



## AMBER VLASNIK 2017 NEBRASKA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**Amber Vlasnik**, has taught math at Lincoln High since 2011. Prior to that, she taught at Lincoln Southeast High School in Lincoln and Albright Middle School in Houston, Texas. In addition to her classroom experience, Amber has served as the Lincoln High Math Department Chair and Instructional Team Leader, and a Noyce Master Teaching Fellow. Amber is a seven-year veteran teacher who earned a Bachelor's Degree (Magna Cum Laude) from the University of Nebraska-Kearney and a Master's Degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). She is currently pursuing a Doctoral Degree in Educational Studies from UNL with an emphasis in Teacher Professional Development.

A panel of Nebraska educators selected Amber as the 2017 Nebraska Teacher of the Year. The Teacher of the Year program recognizes the contributions of classroom teachers who are exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled and who have the ability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn.

Amber and the Awards of Excellence recipients were honored by the State Board of Education at a luncheon in November.

### AMBER VLASNIK

Lincoln High School  
2229 J Street  
Lincoln, NE 68516

School: (402) 436-1301  
Mobile: (402) 525-7465

[avlasni@lps.org](mailto:avlasni@lps.org)



### QUOTES FROM AMBER

“ Teachers grow as professionals when they are given opportunities to come alongside each other to improve student learning. ”

“ Although teaching can be difficult at times, I have a network of professionals who bring a wealth of ideas and knowledge to the classroom. Together, we are engaging students in meaningful learning and are helping them to realize their potential. ”

“ I believe that some of my greatest contributions to the teaching and learning in Nebraska have been through the teachers I have been able to influence. ”

### SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

- Nebraska Department of Education
- Nebraska State Board of Education
- Data Recognition Corporation (DRC)
- BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska
- Nebraska Association of School Boards
- Nebraska Council of School Administrators
- Nebraska Parent Teacher Association
- Nebraska State Education Association
- Bakers Candies, Inc.
- Nebraska Corn Board

### COMMUNITY PARTNER

Channel 10/11

*The National Teacher of the Year Program run by the Council of Chief State School Officers, presented by Voya Financial.*



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### AMBER VLASNIK

Mathematics  
Instructional Coach/Teacher  
Lincoln High School  
Lincoln, Nebraska

# WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS



## BUILDING POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

In order to reach their academic potential, students need to feel safe, welcome, and valued. Teachers have the power to create learning environments that embody these characteristics. During this workshop, we will explore the power of relationships. Attendees will experience tangible examples of how to build relationships with students.



## I'M TEACHING IT BUT ARE THEY LEARNING IT? USING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TO GUIDE INSTRUCTION

The NCTM publication *Principles to Actions* states that formative assessment is an essential component of teaching and learning. Giving students opportunities to demonstrate their understanding throughout a lesson not only makes the material more engaging, but this practice also enables teachers to adjust instruction continually to meet student needs. In this session, teachers will be challenged to think beyond their direct instruction and to really question student learning and understanding. Educators will leave with practical methods of formative assessment that can be easily implemented in their classrooms.

## MAXIMIZING THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

When teachers collaborate to create engaging learning tasks, students thrive. Yet many professional learning communities become times to simply schedule daily lessons, share materials, and fill out forms. Can that time be used for something more? In this workshop, we will experience what professional learning communities could look like if teachers use the time to discuss instruction, student learning, and how to use data to inform and adjust instruction.



## TURNING WALLS TO GLASS: HOW TO USE OBSERVATION TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION

High quality instruction cannot and should not be done in isolation. As educators, our best learning can happen when we open our classrooms up and welcome others in. Welcoming feedback and embracing a growth mindset about our own professional practice leads to improved instruction, which ultimately improves student achievement. In this session, we will dig into practical ways to incorporate observation in our departments and schools.