

RSD TEAM SPOTLIGHT KELLY MULLINS



About Kelly

Since 2014, teacher Kelly Mullins has been the director of bands and choirs at Obsidian Middle School. Her music program thrives with over 210 students, serving more than 30 percent of the school's total population. Kelly's student's have participated in local and state honor bands and choirs, including all-state band and all-state choir. The Obsidian Middle School music program participates actively in district and state music events including the Oregon State University band festival and the North Albany Middle School jazz festival. Kelly also teaches flute privately throughout Central Oregon with an active studio.

Kelly graduated in 2013 with a Master of Music in Music Education from the University of Oregon. After graduating, Kelly taught in Plummer, Idaho which included pk-6 general music, middle school band and 9-12 music appreciation.

In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Kelly was recently named the new board president of the Central Oregon Youth Orchestra (COYO). The organization is a regional youth orchestra program educating and inspiring young musicians through exceptional ensemble training and performance opportunities.

What do you find most rewarding about your job?

The most rewarding thing about my job is making music with our students. Our students at Obsidian are incredibly kind, resourceful, and driven. When I am able to harness the students' energy into making music at high levels, the product can be incredible.



Think of your favorite song, now think of that one part in that song that always gets you, that part of the song that always gives you goose pimples on your arm every time you hear

it. That's called an aesthetic response. Generally, we think of those aesthetic responses only happening when we listen to professional musicians, but that's not the case at Obsidian. At Obsidian, our student musicians make incredible music at high levels that elicit strong aesthetic responses from our listeners. Because our students are so kind, resourceful, and driven, they have this amazing ability to create music that is endlessly powerful.

What are you proudest of at this point in your career?

I am so proud to be a music educator at Obsidian. We continue to have wonderfully successful performances, and we have placed well at many competitions. As an educator, I am always striving to find new and more effective ways to motivate and inspire my students to be better musicians and people. One of the ultimate successes as an educator, in my opinion, is to foster student learning so that students become intrinsically motivated to learn about and better themselves through music. This intrinsic motivation can often show itself in independent practice. I recently realized that all year students were coming in to the music room at lunch and after school every day. Students were coming in to the music room every single day to practice on their own. Some students would even stay to practice until 5:00 p.m. One of my proudest moments came just a few weeks ago when, after school one day, every single practice room was occupied with practicing musicians, there were five students practicing out in the main rehearsal space, and more were coming in! We were out of practice rooms! What a proud moment to have so many students driven to practice. I hope to continue being "out of practice rooms" in the years to come.

What do you enjoy doing when not working?

When not working, my fiance Brad and I love to ski (he snowboards), hike, backpack, travel, game nights with friends, being with our families, kayaking, and anything outdoors. We have even recently gotten into rock climbing. In the summer of 2016, Brad and I backpacked in Denali National Park and Preserve in Alaska for seven days and saw the most beautiful sights of our lives! For our favorite trip of summer 2017, we backpacked up to No Name Lake in Broken Top's crater. Later that summer, we backpacked up to Moraine Lake and attempted to summit South Sister (we had to turn back at Lewis Glacier because

of a snow storm). For our honeymoon, we will be going north to explore the Canadian Rockies.



They said...

“Kelly is an amazing, dedicated music teacher,” OMS Principal Tami Nakimura said. “She often stays after school with students to make sure they’re able to play sports and still practice their music. It’s no wonder I receive so many letters from appreciative parents about Kelly’s dedication and influence on their kids’ lives. It’s also been amazing to watch how she’s built relationships with other regional school music directors, having them in to teach, and teaching herself at their schools. She’s really built our music program and I’m excited to watch it continue to grow under her direction for years to come.”

