

Some parents name their children after famous people or even seasons of the year, but what about naming your kid after a fast food chain? Brian Domokos, English teacher, and his wife, Tiffani, did just that.

During pregnancy, Tiffani had cravings for Taco Bell, and as a joke, the two called the baby Naomi Bell. As time went on, the name stuck, but they didn't want it to be too obvious. Domokos and his wife decided to add an "e" to the end of her middle name to disguise its origins, making it Belle.

On Sept. 17, 2019, Naomi Belle Domokos was welcomed into this world. Due to the fact that Domokos was now a father with a newborn baby, he decided to go on paternity leave for multiple weeks.

One of the driving factors of his extended leave was an experience with a family friend years ago. Domokos' friend's dad passed away after spending his life being a "legend" of a teacher. At the school's memorial service, past students went on and on about how when no one else listened, he was there, and when no one believed in them, he did.

His students expressed a constant feeling of love and respect from this man. During the service, though, Domokos looked over to his family friend and heard her whisper to her mom, "Wow, I wish he had done a fraction of that for us."

Domokos said, "I think that I too have somewhat of a big presence at this school, but what a horrible thing to say that he was a great teacher and an okay dad." Because of that, Domokos went into his journey of being a new father with a different mindset.

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As he reflected back on all his years as a teacher, Domokos said, "I do not do anything but teach, and it's unhealthy. So, when I found out I could take time off, I said, 'I need to do this so that I'm not a workaholic, and so that I can put my family first.' Where you find your identity and your value matters, and too often, I find my identity and value in work." He is even contemplating going part time during the 2020-2021 school year.

Domokos, the self-proclaimed workaholic, is rarely seen taking sick days and has accumulated 116 of them. He has taught through a scratched cornea and puked during first period, then continued to teach until someone told him to go home. Domokos used his sick days to go on leave, but ended up not

taking the full 12 weeks off, so that he could be more available to his past and current students.

One of these students was Grant Seehausen, junior. Seehausen said, "Domokos' leave was a little weird at first, and although we were given a heads-up, it still came pretty fast. It was a hard change, as most of us have never had a long-term sub before. However, Domokos handled it very well and addressed all our concerns." Domokos even provided a Google document that anticipated and answered questions his students might have about this time off.



Photo courtesy of Brian Domokos

While Sydney Brennan, senior, doesn't currently have a class with him, she still "missed not seeing him in the halls." Brennan was in his freshman English class when Domokos first announced he would be proposing to his girlfriend, now wife. She always joked that she would babysit for him one day, and now, a couple years later, that is a real possibility. Brennan said, "I think that Domo's break was a great decision because spending time with family is important, and it's better to take more time off, than it is to loathe your job because you want to be with your daughter."

Not everyone gets the opportunity to go on leave, though, and Domokos recognizes that. Domokos said, "I have a lot of privileges. I had enough sick days that I could take time off and we had enough money. Some people wouldn't be able to take seven to eight weeks off, so I was incredibly privileged to get the chance to do this."