

# ‘It’s an evolutionary time in education’

## Virtual Academy at Randolph teacher makes difference in public school

**Amy Dunn**

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Having grown up in a family of educators, Lane Vecellio got a behind-the-scenes view of the steady commitment of teachers. She had a deep passion for children and improving our society through them. “I thought, children are our future so that’s the best way I can help out,” she said. Inspired by her family, she became a teacher. Now a teacher at the Virtual Academy at Randolph, she’s making a difference in the lives of children.

### Starting the journey as a teacher

Vecellio got her bachelor’s degree in elementary education in the spring of 2016 and became a first-grade teacher that August. She also volunteered in ways that would help her grow as a teacher.

A teacher’s role can be exhausting. There are so many students in one classroom, and it is stressful trying to give each one an individualized education while helping them reach their potential. Throughout one day, teachers make many decisions. They need to meet all the requirements and stay in line with the standards of the state, while meeting students’ needs. Planning and achieving a good balance are challenges, especially for new teachers.

Starting out as a teacher, it was difficult to adapt to these demands.

Vecellio says you have to find out how to succeed and you learn to balance, multi-task and do the work as you’re able to. Beginning teachers have to find out how they can get things done in a way that works for them and get into a pattern.

She feels that kids’ education needs to be engaging, especially for young children. She needed to find various ways to keep them very invested, making their education applicable to them.



**At the end of the 2021-22 school year, Virtual Academy at Randolph teacher Lane Vecellio and others at the school had an event with a beach theme. They were able to tell students goodbye while ushering in the summer.**

VIRTUAL ACADEMY AT RANDOLPH

That way, they will more likely remember what they learned and practice it in real-world situations.

In addition to being learners, Vecellio says children should be “reflective of the world around them.” With her role in education, she wants to help them along the way so they can have a positive impact on society.

### Switching to virtual education

She started teaching virtually in the 2020-21 school year. The next school

year, 2021-22, a teaching position was available in the Virtual Academy at Randolph.

She got the job of teaching a combination class of kindergarteners and first-graders at the Virtual Academy. She taught writing, reading, social studies, math and science. In small groups, she also taught fundamentals such as letters, sounds and how to read. It was her sixth year as an educator, and her first time of teaching in

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# Vecellio

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Randolph County. She was honored with the Teacher of the Year award for the Virtual Academy at Randolph.

"I definitely went through my ups and downs with trying to take everything I learned (from) in-person teaching and switching it to virtual," said Vecellio.

Transitioning to virtual teaching from in-person was challenging, but it helped her to be innovative and was very rewarding. Instead of looking at what worked well with traditional in-person teaching, she had to start with a fresh outlook to see what would be successful with virtual education. That opened up a creative opportunity for her. She did a lot of research and tried different things.

This new way of using technology for education has given more opportunities to students as well. They have access to more resources than what would be

available in the classroom.

With virtual learning, Vecellio said she's been able to individualize her teaching more. Through technology, she can see how well students are doing in real time and address problems sooner than with in-person learning. This is beneficial particularly for the younger students who are learning reading and writing. They don't have to handle transition times or in-person issues like waiting for a particular class to deal with a problem. She has short periods of time in which she can give students one-on-one help.

She feels like she now has more communication with students' families, which helps her understand students' needs and support them more. Instead of sporadic communication with parents like it is with in-person learning, she was able to be in contact with them daily. Communication helps ensure that students meet her expectations and that she's aware if there's something that's not working.

Parents use the communication platform a lot. "I think this is the first year

I've been able to speak to almost every parent within a couple of days ... and that hardly ever happens," Vecellio said.

Although teaching can be demanding and tiresome, it's rewarding to feel like the students are your family and you're a part of their families. Vecellio says that drives you to keep perfecting the practice as an educator.

## **Making public education better during this evolutionary time**

Having gotten her master's in school administration last year, she wanted to gain leadership experience helping other teachers. The Virtual Academy had limited staff, so in addition to teaching, she helped with leadership on the elementary-school and middle-school levels. She assisted with things such as putting the curriculum together, problem-solving and forming course materials. She was an advocate for the staff and teachers, trying to improve things by obtaining resources and planning for the next year.

"I think it's an evolutionary time in

education and so my goal is to be a part of that evolution and make our public education system better," said Vecellio.

She has made many good connections with coworkers. Although it's hard being an educator, the teachers bond with each other, working together to improve things. "They always say, 'It takes a village to raise a child.' Well, it takes a village to educate them as well," said Vecellio.

Vecellio is glad to be part of the hard-working staff at the Virtual Academy, and she plans to keep teaching there. She wants to make better use of the technology and continue making strong bonds with the kids and their parents, which will help students grow.

She hopes to eventually work in school administration, providing more support for teachers to improve their ability to help students.

*Amy Dunn writes people profiles. Know someone in Randolph County who is making an impact or has an interesting story? Email suggestions to [adunn@courier-tribune.com](mailto:adunn@courier-tribune.com).*