When Dr. Bianca Benitez graduated from Coppell High School in 1994, a career in the classroom was the last thing on her mind. Today, she says she’s never felt as strong a calling to anything else in her life.

“When you’re teaching and kids get that ‘ah-ha moment’, you’re like, ‘This is why I’m here — to help them make those connections,’” she said. “Their ability to see things from so many different perspectives and have that inquisitive mind all the time drives me.”

After receiving a Doctorate of Chiropractic from Parker University, Dr. Benitez worked as a contract doctor in a nearby clinic, where she filled in as an instructor teaching interns. She fell in love with teaching instantly.

“I was like, ‘I have to do this,’” she said.

Dr. Benitez obtained her alternative educator certification and landed her first instructional role teaching freshman biology at Williams High School in the Plano Independent School District. Eventually, she found herself drawn back to CISD, where she currently teaches AP Biology at CHS.

She believes she would not be the teacher she is today without the learning environment she had as a student in CISD.

“The idea of coming back and being able to give back to a district and community that was such an important part of my life — and still is — was a dream come true,” Dr. Benitez said.

As a former student, Dr. Benitez recalls taking social studies with Diane de Waal and English with Linda Moore and Kim Pearce. She remembers when CHS Principal Laura Springer was coaching P.E. and Superintendent Dr. Brad Hunt was a newly-hired special education teacher. Calling them her colleagues now is “surreal and special.”

“I find it really inspiring and powerful that I see people daily that I learned from, and still learn from, knowing that maybe I can have that impact on the next generation of students who might also return to Coppell,” Dr. Benitez said.

Her efforts to bolster her students’ futures are evident both in and out of the classroom. Students say she can often be found at sporting and community events or mentoring students in their college applications. The genuine relationships she fosters with students have earned her accolades, including the Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction by The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS) last school year.

Recently, Dr. Benitez was chosen as the high school “Teacher on the Rise,” a monthly award sponsored by Market Street and Mrs. Baird’s Bread that honors North Texas educators for their contributions to education.

CHS senior Aman Singhal nominated Benitez for the recognition.

“She delivers her passion for her kids and class more than any teacher I’ve ever seen in my life, and you know it from the moment you walk into her room,” Singhal said.

The surprise award resulting from the heartfelt words of her student was a “defining moment” for Dr. Benitez.

“Any time an award comes from a student who goes out of their way to fill out whatever form or write whatever essay and has such incredible things to say about you, it just goes right to the heart,” she said.

**JOSHUA CHANIN  Class of 2012  AP US History Teacher at Coppell High School**

“I graduated from New Tech High @ Coppell in 2012. I returned to Coppell ISD to teach because of the school district’s superior academic excellence in the classroom as well as Laura Springer’s student-first, FISH philosophy that is practiced every day at Coppell High School. I love working in a school district that is welcoming and supportive to all its employees!”
BAILEY ERNST  Class of 2014
First Grade Teacher at Valley Ranch Elementary

“I decided to come back and work as a teacher in CISD because I had such a wonderful experience growing up in the Coppell Schools. My teachers helped me grow my love and passion for learning. Every day as a student I woke up excited and ready to go to school because of the positive atmosphere my teachers created. I feel my teachers made me feel welcomed and loved every day! I truly enjoyed CISD and feel they have shaped me into the teacher I am today. My goal as a teacher at CISD is that I am giving my students the same wonderful experience that I got as a child. I hope to create a love and passion for learning while creating a positive environment where all students feel loved and welcomed. I am so proud to work in the best district at the best elementary school, Valley Ranch Elementary!”

ANNMARIE VINCENZO  Class of 2015
Kindergarten Teacher at Canyon Ranch Elementary

“To me, Coppell ISD is a district that shaped me and made me who I am today, and I am lucky and proud to say that it is a district that continues to mold me. I truly believe that the most important pillar in CISD’s core beliefs is relationships - relationships between teachers, relationships between partners in our community, relationships among students, and relationships between educators and learners. As a child and teenager, I was lucky enough to have so many important teachers and people in my life that inspired me daily. I am the educator that stands here today because of the educators that helped me - many that are still working for CISD today. I wanted to come back to Coppell to have the same impact on my learners that my educators had on me. CISD will always be home to me and will always be the place that made me who I am.”

BRITTANY SCRUGGS  Class of 2006
AP Human Geography Teacher at CHS

“I am a proud alumni. To go from a student perspective to being a teacher has given me an insight on what students experience daily. I have a connection to the school spirit. Sharing the unique Coppell experience with my students is a bond I am glad to have.”

SABRINA KHAN  Class of 2009
Instructional Coach at Austin Elementary

“I always knew I wanted to be an educator, and it seemed only fitting to return to Coppell ISD where I had so many positive experiences as a student. I’ve stayed because CISD values not only great teaching but also relationships. It’s been amazing to be able to learn from and work alongside educators who were once my teachers. Not everyone can say that their neighbor was also their high school principal and is now their superintendent.”

MACI PHILLIPS  Class of 2014
Pre-Kindergarten Teacher at Lakeside Elementary

“I grew up attending CISD from Kindergarten at CCE to graduating from CHS. The stellar education I received and the deep relationships I built over the years with my teachers, drove me to become a teacher myself. I wanted to return to CISD to make an impact on students just like I received. It was a dream of mine to work in CISD and I am very proud to work in my hometown district and to give back to the school district who shaped me into the teacher I am today. I will forever always be a Coppell Cowboy!”

KRYSIA STEPHENS  Class of 2010
English Teacher at Coppell Middle School North

“I attended Valley Ranch Elementary, Coppell Middle School East, and graduated from Coppell High School in 2010. I returned to teach in CISD because of how much I valued the education I was given and the relationships that I built with my amazing educators and peers. My hope in becoming a teacher here in CISD is to someday be as impactful and inspiring as some of the teachers that I had growing up.”