

Paige Fettig, '18 - 4th Grade Teacher

Good morning! My name is Paige Fettig and I am a Bismarck native. I grew up here and attended K-12th grade in Bismarck Public Schools and graduated from Century High School in 2014.

I decided to attend VCSU after a Viking Visit Day because the campus and the staff made an impression on me. I knew VCSU had a reputation for having the best education program in the state, but after visiting with professors that day, I felt that had been confirmed. I was welcomed and valued and could hear the passion in their voices as they spoke about the program and what it had to offer. I knew I would be in good hands.

I cherish the time I had in Valley City. I graduated in 2018 with a bachelors in elementary ed with a few endorsement certificates under my belt. I had accepted a teaching position in Bismarck that May and have been teaching 4th grade in BPS now for 5 years. When I left my classroom this morning I had taught a lesson about reading fluency and when I return we'll jump right into sound waves. Being away from my students during the day makes me anxious, but the reason I'm here today is very important.

As I had said before, VCSU's education program has a reputation for being the best. But in order to stay at the top of the pack, the facilities need to be updated. McCarthy Hall has many of the education classes. It is one of the oldest building on campus and in desperate need of basic renovations such as the heating system. I remember when we'd have classes McCarthy, the heater would make the loudest banging noises and just operate at a level that would become too distracting for class and we'd end early. We were limited to the classrooms we could use because many of them didn't have the technology for us to project from laptops for presentations.

The environment in McCarthy is very "old school" for lack of better terms. It's that stereotypical image of a schoolhouse that comes to mind with chalkboards and rows of desks. McCarthy actually still has chalkboards! Schools today don't resemble that at all. Many classrooms have multiple options for seating, gathering spaces, and quiet heaters. Even smart boards have become obsolete and smart projectors have been installed so a regular whiteboard can become interactive when the projector is on.



I felt very prepared for my role as a classroom teacher with the learning I did at VCSU. My time there gave me the knowledge I needed not only to teach well, but also to understand how students learn. The term "students" doesn't just apply to elementary age children, it also includes adults. Learners need comfortable and welcoming environments to engage in content. They need their surroundings to be conducive to their learning needs. They need a space that allows for collaboration and communication... and to not be interrupted by banging heaters.

Currently, the education offices are in McFarland Hall, along with some faculty offices. While other offices and classes take place in McCarthy. The renovations to McCarthy will also create a more cohesive program due to the proximity of the entire department. Having a central location will allow for easier collaboration and a stronger sense of community.

We know that teacher retention has taken a big hit over the last few years. Every district is feeling it, including my own. It's imperative that we do what we can to encourage those interested in education to pursue their interests and masters of their craft. By supporting VCSU and the McCarthy renovation, you'll be helping new teachers find their passion for education, which will in turn inspire young students to find their passion for learning.