

Mrs. Atkinson moved to Mountain Home, Arkansas in 2000 from North Little Rock, Arkansas. She married to Max Atkinson in 2001 and has 2 sons, 3 step-daughters and 10 grandchildren. Max and Debbie are volunteers for the Athletic Department of MHPS. You might see them volunteering by announcing football and basketball and the keeping of the score and scoreboard for those activities. She currently serves at the Director of Special Education for Mountain Home Public Schools. She is also in her 5th year as the Head Coach of the Mountain Home Lady Bombers Soccer Team.

Mrs. Atkinson received her bachelor's degree in Elementary/Special Education in 1977 from the University of Central Arkansas. A Master's in Education was granted in May of 1993 in the area of Early Childhood Special Education. In May, 2006, she pursued and was granted certification in the Supervision and Administration from Arkansas State University in Mountain Home.

Mrs. Atkinson is currently licensed in the following areas by the Arkansas State Department of Education:

- –Special Education Administration Supervision
- –Early Childhood Special Education (Birth – 5 years of age – Special Education)
- –Mild to Moderate Handicapped, K-12
- –Severely Emotionally Disturbed
- –□Elementary Education

Mrs. Atkinson has been a professor at Arkansas State University of Mountain Home for 4 years. She instructs teacher candidates in the Exceptional Child in the Regular Education Classroom.

Several awards in the area of Special Education have been awarded to Mrs. Atkinson:

- –State President of the Division of Early Childhood (DEC)
- –State Secretary of the Division of Early Childhood (DEC)
- –Lonoke County Chamber of Commerce Educator of the Year
- –Co-Chair of the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services Public Awareness Committee
- –Northside YMCA, North Little Rock, Arkansas – Volunteer of the Year

Coach Atkinson has also received the following recognitions in coaching Soccer:

- –State Championship – 2009 – 6A Soccer State Finals
- –State Championship – 2011 – 6A Soccer State Finals
- –Nominee for the Adidas Coach of the Year for the state of Arkansas by the -National Soccer Coaches Association in 2003
- –Recipient of Adidas Coach of the Year for the state of Arkansas by the National Soccer Coaches Association in 2004
- –Recipient of Adidas Coach of the Year for the state of Arkansas by the National Soccer Coaches Association in 2011

Mrs. Atkinson's Philosophy:

Serving children and students with disabilities and their families, as well as coaching young woman on the high school soccer team is as much a responsibility as it is an opportunity. I feel that a supervisor or coach is not only an authority figure but a role model as well. What I do and don't do... what I say and don't say... can have a lasting impression on the young people I serve, the young woman I coach and the staff members that look to me for guidance.

As a Special Education Director, I have the awesome responsibility of affecting a young person's self image and to, perhaps begin to build a foundation for a positive attitude regarding the idea of hard work, the ability to compete in today's society and the skills needed to develop strong personal relationships with others.

Whether I am in the role of Director of Coach, I am determined to be the best that I can be for the students with disabilities and their families and my players. I will assist every student, no matter his or her test scores, achievement level or playing ability to reach their God-given potential. I shall prayerfully keep ever mindful that I am responsible for the quality of services provided to children with disabilities and their families. I shall also remember that in coaching soccer that I am responsible for teaching the soccer players about life as well as soccer techniques and strategies.

I believe that success of the program, be it educational or athletically, will be determined by remaining Student-Focused and by empowering, rather than isolating families.