

Keeping Current With Kemper

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Helen Hagen, Editor

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Comments from William T. Kemper Fellow...

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The Great Teacher Inspires! - William Arthur Ward

Inspiration is a beautiful word in my ears. The verb inspire has many meanings. It is to encourage people into greater efforts, greater enthusiasm, or creativity, to arouse a particular feeling in somebody, to stimulate somebody to do something, especially creative work or the making of art and to inhale air or a gas into the lungs (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/inspire>). The Latin root for the word "inspirare" means to take a breath. The quality of the breath we take in sometimes makes a drastic difference in how our educational activities turn out! A reflective educator asks: What feelings do we provoke in others; joy, curiosity, interest? The challenges with our current economic crisis and fallout from the situation that we as individuals, families, and institutions are encountering causes us to pause and sort out what is the most valuable for us. Challenges force people to be fully present in the now. Some challenges help us feel more alive. Challenging times help us realize how fortunate we are. Teaching and learning are inspirational, almost art-like activities, as one of the definitions of the word inspiration suggests. We have many reasons to be thankful.

The William T Kemper Foundation and Commerce Bank Trustee grant has funded our Professional Development School Partnership activities for the next three years which makes this a continuous commitment on their behalf from 1995 to the present. The Kemper Coordinator Council members are taking this opportunity to thank the William T. Kemper Foundation-Commerce Bank Trustee and the Bradley University College of Education and Health Sciences for their financial assistance. Due to their belief in our purpose, we have continued to offer our Professional Development School Program staff and students support, quality experiences, and new ideas. We appreciate your contributions and your encouragement.

Dr. Beth Bussan, the Principal of Valeska Hinton, is retiring and we are extremely grateful for her presence in our community. She has inspired us with her consistent caring and dedication to children, their families and with future teachers and professionals. A Bradley pre-service teacher mentioned that Dr. Bussan is "inclusive, thoughtful and energetic. She has insightful observations and goes out of her way to remembering what everyone is doing." Thank you Dr. Bussan!

Whittier, Manual as well as Roosevelt are all finishing a first year under new leadership in each school—successfully. Congratulations!

May we take our breathe in with gratitude this spring to become an inspiring presence to others. In our desire to inspire others and ourselves into deeper learning, a message on my colleague's filing cabinet reminds us

Like earth, know balance. Like wind, fly free. Like fire, be alive. Like water, feel peaceful
(Anon.)

We wish to thank all of our children, families, teachers, administrators, pre-service teachers, community members, and PDS Coordinators for the semester!



Heljä Antola Crowe



Historical Westlake Hall

College of Education and
Health Sciences

BRADLEY
UNIVERSITY

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Dr. Heljä Antola Crowe,
Kemper Fellow
for Teaching Excellence

Peoria “Grow Your Own”

Peoria “Grow Your Own” Producing a Bountiful Harvest

“My name is Teresa Donley, and I have worked for Peoria Public Schools District 150 for over ten years. In August, 2007, I was accepted as a candidate into the Peoria ‘Grow Your Own Teachers’ cohort. This initiative is far more than a program to supplement the cost of tuition for non-traditional students at Bradley University and Illinois Central College.

Being a non-traditional student, a single parent, and a full-time employee has posed a variety of challenges in my quest for education. The average age of the Peoria cohort candidate is approximately 39 years, and nearly all of us are working parents. We are all facing the same obstacles and challenges. It is through the relationships and bonds that I have created with my fellow candidates and consortium leaders that I have been able to overcome many seemingly impossible hurdles and move forward with confidence and ambition.

Even more importantly, however, are the connections and relationships I am creating with students, their families, and community leaders. I have seen first-hand how these relationships can have a lifelong impact for students. My mentor, and Bradley alumna Kristie Hubbard, is an expert at building relationships with students and their families. It is through the expertise of my instructors at Bradley University, the GYO consortium, and working closely with Kristie that I have come to recognize and understand the value of creating lasting, genuine, and real relationships.

The intent of this state-wide initiative is to recruit leaders, currently working within the schools/community, who are already committed to the children and their families in the Peoria area, to become teachers. In my opinion, the Peoria GYO program is doing just that. I am looking forward, with great anticipation, to see the impact that this ‘crop’ of teachers will have in the lives and achievements of Peoria students!”

To find out more about the Peoria Grow Your Own, please visit these sites: http://www.growyourownteachers.org/GetInvolved/GYO_BestPractices_Vision.htm and <http://www.growyourownteachers.org/BeAnAdvocate/Consortia/Peoria.pdf>

by **Teresa Donley**
Peoria GYO



Teresa Donley
Manual High &
Middle School

Manual Middle and Manual High School

by **Dr. Patty Nugent**
Site Coordinator



New Health Center at Manual High School

In February, 2009, Methodist Medical Center opened an in-school Health Center at Manual. It is the first Health Center stationed in a high school in Peoria. It has been open for two months and is currently seeing 20 or more patients per day. The center gives high-school students access to health services which they might not have had access to previously. The Health Center is staffed by a nurse practitioner, a social worker, and an office assistant. It is currently open only to staff and students, but the plan is to open the center to the community at a later date.

