

USD 116 New Teacher Mentoring Program

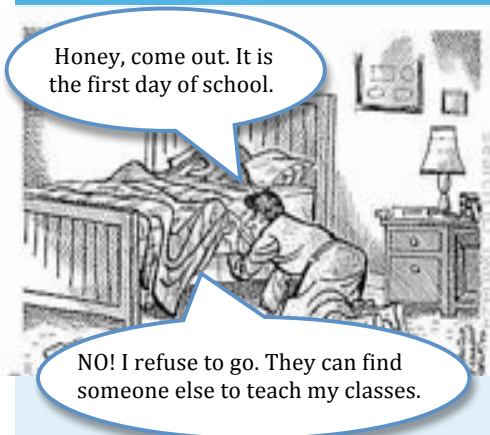
New teachers, Jennifer Sams, Jennifer Harris and Jessie Stow, enjoy an icebreaker bingo game at the two-day orientation in August.



October 2009

Issue 1: Starting Out

Providing program insight to School Board members, administrators, new teachers and mentors



A Look Inside

2

Teacher Feature

Highlighting new teacher Kelsey Bridges and her mentor Lorna Mesri

3

The First Day of School

Eight first-year teachers share their first day stories

What We've Done

- Provided a two-day **New Teacher Orientation** to 34 new teachers in August. 23 of our new staff are first-year teachers and 11 are new to the district but not new to teaching.
- Trained a group of seven veteran teachers to become mentors through a four-day **Induction for the 21st Century Educator** training. We now have 45 teachers trained to be mentors in our district.
- Began our professional development **Moodle** forums for new teachers and mentors to post questions, advice, suggestions and comments to each other.

Upcoming Professional Development Dates

- October 7 from 4:00 – 6:00: **Classroom Management**
- November 24 from 4:00 - 6:00: **Effective Instruction Part I: Lesson Planning**
- December 8 from 4:00 – 5:00: **Effective Instruction Part II: Teaching Strategies**
- December 8 @ 5:00: **Mentoring Social**

Teacher Feature

First-year teacher Kelsey Bridges poses with her mentor, Lorna Mesri, on the first day of school. Both teach 3rd grade at Yankee Ridge Elementary School.

A Dynamic Duo

How did Kelsey Bridges feel about her first day of teaching? “Not nervous really. Just overwhelmed by how fast things went.” Actually, Kelsey didn’t have much time to get nervous since she was hired just 13 days before the start of school, which made her one of the latest hires in the district. “In fact, I was hired on a Friday and attended the New Teacher Orientation the following Monday,” she said.

Kelsey clearly feels indebted to her mentor, Lorna Mesri, for all the help and advice given to her from the beginning. When asked what types of things they are working on together, Kelsey quickly replied, “Everything!” Lorna has not only provided curriculum in every subject but also helps Kelsey with the daily issues that come up. “Every single day we talk together,” Kelsey commented.

Lorna explains that their relationship is definitely a two-way street, though. They brainstorm ideas together and Kelsey provides great insight and suggestions to use in both of their third grade classrooms. She believes that Kelsey is an incredibly strong first year teacher and truly admires her for



how upfront, honest and open she is.

Despite her new teacher status, the teaching profession wasn’t completely new to Kelsey; she has been immersed in it all of her life. Her mother, Katie Bridges, taught at Urbana Middle School for 34 years and recently retired. Kelsey had heard so much from her mom about the struggles involved in teaching that she wasn’t sure she ever wanted to be a teacher herself. Yet, here she is teaching. “She is just a natural,” Lorna explained.

Lorna’s own natural abilities in mentoring became quite apparent during the interview. They discussed, planned, and resolved a handful of issues that had come up recently. It’s nice to see that in addition to how comfortable Kelsey already is with teaching and Lorna with mentoring, they are also both very comfortable working together.

The First Day of School

It's their very first day of teaching in their career. Here is the scoop on how it really went for eight of our newest staff.

My first day of teaching at Washington was quite honestly, FANTASTIC! I was very excited to meet all of my kids and they were so happy to be at school. Being the very first day, it was a bit chaotic, but as soon as the day got underway, I felt at home. My first day proved to me that I definitely made the right career choice!

Ashley Smith, K-1
Washington Early Childhood



Overall, the first day was great! I was able to get the nerves out of the way. The first day was when it all became real. Suddenly, here I am, in control of a classroom of 30 students and I have the chance to impact 100 lives each day, 100 opportunities to make a child's day and encourage someone to achieve their dreams. It's the day that, for me, really confirmed that this is where I am supposed to be.

David Reif, Math
Urbana High School

I wasn't nervous. I thought I would have all these feelings of not knowing what to do, not sleeping the night before, and making a complete fool of myself. The first day was a slight whirlwind, though. I only had half my class, which was great to be able to bond with my 1st graders. The day went by so quickly and after dismissal, I came back to my room and realized I had survived my first day. I had my Kindergarten parent meeting that night, so I had more work to do. I didn't get home that night until almost 10pm, so it was a long and very memorable day for me.

Jennifer Harris, K-1
Flossie Wiley



Before my first-grader students arrived I was really nervous, but I soon realized that they were just as nervous as I was. The day went pretty smoothly and I was excited to return the next day! =)

Allison McLemore, 1st Grade
Yankee Ridge



I'm not sure if it is common for first year teachers to have second thoughts about their career choice, but I sure did after my first day. Since I did not know my students, I made the mistake of putting two boys together that I now know never to put within 4 feet of one another! Furthermore, I naively thought that I could keep the mountain of supplies separate so that each student could keep his or her own supplies. Despite these minor setbacks, I approached day two with a plan and a fresh start, and it was far smoother than I could have expected! Now, my kids have the routines down and we are all enjoying each new day together!

**Linda Hicks, 1st Grade
Thomas Paine**



Everyday is a new exciting adventure. I learn something new about the students and myself every single day. So far, it's been a great experience!

**Jess Dupuis, Reading
Gerber**

I guess what I would say about my first day was that it was really hectic, but a lot easier than I expected. Going from student to teacher in such a short period is a little strange, but as soon as one student called me Ms. Vitulli it felt very natural.

**Sandra Vitulli, 6th Math
Urbana Middle School**

The first day of school went well, I can honestly say that many years of working with youth, through summer camps, tutoring at mentoring programs, as well as my previous attendance in numerous Professional Development workshops have played a role in how successful my first days and weeks of school were. As a new teacher and a non-traditional student, I find the Instructional Coaches to be a wonderful source of support, it nice to know that I can ask questions, or seek resources, without wondering if I am bothering my colleagues. UMS does Rock - I can feel the beat of my students Learning.

**Barbie Price
Family & Consumer Sciences
Urbana Middle School**

