

JAKE OLSON
VISUAL ARTS TEACHER

Where did you grow up?

0-12: Columbus, OH
12-18: Roseville, MN
20-25: Hildesheim, Germany

What were your experiences in High School?

9th and 10th grade Jake Olson was unsure, unmotivated and a general pain in the brain for my teachers and parents. In my junior year I had a few particular teachers who engaged me in their subjects (Heroes in Mythology, Painting) and showed me the value of having enthusiastic, caring mentors. They pushed me to discover what I had inside of me to be successful and have a meaningful high school experience.



Where did you go to school?

High school: Roseville Area High School
University: Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaft und Kunst (University of Applied Science and Art)
Hildesheim, Germany, BA in graphic design and illustration.

Why did you become a teacher / para / other?

My older brother/roommate is an elementary music teacher at Gaultier in Saint Paul, and was previously a HS music teacher for 3 years at Creative Arts in downtown STP. I always like to hear his stories about the education world. He encouraged me to get my sub license after I graduated and moved back to the US in July, 2014. Instead of being a sub, I was offered a position as a paraprofessional at my last school where I started my journey in education.

Where did you work before Augsburg Fairview Academy?

Twin Cities German Immersion (charter) School, Saint Paul

Why did you choose to work at Augsburg Fairview Academy? Why a charter school and not a public school?

I've been working at a charter school for the past two years. I enjoy the freedoms and opportunities you have in the charter environment to experiment with non-traditional methods and styles of teaching.

What was your first impression of Augsburg Fairview Academy?

A positive place. At AFA you are welcomed with open arms and open minds.

What has surprised you most about working at Augsburg Fairview Academy?

How quickly you feel and are a part of this community.

What do you like about Augsburg Fairview Academy?

The collaboration. Everyone has a voice, and everybody is equally important.

What don't you like about Augsburg Fairview Academy?

So far I'm not too excited about my daily 4:00 commute back to the North End, St. Paul. Maybe I'll have to move to MPLS sometime soon!

What do you wish other people knew about Augsburg Fairview Academy?

What would you say are some of your strongest beliefs about education?

Education is the absolute number one priority in this country. Only informed, compassionate, empathetic, resilient, humble (educated!) individuals can even begin to understand the many facets of and confront the vastly complex problems of this nation and our world: climate change, health care reform, racial and social injustice, rapid gentrification in our cities, gender discrimination, unnecessary war. The list goes on.

What's your personal philosophy on what should be done about education?

American society needs to prioritize education and start to highly value the teaching profession. Raise/reallocate tax dollars away from frivolous projects. School funding should be secure and reliable and fair, not based on neighborhood property taxes or standardized test scores. Make the job more appealing by paying teachers better to recruit more fantastic people to this profession and keep them there! In Germany teachers make a much more comfortable salary than here in the US, because the profession is highly valued in their society. Offer more comprehensive nation wide programs and scholarships to diversify the teaching force. Stop presenting college as the ultimate summit of success and everything else as a shortcoming. Free post-secondary public education. The list goes on.

What would you tell someone who is thinking about enrolling at Augsburg Fairview Academy?

JUST DO IT.

This is *not* a traditional point A to B top-down high school. This is a **community**. You will have a support system of staff with diverse backgrounds and talents who'll **meet you where you're at**, teach you real-life skills and help you find your own way up to that podium at graduation.

What are your hobbies?

Hanging out in my backyard, exploring Minnesota, being in Germany, playing music with brothers and friends. Painting and drawing. Music production and recording.



If you weren't working at Augsburg Fairview Academy, what would you be doing instead, or what would your life be like?

I'd be in another school. Maybe I'd be in the design world, but I prefer to be doing something outside of the commercial realm.

What might (someone) be surprised to know about you?

I played a lot of street music in several countries while I lived in Germany. Some days were very lucrative, some not, but it was the very best fun. I'd like to see more of it in the Twin Cities.

How would your students describe you?

Describe who?

