



Teacher Gains Classroom Techniques, Skills Through TeacherTech Program

After spending her summer with children, **Sarah Reynolds**, third grade teacher at Frances Willard Elementary, came back to school this fall invigorated and full of new ideas and approaches to teaching.

Her new perspectives were a result of her participation in YouthFriends' TeacherTech program.

TeacherTech partners teachers with area businesses during the summer months to expose them to applied industry concepts which will then be incorporated into their classrooms. Reynolds spent eight weeks as a paid extern at Children's Mercy Hospital.

"It was just a wonderful experience," Reynolds said. "It was really nice and refreshing to be in the corporate world, and I learned so much that I could bring back to my classroom."

At Children's Mercy, Reynolds worked as an assistant to the child life specialist. Her duties encompassed assisting with morning playgroups, working with dialysis patients and spending time with patients whose families were not there.

The externship proved to be a win-win situation for both Children's Mercy and the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. Reynolds filled a specific departmental need, impacting staff and patients alike. But she also gained knowledge and work environment skills that she has brought back to her third graders.

"I learned that group work is important, but that



Sarah Reynolds, third grade teacher at Frances Willard Elementary, spent her summer working as a TeacherTech extern at Children's Mercy Hospital.

each child really needs to have a job or task that they need to complete to make it work," Reynolds said. "I also learned some new technology skills and I'm planning to have my kids work more on the computer this year."

One of the theories of TeacherTech is that by hiring teacher externs, employers play a critical role
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Holman Academy of Excellence Dedicated

The first charter school in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools was formally dedicated this week.

The Maurice Holman Academy of Excellence Elementary Charter School held a dedication ceremony and open house on August 27 to formalize its opening and to give the public a glimpse of the school environment. A short program was followed by a day-long open house whereby guests, community residents and parents were invited to tour the school and learn about its curriculum and goals.

Principal **Earl Williams** said the opening of the school has

"breathed new life" into the building and its surrounding community, and he is pleased at how quickly the students have acclimated themselves to the new environment.

"We have some really, really bright kids from all over the district," Williams said. "It's been a big change for some of them to leave their old schools and start in a new building and climate, but they're doing very well."

The school sits on the site of the old Parker Elementary School, 3334 Haskell, and opened this fall to a population of 118 students, grades K-5. The building received extensive renovations during the spring and summer to ready it for

the start of school.

The mission of the school is to provide self-paced, performance-based learning with an emphasis on core knowledge, civic responsibility and entrepreneurship. Staff, students and the community will begin to see that entrepreneurial element come to life in September. The school will begin developing its own in-house store, bank and TV/radio studio. These "businesses" will help students enhance several curriculum areas including reading, language arts, technology and social studies. Williams said students and staff also will work to get the community involved in these projects.

Board of Education Action

At its Tuesday, August 26 meeting, the Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education took the following action:

- Accepted a report on the progress of the district's Energy Partnership with the Board of Public Utilities. This partnership has been going on for seven years. It was formed as part of the district's Bond Renovation Program and includes converting from heating with natural gas equipment to electric heat. It provides the district with lower energy costs and service entry support by BPU. As part of this partnership, the district receives an annual rebate from BPU. This year's rebate was \$376,193. The seven year total for the infrastructure and heat credit is \$3,000,381.48.
- Accepted a report on the ACT results from the senior class of 2008. The results show a slight increase in the mean test score from 17.1 to 17.4 with an increase in the number of students scoring 21 or better.
- Approved a Five-Year Professional Development Plan for 2008 through 2013. The plan outlines the process used by the district to award Individual Development Points required for licensure renewal by teachers and administrators.
- Accepted, as an informational item, a report on the site selection for the Mid-Town Preschool. The district is continuing to work with LADCO Developers on construction documents and site selection. The new recommended site is ½ mile from the site discussed during previous conversations (55th and State Avenue). The advantages of the proposed site are access, lower traffic, larger site, significantly lower road and site improvement costs, and a lower site acquisition cost.
- Discussed finance and lease options for the Education Center replacement facility under consideration for the 500 block of Minnesota Avenue.
- Accepted an informational item on the "Asian Games: The Art of Contest" traveling exhibit that will be at the West Wyandotte Branch Library Sept. 2 through Oct. 20. The national exhibit features works of art from distinguished collections, and examines the role of games as an activity and as an expression of cultural values in the diverse societies of Asia. The library has received a \$1,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to present programming to complement the exhibit. An Opening Reception and Family Game Extravaganza will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 7.
- Heard a report on the first Celebration of Library Excellence. Held August 20, the celebration marked the achievements in library services over the last 20 years.

Photo Galleries Online

Photos from the 2008 Convocation are available for viewing on the district's website at www.kckps.org/photos/convocation/.

This is just one of many photo albums of district events posted on the website. Others include the annual Golf Tournament and the *Reasons to Believe* Gala.



Cold Treats . . .

District bus drivers were treated to ice cream when they returned from their routes on Friday, August 22. The treats were provided by the district to thank drivers for the hard work that they do, and to mark the completion of the first full week of school. Shown here are drivers Alberta Harris and Brie Ross.



All Tuckered Out . . .

The excitement of the first day of school wore out this kindergartner from New Chelsea Elementary School. He fell asleep as he was waiting to board his bus after school. He is a student in Erin Hiscocks' class.

TeacherTech

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in developing well-rounded, progressive teachers who can inspire the future workforce through real-world applications of math, engineering, technology and science (METS). And this certainly seems to have happened for Reynolds.

"I had no idea that child life specialists existed in the world," she said. "There are so many new career positions available today that weren't there nine or 10 years ago when I was in school. I'm glad to be able to expose my students to the new careers and new experiences based on what I know now."

To learn more about TeacherTech or to see which

businesses participated in the summer 2008 program, go to www.uplinkthefuture.org.



STAFF NOTEBOOK

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Submissions are welcome and are due by noon on Monday for the following edition. Direct them to:

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