

Getting to know Dan Mysnyk a little bit better...

What's your educational background?

When I started college, I thought I would study medicine like my father, but when I arrived on campus with the football team, I found myself drawn to the math department instead. I shifted my coursework, added economics after my freshman year, and never looked back.

What I've always appreciated about math is that it teaches you how to think logically, clearly, and with discipline. After earning degrees in Mathematics and Economics from Wartburg College, I continued my studies at Tarleton State, completing a master's in mathematics with a focus on data science. There, I learned that while numbers are objective, interpreting data requires nuance. What we measure and how we measure it shapes the conclusions we draw. Later, while at VCHS, I earned a second master's in Finance and Economics. That experience reinforced key ideas like opportunity cost and the importance of thinking beyond immediate outcomes to long-term consequences. Good decisions aren't always obvious and they involve tradeoffs.

These experiences shape how I lead in a Christian high school. Data matters, but it's not the whole story. Education is about people, not just outcomes. My goal is to use data to inform decisions while recognizing the deeper responsibility we have in shaping students' lives with wisdom, purpose, and faith.

How did you get to Colorado and Vail Valley? What are your passions in regards to activities in Colorado?

Growing up, my dad would take me skiing, and I fell in love with the mountains. I was working in data science in Texas and my position was eliminated during the ski season so I took advantage of the situation and headed to Colorado to ski and became a ski instructor. It was during this time that I met Lauren Mutter, who wore many hats at VCHS. She encouraged me to apply for a teaching job at VCHS – for statistics – and I haven't looked back. Ten years later, my wife and I are putting down roots.

As for my Colorado passions...during the winter, whenever I have free time, you'll find me on skis, whether that's at the resort or out in the backcountry. Summer is almost harder because there are just too many options. I love to SUP — stand-up paddle boarding — on the river, especially the Upper Colorado from State Bridge down to Two Bridges. I also like to *pretend* I'm a golfer, and I've recently gotten into pickleball.

Colorado has a way of making it hard to ever want to leave.

When and how did you meet your wife?

My wife, Ronnie is a physical therapist here in the Vail Valley. I love our story but haven't shared it with many outside our inner circle – probably because I'm a guy, and a private one at that. She first came to Colorado in 2015 with the Israeli ski team for the world championships at Beaver Creek— that's what brought her here originally.

I met her when she was taking a stats class at CMC. I stopped by to say hi to the teacher, my friend and former VCHS colleague, Tyler Jager. She was taking his class and needed tutoring, along with a few other students. I offered to help them, a few weeks into it she was the only one I was still tutoring. To “pay me back” I asked her to go skiing, you know, to help me with my form. I mean she was working with the Israeli ski team so I figured I could learn a thing or two. We’ve been together ever since.

She finished her time at CMC, went on to Colorado Mesa and then CU Anschutz for her PT degree, and we did the whole long-distance thing for about four years until she moved back to the valley. It wasn't easy, but it was worth it.

We had a small, private wedding about two years ago and are going to Israel this July to celebrate with our family there, which we had planned to do right after our wedding but were unable to due to the war breaking out.

Ronnie and I bonded over skiing first, but what really connects us is a shared passion for helping people — just in different arenas. I do it through education, she does it through health sciences, but at the core we're both wired to help people reach their goals. That alignment means a lot to me.

Tell us about your life growing up?

I grew up in Iowa City, Iowa, the oldest of four kids and the only boy. My dad is an orthopedic surgeon and my mom was a music teacher — I really like music but never played an instrument likely because my mom was the teacher. I was fortunate to grow up in a home where faith, family, and just being outside were central to everything. I was always out playing sports and deeply involved in church and my youth group.

Growing up as the oldest sibling — and the only brother to three sisters — is honestly a life skill I didn't fully appreciate until later. It taught me patience, perspective, and how to navigate a lot of different personalities. My family has spread out since then and we've become a bit of a global family — my sisters are now in India, Louisville, and Phoenix — but we still make it a priority to all get together at least once a year.

What is your favorite childhood memory?

I have a lot of great memories growing up, but one stands out above the rest. My dad would take us out on the boat, and he made a point of giving each of us two full hours of inner tubing — just one on one, his undivided attention. With four kids, that was eight hours on the water in a single day. He did it every time without complaint, and we absolutely loved it.

Looking back, what I remember isn't just the fun of it — it's that he showed up fully for each of us, one at a time. That kind of intentional, individual attention is something I've never forgotten, and honestly something I try to carry into how I work with kids today.

Time for a soft ball question – what is your favorite meal?

I'm a big fan of most food but my absolute favorite is Steak fajitas.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Honestly, I see myself right here. My hope is to still be at VCHS, leading a thriving, healthy school community. This isn't a stepping stone for me — it's where I want to be. My goal is to continue building something meaningful at VCHS and to see it flourish as a strong, vibrant Christian high school.

Where did you develop your faith?

Faith is a part of my everyday life. For me, it's not about outward appearances or going through the motions — it's about a genuine relationship with God. It's about being in the Word, being in prayer, and inviting God into every aspect of your life.

I was raised in a deeply devoted Christian family — I was in church before I even have memories of it. My dad has been a huge influence as well, instilling in me the importance of Scripture and the role of the local church in our lives. When I was growing up, I attended Heritage Christian School and was actively involved in youth group. I can honestly say that my youth group leaders played a significant role in shaping my passion for working with kids and ultimately paving the path I'm walking today.

Tell us about your church life.

I grew up at Park View Evangelical Free Church in Iowa City — it's just called Park View Church now. It's where my faith was rooted and where my parents still attend today. Here in the valley, I attend both The Vail Church and Trinity Baptist Church.

