

Valley View School

**Mandy Hines – Pre-K Special Education Teacher**

Mandy Hines has accepted the position of Pre-K Special Education Teacher at Valley View School. She received her undergraduate degree in English and Early Childhood Education from the University of Cincinnati and a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education from San Francisco State University. Mandy recently completed coursework at Eastern Connecticut State University to earn her cross-endorsement in Integrated Special Education Early Childhood. She has taught elementary school in Cincinnati, Houston, San Francisco, and most recently as the long term substitute in Pre-K at Valley View School. Mandy is thrilled to join Portland Public Schools and the strong learning community at Valley View School. She would like every child in her classroom to feel valued and connected to the school community. Mandy spends her weekends enjoying the outdoors with her two children, Holden (8) and Callahan (6) and her husband Brendan. She also enjoys hiking, biking, running and her yoga practice.

**Julie French – Art Teacher**

Julie French is the new Art teacher at Valley View School. Julie received a B.A. in Studio Arts/Graphic Design from SCSU and her Art Teacher certification from the Alternate Route to Certification program. Julie has been teaching young artists from Pre-K through grade12 for the last five years. She loves making art, photography, gardening and spending time with her husband and three children.

**LauraLee Denler - Tutor**

LauraLee Denler is excited to serve as a part-time Language Arts and Math tutor at the Valley View School. She earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Education from Eastern Connecticut State University. Her passion and commitments have been supporting children and adults in reaching their full potential. She has had the privilege of working in the East Hampton school district as an Interventionist for nearly seven years. Also, as a former owner and operator of a fitness center she worked with adults training and inspiring them to participate in triathlons along with daily goal setting. She has volunteered as an EMT and coached youth basketball. LauraLee is looking forward to a wonderful year of motivating and monitoring students for academic success.

Gildersleeve School

**Jessica Oslander - Special Education Teacher**

Jessica Oslander has had 4 years of experience working with children of all ages. She just completed her Master's Program in Special Education from Central Connecticut State University. She also has a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Western Connecticut State University. While going to school full time for the last two years, Miss Oslander worked as a paraprofessional working with students with varying disabilities in fourth and second grade. Before that, she was a preschool teacher for a multi-aged group in a private preschool. This past semester she completed her student teaching experiences in Meriden working with first and fourth grade students, and then at Ben Bronz Academy in West Hartford working with students from fourth to eleventh grade. At both placements, she was able to grow and learn from each school as an educator. Miss Oslander is very excited to be joining the Gildersleeve team in Portland as the Third Grade Special Education Teacher. Miss Oslander is very interested in teaching mindfulness and positive goal setting for her students and tries to create a positive atmosphere where ever she goes. In her down time, she enjoys taking her dog Duke for runs or hikes, singing, going to the gym, and spending time with her family and friends.

**Stephanie Dominguez - Paraprofessional**

Stefanie Dominguez will be joining the Gildersleeve community as a paraprofessional in second grade. She previously student taught in second grade at GS and is very excited to be back! Stefanie graduated from Eastern Connecticut State University in May with her Bachelors in Communication and Early Childhood Education. She hopes to one day be a special education teacher in a self-contained or

hospital setting! Stefanie loves learning new languages - she wrote her thesis on Dual Language Learners - and is currently working on learning American Sign Language! If she weren't in the education field, though, she would definitely be making movies with Disney!

#### **Jennifer Flynn – Paraprofessional**

Jennifer Flynn is excited to join the Gildersleeve team as a paraprofessional. Jennifer has previously worked with young adults and teens with disabilities in a special program at Big Y Supermarkets. She also worked in the retail and customer service business for over 18 years with experience in human resources, training, horticulture, hiring, and management. Jennifer has three sports enthused daughters ages, 12, 11 and 5, as well as a tag-along sports watching husband. When she is not taxing around to soccer and swim practices, she also dabbles in refinishing furniture and writing poetry. Jennifer and her family relocated back to Connecticut from the Florida Keys/Wellington Florida area after 6 years, “nothing beats the New England School systems!”

#### **Nancy Nadolski – Paraprofessional**

Nancy Nadolski joins the Gildersleeve school team as a paraprofessional. Nancy spent the last two years as a paraprofessional at Glastonbury’s Nayaug School. Earlier in her career, she worked as a Senior Security Analyst for Cigna and as a Senior Auditor at Arthur Andersen LLP. Nancy earned both a B.S. in Business Administration, Accounting and a MBA from the University of Connecticut. Nancy is a life-long Connecticut resident, an avid reader and UConn Huskies fan. Nancy has lived in Portland for the last 14 years with her husband Mike and their three children, Julia, Nathan and Ryan.

### **Brownstone Intermediate School**

#### **Jennifer Martinez - Paraprofessional**

Jennifer Martinez is a new paraprofessional at Brownstone Intermediate School. She has a Master’s Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Lesley University, and a Bachelors of Arts from UMass-Amherst. For the past two years she been tutoring in East Hampton and Wethersfield. Prior to that Jenn was a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Hanscom Middle School on Hanscom AFB, MA. Jenn loves helping students reach their goals and making sure they feel safe and part of the school community. In her spare time she enjoys traveling with her family, gardening, playing piano and swimming. She’s looking forward to being part of Portland Public Schools.

