

At DuPage High School District 88, nearly 50 percent of the student population is Low Income, and nearly 50 percent is Hispanic. While some teachers and department heads might be intimidated and overwhelmed by those demographics, Mary Barney meets them head on and rises to the challenge with enthusiasm and passion. Mary joined District 88's Willowbrook High School in 2012 as the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department Head and teaches online consumer management, business law, public speaking and communication technology. Her care for and dedication to students was instantly apparent, and she immediately got to work to help build futures for our pupils and accomplish our mission of working for the continuous improvement of student achievement. Mary has 25 years of teaching experience and earned her master's degrees in Education Leadership and Education/Curriculum and Instruction. With Mary, "no" is an unacceptable answer – it's just "not yet." When she sees a gap we could be filling with opportunities for kids, she researches it and proposes it with tenacity – she never gives up and never quits.

When Mary started at Willowbrook in 2012, only 10 students participated in dual credit, which is an opportunity for students to take college-level classes and save money on college tuition while in high school. This past school year (2019-20), nearly 1,000 students received dual credits under Mary's leadership, which resulted in almost \$500,000 in tuition savings for those young adults. Mary and her CTE staff continue to partner with College of DuPage (COD) to provide 20 dual-credit courses, and Mary has helped 12 CTE teachers become approved as Adjunct Professors with COD. Along with dual credits, Mary has guided her staff to implement 22 career certificates as well. More than 4,000 students have obtained certificates under Mary's guidance, which enables them to begin a career right out of high school in the areas of early childcare, culinary arts, automotive and HVAC. In all, more than \$4 million has been saved/earned by about 9,500 Willowbrook students since 2013 in CTE dual credits, university credits and certifications. In 2013, Mary also worked with her colleagues to write a Project Lead The Way grant, which allowed Willowbrook to offer the Project Lead The Way Engineering Program for pupils. Mary goes above and beyond in her role as a classroom teacher and a department head and has:

- Served on a CTE Roundtable in Will County and DuPage County
- Led CTE-related workshops
- Enrolled in university courses outside of her typical wheelhouse
- Presented during a COD/District 88 Dual-Credit Symposium
- Served as a pilot instructor and helped with curriculum development for the first District 88 online consumer management course
- Served on the COD Paralegal Advisory Board and Early Childhood Advisory Board

When you picture what you want in an ideal teacher and department head, Mary truly embodies each characteristic and quality. Her No. 1 priority is to empower each student to reach his or her potential and to help her students learn skills to discover a career they will enjoy, to develop emotional intelligence and empathy and to engage in lifelong learning. As a department head, Mary leads by example, modeling the best practices she encourages her staff members to embrace. She promotes their own creativity and continuously collaborates with her peers and shares her knowledge and experiences to do everything possible for our students, families and communities.

Respectfully,



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