currently enrolled in graduate school at ISU and they both also work 40 hours a week. Haiden loves working out at the gym, camping, going to Real

Salt Lake soccer games, shipping for anything, and renovating homes and RV's. During the summer, they love to relax and travel to new parts of the world.



**Tim Goodworth**  
High School Art Teacher

**Tim Goodworth**

Tim has been working professionally in the field of art for the past 20 years, the last 8 of which have been spent as an in-house artist for Blackfoot Brass/ Rocky Mountain Hardware. He’s an all-around artist and is just as comfortable sculpting as he is painting or drawing. Tim has also served the past several years as Superintendent of Fine Arts at the Eastern Idaho State Fair. Tim’s work has been showcased in art galleries in Jackson Hole, WY, and can be seen throughout the world, including work done by Rocky Mountain Hardware in several LDS Temples (most recently, the Provo City Center Temple). He has been able to work in many different areas of art including as a professional wildlife/landscape painter, children’s book illustrator, sculptor, pattern maker and, most importantly, father. Tim and his wife, Heather, live in Shelley (don’t worry, he won’t sabotage the Panthers) with their four beautiful children – his greatest works of art. Tim is excited to have the opportunity to share what he’s learned in his work experience with budding artists and believes we were all born to be creators of our own art. Tim’s educational background has really helped him to see the beauty in all kinds of artwork, from traditional art to more modern, there is beauty to be found and created. He looks forward to sharing what he has learned with the SRHS community, and learning from them in return.



**Jenifer Haley**  
Special Education Teacher

**Jenifer Haley**

Snake River High School welcomes Jenifer Haley, Science Teacher. Mrs. Haley graduated from Northwest Nazarene University in 2000.

Jenifer’s main goal is to help students learn through real life-experienced projects. She hopes that students will be able to work together to accomplish realistic projects. Parents and patrons can help her by staying in touch, stopping by, call or emailing her.

Mrs. Haley loves to garden, read, and hunt. She has two children; a son, who is in fourth grade, and a daughter, who is in first grade. Her husband works at the Naval Reactors Facility.



**Kevin Curtis**  
Riverside Special Education  
Teacher

**Kevin Curtis**

Kevin Curtis is a Special Education Teacher at Riverside Elementary. He also is the head baseball coach and an assistant football coach for the high school. He taught Special Education and coached in Arizona before he came to Snake River.

As part of the staff at the Riverside Elementary, he is excited to engage students in life-learning activities. He hopes that a student will say, “I learned academics are fun!” He believes that parents are partners in the educational development of their student.

Kevin recently married Sheri Lim of Snake River. They have six children and seven grandchildren. He likes to golf, nature hike, baseball, football, and travel.



**Angela Parkinson**  
Speech Language Pathologist

**Angela Parkinson**

Angela Winder Parkinson is a native of the Snake River area who graduated with her masters in Speech Language Pathology from Idaho State University in 2016. She enjoys playing music (piano, violin, etc.) and spending time outdoors with her husband, Neil. As a Speech Therapist she hopes that all the children she serves leave therapy with more confidence in their speech and in themselves.



**Jeb Harrison**  
High School Social Studies  
Teacher

### **Jeb Harrison**

Jeb Harrison will be teaching Social Studies at Snake River High School this year along with being the new Head Football Coach and Leadership Advisor. Jeb graduated from Idaho State University and has taught at both Pocatello and Century High Schools before coming here.

Mr. Harrison is excited for the great things that are ahead for himself and his family. He is excited to be back in the Snake River Community. It is something that he has thought about for a long time and it feels like home. He hopes that the students will remember that seeing the world from the other person's point of view is usually a good place to start. Jeb said that he would love to have as many community members continue to come out to the games and cheer their heart out for the Panthers!

Jeb's hobbies include playing golf with his sons, football, and spending time with friends and family. Jeb and his wife, Amber, are both alumni of Snake River High School and they have a lot of roots here. It has been extremely fun so far this year to be teaching across the hall from his wife and it didn't take too much to convince their boys, Anthony and Titan, to become Panthers. Most of all, they love being together and doing what they love, being outdoors, playing games, and trying new things.



**Whitney Thompson**  
High School English Teacher

### **Whitney Thompson**

Whitney Thompson was born and raised right here in Blackfoot, Idaho to Darrin and Shawnee Dance. She attended and graduated from Snake River High School in 2011 and then went on to further her education at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. After only a semester at USU, she decided to come back home and marry a potato farmer from Pingree. She then continued the remainder of her schooling at Idaho State University, where she will be graduating from this December. Whitney is currently doing her student teaching as an English teacher at Snake River High School, as well as teaching two classes as a part-time teacher. She is looking forward to this semester and teaching at her very own alma mater.



**Vaneen Kohler**  
Elementary Counselor

### **Vaneen Kohler**

Vaneen went back to school after 18 years off to have a family and obtained her masters in marriage, family and couples counseling in 2015. She has recently been working in Pocatello for MK Place, which is an adolescent rehab.

Vaneen loves and appreciates all kinds of art, but most especially paintings. She is interested in learning to paint and will pursue that in her extra time over the next several years. She enjoys reading, crocheting and cross stitch.

We asked her what she hoped her students will most remember about her. Vaneen said, "I want students to feel heard, understood, hopeful and to be able to see their options." When asked about her goals, she said, "I would like to be a presence for the kids during their activities such as lunch and recess. I would like them to know who I am and what I do." Parents and patrons can help her do her job. "I would like to get feedback on behavior's progress and performance of the students."

Together, Vaneen and her husband have six children; two have graduated from high school and are pursuing careers, one of them is currently serving in the Air Force, and they have four in school ranging from first grade to high school senior. Her family has lived in Bingham County for 21 years, and both her and her husband grew up in Bingham County.