#### **Julia O’Neill Correira – Paraprofessional**

Julia O’Neill Correira is a paraprofessional at Brownstone Intermediate School. She studied art and communication at Eastern Connecticut State University and worked teaching art classes to children for three years after graduating. She spends her free time gardening and training her border collie.

### **Middle School**

#### **Christina Meyer, RN**

Christina Meyer will joining the nursing staff this fall at the Middle and High Schools. Christina has been a registered nurse for nine years and earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing from Central Connecticut State University in 2011. Christina began her nursing career at Hartford Hospital and has spent the past four years as a school nurse working with students ranging from preschool through high school. Christina has been accepted to graduate school at the University of Saint Joseph and will begin classes next fall to pursue her Master’s degree in nursing. When she is not working, Christina enjoys spending time with her husband and two young sons.

### **High School**

#### **Kathryn Bohannon - Social Worker**

Kate Bohannon is excited to take on the role of school social worker for Portland secondary schools beginning this fall! She earned her undergraduate degree in English from Saint Michael’s College in Colchester, Vermont. After working as a paraeducator, Kate decided to pursue her Master’s degree in Social

Work from the University of Vermont. While she loved Vermont, she found herself wanting to move back to Connecticut to be closer to her family and the beach. She began her social work career working for two years as the Youth Services clinician for the town of Mansfield, Connecticut. For the past three years she has worked as a clinician for the Academy at Mount Saint John, a special education school for middle school and high school boys. In addition to her role as clinician, Kate took on a leadership role with her co-workers, facilitated state-testing, and was the basketball coach. Kate uses a strengths-based, solution-focused practice to help her students process their stressors so that they are able to access their education. She is excited to join the Portland school community and is looking forward to establishing herself as a positive and supportive presence in the middle and high schools. In her free time, Kate enjoys staying active through running, hiking, and playing sports with her favorite adventure partner, her therapy dog Charlie.

### **Robert Jones - English**

Portland native Robert Jones is beginning his first year of teaching English at Portland High School after a lengthy career in journalism and print/graphic production management. Robert graduated PHS in 1993 and earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Connecticut in 1997 and became a reporter and editor for the Middletown Press. In the years that followed, Robert transitioned to a career in print and graphics production at a shoreline pre-media company before pursuing a career in education. This past spring, Robert completed his student teaching at Bacon Academy in Colchester and earned his master's degree in Education from Central Connecticut State University. He also taught at John Winthrop Middle School in Deep River as a long-term substitute this year. Robert is a member of the Kappa Delta Pi honor society at CCSU and the Connecticut chapter of the Council of Teachers of English. Robert and his wife Carol live in Portland and have an eight-year-old daughter, Marilyn and a six-year-old son, Bobby. In his free time, Robert enjoys baseball, basketball and music.

### **John Bourque – English**

John Bourque is a newly hired English teacher at Portland High School. He will be teaching AP Language and Composition and Senior English. John obtained a bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut with a double major in English and History. He has also completed the MAT program at Central Connecticut State University to earn a teaching certificate and master's degree. As a writing tutor, John has helped high school and college students from across the country improve their writing. Within his classroom, there is a focus on creating a classroom community, encouraging a growth mindset, building critical thinking skills, and improving reading and writing. Outside of the classroom, John enjoys writing fiction, yoga, disc golf, and spending time with family.

### **Lisa Bouchard – Special Education**

Lisa Bouchard is the new Special Education teacher at Portland High School. Lisa has an undergraduate degree in journalism from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a Master of Arts in Teaching in Special Education from Liberty University. Prior to entering the field of education, Lisa held roles in sales and marketing for both nonprofit and corporate organizations. Outside of the classroom, Lisa enjoys reading, kickboxing, music and traveling. She also loves hiking with her husband and Siberian husky, named Takaani. She is looking forward to sharing her passion for teaching with the Portland community!

### **Chris Norwich**

Chris Norwich is the latest teacher for Portland High School's technology and engineering education department. Chris has received his Bachelor of Science degree from Central Connecticut State University in technology and engineering education this past spring after student teaching at John F. Kennedy Middle School in Southington and Lyman Hall High School in Wallingford. In his coursework, Chris has bolstered his proficiency in engineering design and STEM laboratory practices. Aside from studying tech ed, Chris was an active member of CCSU's band program, serving as a student leader during his junior and senior years. Chris has played tuba for thirteen years and continues to this day. Chris is a lifetime resident of Meriden and lives with his fiancé Matthew, and his two birds Harris and Calcifer. At home, Chris enjoys woodworking, 3d design, gardening, sewing, and embroidery.

**Celine Afolabi - Paraprofessional**

Celine Afolabi is a paraprofessional at Portland High School, she has a B.Sc. degree in Management. She previously worked as a substitute teacher/paraprofessional in Portland Public School and Manchester Public School district. She is currently studying to acquire her M.Ed. in Special Education and will love to become a special education teacher in the future. She loves to travel, read books and cook.

**Carolyn Kemp - Paraprofessional**

Carolyn Kemp has been hired as a Paraprofessional at Portland High School. Carolyn is currently attending CCSU for a Masters/Teaching Certificate in Special Education. Carolyn previously worked at Newington Public Schools as a Special Education Tutor. Carolyn lives in Newington with her family. Carolyn is a black belt in karate and enjoys running, swimming, and hiking.