

2021 CTE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

LAUREN APPELHANS

Family & Consumer Sciences

Greeley Central High School

Greeley, CO

The commitment of Lauren Appelhans to Career & Technical Education (CTE) goes above and beyond your average teacher. She is dedicated to discovering all there is to know about CTE and passes along that knowledge to both students and other teachers. She attends conferences regularly, and Lauren has also served on both the CACTE and CATFACS Boards in different roles, including her current role as CATFACS president. Additionally, Lauren has participated in writing state-wide Scope and Sequences for multiple Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) classes, as well as creating an entire class of Theater/Costume design, which she shared with FCS teachers across the state. She advocates for CTE/FCS by talking to legislators and participating in discussions regarding funding, what we teach in our classes, as well as how CTE is a complex curriculum that pushes students to succeed.

As Central's CTE department chair, Lauren has worked to learn about all the programs in our CTE department at Greeley Central HS to best serve the team. This past year, when presented with the opportunity to advocate for the CTE department to gain new classrooms, Lauren jumped right in. She attended all bond meetings, created formal proposals including current research and statistics and advocated for the need to have innovative spaces in CTE. Due to her passion and commitment to our department, she managed to secure new rooms for Business as well as FCS, giving us the tools to teach industry level skills in classrooms that match.

If you meet Lauren and ask her what she does, her passion pours out of her. She explains how FCS is a program that teaches students life skills and gives students opportunities to explore their future careers while still having the support of teachers. As soon as someone finishes talking to Lauren, they immediately want to go back to high school and sign up for her classes because of the exhilarating manner in which she describes FCS!

Lauren is not only fiercely committed to CTE, she is even more committed to her students. She supports students in their day-to-day classes, taking time for teachable moments about anything from mindfulness to organization. Lauren takes students who hate school and turns them into passionate classroom participants. This past year she was given a Fashion class composed of mostly males who were not too excited about being in Fashion and she was able to get them to engage in the content. Students constructed masks and hoodies and proudly wore them around the school. Central has many students who bring different experiences/backgrounds to the classroom; Lauren continues to not only respect those differences but help students thrive with them. She successfully guides coworkers through differentiating and accommodating curriculum to help students in all content areas.

This past year presented teachers with countless challenges, but Lauren rose to the occasion and was beyond successful. Through many quarantines, Lauren never stopped teaching. She adopted synchronous teaching, helping students be successful even when they couldn't attend school in person, and also found many different technologies to help keep students engaged and pushing through to meet goals. Her classes continued to be fun and dynamic, while pushing students to learn valuable skills and have academic rigor.

Now Lauren may be an incredible CTE advocate, coworker, and teacher, but that is not all it takes to be worthy of being CTE Teacher of the Year. She is also an incredible person. Her passion for her career bubbles over into her personal life. Lauren is immensely supportive of each person she meets, whether that be through sewing and donating masks, tailoring clothes for friends and coworkers, providing food to people in need or simply being a supportive friend. Lauren continues to prove that she is a thoughtful, kind, and supportive person.

Lauren Appelhans has demonstrated incredible passion and dedication to Career & Technical Education throughout her career, which makes her a deserving recipient of the CACTE CTE Teacher of the Year Award! Congratulations, Lauren!