



Ohio Teacher OF THE YEAR

State Board District 1 Tonya Thorbahn

Tonya Thorbahn is an intervention specialist at Bigelow Hill Intermediate in Findlay City Schools. She has been teaching for 12 years, educating students with special needs in third, fourth and fifth grades. Tonya is passionate about student-centered learning and strives to help her students find their passions. Her students have raised money for local charities, connected with professional athletes, designed video games and filmed their own cooking shows.

Tonya is consistently a leader among her peers at Bigelow Hill Intermediate. She secured funding and designed a makerspace for Bigelow Hill, created and advises First Lego League and Wonder Workshop robotics teams, and organized the “Pasta Palooza,” a family dinner. Because of collaboration between Tonya and her colleagues, Bigelow Hill qualifies as one of six STEAM schools in the state.

Tonya’s service to Findlay City Schools has resulted in long-lasting community partnerships. Working with G.S.W. Manufacturing and the Findlay Village Mall, Tonya executed a district wide Cardboard Challenge. Her relationship with One Energy resulted in funding for a summer Lego robotics camp attended by 25 students. Tonya has been recognized as the district’s STEM Teacher of the Year and served on Ignition and Instructional Incubator initiatives. Tonya also is an adjunct professor for the University of Findlay and serves on the Educational Advisory Council.

She holds a bachelor of science and master of arts in education from the University of Findlay. She currently is pursuing an additional master’s degree from Western Governors University in learning and technology.