One moment that really shaped how I think about church happened in 2008 when the Iowa River flooded historically. The Park View Church took on five feet of water — sandbagging was completely ineffective, there was nothing you could do. But what came out of that experience was this phrase that stuck with me: *the church has left the building*. We couldn't do services at the church itself so we met in smaller groups at people's homes.

It became a real, lived lesson that the church isn't a structure — it's the people, the mission, and the work you're doing in the community. The building has since been beautifully renovated, but that season revealed something deeper about what a church actually is. That perspective has carried with me and shapes how I think about faith community wherever I am.

If you were stuck on a deserted island what book and playlist would you bring?

I'll start with the easy one — the Bible. I know that might sound like the expected answer, but it's genuinely true. Psalms when I'm struggling and need encouragement, Proverbs when I'm trying to figure out what to do — there's really no book that covers more ground than that.

For a second book, I had to actually think about this one. I read mostly dry economics books, so my shelf isn't exactly beach-friendly. I'm a big Dan Brown fan, and one of his novels would actually hold up to multiple reads — which matters a lot when it's the only book you have. I did consider bringing *The Wealth of Nations*, a deserted island might finally be the time and place to get through it.

For music, I'd go country. I went to grad school in Texas and got into it there, and there's something about country music that just settles you down and lets you feel things. It's the perfect soundtrack for sitting on a beach with nowhere to be.

What is your favorite movie?

Moneyball, without question. I actually show it in my stats class every year — which probably tells you everything you need to know about why I love it. Most people think it's a baseball movie, but it's really not. It's about seeing the world differently, solving a problem nobody else even recognized existed, and having the conviction to trust the process when everyone around you thinks you're wrong. As someone who teaches statistics, that resonates deeply.

I'm also a big Michael Lewis fan — he wrote the book Moneyball was based on, and also wrote *The Big Short* — so there's a through line there of stories about people who think differently and see what others miss.

It's also one of the only movies I'll watch more than once, which says a lot.

What are your bucket list items?

There's a lot of world out there and a lot I still want to see, but three stand out.

First, skiing Mount Holy Cross. I'm a big backcountry skier, and that one has been on my radar for a while — it's right in my backyard in a sense, but it demands real preparation and the right conditions. It feels like the kind of objective you have to earn.

Second, floating the Grand Canyon. A full river trip through the canyon is one of those experiences that just seems like it would put life in perspective in a way very few things can.

Third — and this one is the most personal — my brother-in-law lives in India, and I want to go trek with him there. More broadly, I'd love to do something meaningful and adventurous with each of my brothers-in-law. My family has spread out across the globe, and turning that into an adventure together feels like the right way to embrace it.

Tell us about your tenure at VCHS — your time and accomplishments.

Honestly, this is a hard question for me because I've never been someone who gravitates toward praise or recognition. But I'll do my best.

I'm first one in the building most days, starting in the weight room before the school day begins, teaching all day, coaching after school, and coming back in the evenings to plan. That rhythm is just who I am.

In terms of contributions, I designed and helped build out the weight room, which I'm proud of. I played a role in navigating the transition from Spring Break into COVID — a moment nobody had a roadmap for — and that experience helped lead to the development of the block schedule, remote supervision, and P+L+U days. But I want to be careful taking personal credit for any of that, because everything here is a team effort. That's genuinely how I see it.

What I'm most proud of, if I'm being honest, is the coaching. It's been one of the most meaningful parts of my time here — not just developing athletes, but developing young people. Character, perspective, how to carry yourself. The goal has always been to help kids become the kind of people the world needs more of.

That's what gets me back in the building early every morning.

VCHS is great, but there's always room for improvement. What fine tuning do you plan to implement?

VCHS does a lot of things exceptionally well — academic excellence, college prep and placement, the relationships between students, parents, and faculty, and a genuine, living faith at the center of everything. One of the most meaningful parts of stepping into this role is that I know this school deeply. I know where we've been, how we've grown, and I have a clear sense of where we're capable of going.

But there's always room to grow, even if it's just fine tuning. Here are the areas I'm most focused on:

Community Involvement. Teaching doesn't only happen in a classroom. I want to see our students continue to grow academically and personally — and that means getting them out into the world. Last year I helped implement P+L+U Days, which gets students out into the community working hands-on with local nonprofits and initiatives. It's one of the things I'm most proud of because it's not just service hours — it's teaching kids to walk the walk, to serve the way Jesus showed us, and to understand what it means to be part of something bigger than themselves. This program is growing and I want to keep building on it.

Athletics. Coaching has been one of the great joys of my time at VCHS, and our sports program is close to my heart. We're the only school in the Valley with a boys' volleyball team, our girls tennis program is as strong as it has ever been, our girls soccer qualified for state last year and this year, and girls volleyball continues to improve and has a realistic shot of a state title next year. On the boys' side, our golf team remains competitive and has several key players returning, boys football has some strong momentum and should win a lot of games this year, and boys' basketball should make another run at state. There's real momentum here and I want

to keep investing in it — not just in wins, but in what athletics teaches kids about discipline, teamwork, and character.

Science and Math. With degrees in mathematics and economics, I'm a numbers guy — I'll own that. VCHS has grown its STEM and robotics programs significantly, and I'm genuinely excited to work with our team to take them to the next level. This is an area where I can bring both personal passion and direct expertise, and I think the ceiling is high.

Faith. This one underlies everything else. Faith isn't a department at VCHS — it's the foundation. Everyone is welcome here, and our goal is to meet students where they are and walk alongside them. I want to make sure that as we grow in every other area, we never lose that. It's what makes VCHS distinct, and it's what I want to protect and deepen.