

# MEDALLION OF EXCELLENCE

## **Prepared Graduates**

**Dr. Dean Braughton**  
**Principal, CY Middle School**

“Dean had a major role in the planning and design of CY Middle School. Our new facility incorporates career exploration opportunities for students as much as the regular curriculum subjects of math, science, language arts and social studies. ... Students then learn the importance of core subjects and how they relate to ‘real world’ careers.” -- Debbie Bovie

“Without a doubt, Dean has spent his career building a school system that prepares students for careers, post-secondary education and life. ... [A] key concept that Dr. Braughton pushed from the curricular standpoint was exploratory courses. ... Students can develop a vision of what they want to do or become and then, with the support of their families, schools and with their internal drive, achieve their goals.” -- Mike Jennings

**Mary Beth Peden**  
**Instructional Facilitator, Natrona County High School**

“As co-facilitator for the student exchange with sister city Hsichih, Taiwan, she traveled with student delegations on two occasions to Taiwan and has hosted Taiwanese student groups who have visited Wyoming. She also wrote National Endowment for the Humanities grants so students could travel to Asia and Russia. She has always believed that students need to know as much as possible about their world outside of Wyoming.” - Chris Bolender

“For over three decades, whether teaching Honors or IB students, at-risk or summer school students, Mary Beth’s empathetic, yet demanding, classroom instruction has prepared graduates to become active and positive members of society. ... There is hope for the future of democracy, and America as a whole, because of educators like Mary Beth Peden.” -- Jeff Jelskey

**Shawn Weis**  
**Music Teacher and Band Director, Natrona County High School**

“He is supportive while maintain quite high expectations. His performing ensembles are always of high quality. ... Starting weeks prior to the start of school in the fall, moving from the end of marching band season into concert season and basketball pep bands then to the spring festival season, musical, etc., the work of the band program at NCHS is relentless.” -- Gregory Paulson

“He is an incredible musician with talent galore and such a phenomenal teacher, which is not always an easy combination to find. ... His bands have received ‘superior’ ratings at every festival and contest that he has been a part of, as well as others honors received. The jazz band has been invited to play at the North Texas Jazz Festival, which only happens by audition and invitation, and at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Honors such as these do not happen to run-of-the-mill, average, ordinary teachers but only those who demonstrate excellence on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis.” -- Steve Grussendorf,

**Alan Vandeventer**  
**Counselor, Natrona County High School**

“He involves parents, teachers, administrators, and any other significant individuals that will assist students in staying in school and working toward graduation.” -- Margo Nokes

“Alan does more than is called of him and still tries to push himself even farther. Anytime I see him in the halls, he is talking to someone, running papers somewhere, and getting things ready for his students.” -- Caleb Bunce

**Wendy Pollock**  
**Ag/Multimedia Teacher, CY Junior High**

“She possesses a wonderful blend of ‘care and yet no nonsense allowed’ in the classroom. Kids respond well to instruction and enjoy being part of class or cocurricular activity”. -- Dr. Dean Braughton

“Wendy has been a very influential member of our exploratory/elective restructuring at CY Junior High School. She has spent countless hours researching and reflecting on middle level best practice around professional pathways and how to connect student learning to later life.” -- Mike Jennings