Services offered at the center are assessment, diagnosis and treatment of minor illness and injury, identification of conditions that may need further referral such as asthma, diabetes, and high blood pressure, athletic and routine physicals, immunizations, health screenings, support of students and parents, individual and group health education, management of chronic illnesses, and mental health counseling/referrals as necessary.

Bradley Field Experience Teacher

“As a newer student in the teacher education program at Bradley University, I had not had a great deal of experience in the field until this semester. I have been learning about so many different strategies that are being implemented to better the educational experience for children, but experiencing these strategies, like collaborative teaching, first-hand and just reading about them in a textbook are two completely different things. Elementary education and special education are my main concentrations, so I never expected to be sitting in a classroom of teenagers at Manual High School for one of my experiences in the field. I was a little apprehensive about being at Manual High School because I didn’t know how I would be received by both the students and staff, but my uncertainties were met with reassurance in the first couple of weeks of my observations.

The experiences that I’ve had in the classrooms this semester have been tremendous, especially my observations at Manual High School. I have been lucky enough to work with two wonderful teachers in the math department, Susie McCraith and Beth Waller. I have

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Beth Waller and Susie McCraith,
Manual teachers

(Manual Junior and Manual High School continued)

articles and have heard personal accounts and opinions of collaborative teaching, and I know that it is not something that all teachers can deal with easily. I was not aware that I would be in this kind of setting at Manual High School, but I feel privileged to have experienced how effective it can be when two teachers work together. Ms. McCraith and Ms. Waller have worked cooperatively and supportively with each other every time I have visited their classrooms and that makes the classroom atmosphere pleasant for everyone. The two of them were always exchanging ideas about how to better teach the material and motivate the students to do well. They are the epitome of the old saying, 'Two heads are better than one.' They are both very professional, but they know how to have fun and laugh with the students and each other. They praise and motivate the students, and I could sense a feeling of pride radiating from the room with each 'good job' and high five.

Seeing how these two teachers work with each other and the students has been extremely motivating to me. They seem like they thoroughly enjoy what they are doing, and I'm glad their students have that positive learning environment in their classroom. I felt welcome and comfortable when in their classroom, and this has been a great experience for me as a future teacher."

-Amanda Bennett

Roosevelt Magnet School

by Dr. Heljä Antola Crowe
Site Coordinator



Cathy Godhigh with her newly published children's book.

Roosevelt Magnet School - 2008 Illinois Honor Roll School

Congratulations to the staff and students of Roosevelt Magnet School! They recently received a Spotlight Schools Award for their student achievement in 2008 in the State of Illinois. Dr. Christopher Koch, the State Superintendent of Education wrote: "I commend you and your staff for the hard work and effort that allows your students to succeed academically. We encourage you to celebrate your success and share the good news with students, parents and all community."



Roosevelt Author

Cathy Godhigh, a secretary at Roosevelt Magnet School, has written a children's book titled *Back Porch Watermelon* which is based on her experiences with her grandfather when she was a child. Great work, Cathy!

Pre-Service Teachers' Thoughts at Roosevelt

"During my short few months at Roosevelt, I have gained more insight and knowledge about teaching than I thought I ever would. Not only have I learned from my cooperating teacher, but the students have taught me so much about teaching and myself. My mindset of only teaching in a high-school setting when I graduate has changed dramatically after this extremely rewarding experience at Roosevelt Magnet School." - Mike Morris



Mike Morris, Bradley Novice Teacher at Roosevelt



Cara Liberacki, Bradley Student Teacher

"It is within the Roosevelt Magnet School community that I have been able to transform learned knowledge into practice. As a student teacher, I am utilizing my skills on a continual basis to generate wonder and active participation. I have provided my second-graders with structure, engaging activities, and compassion. The partnership between my cooperating teacher, Mrs. Sexton, and myself has provided me with the inspiration I need to take my teaching to the next level. As I continue down the path to becoming the best teacher I can be, I will always remember the people along the way who have changed my life. In collaboration with the school, I am accomplishing my dreams!" - Cara Liberacki

"While at Roosevelt, I have learned so much about the character of a classroom and how important it is to develop relationships with students. The culture of the school has highly impacted how I am able to interact with my students and the different types of activities that I can do with my students. Student behavior has been my main struggle in learning good management skills. There are some days where I go in and the day ends up being great, but then other days I go home and want to cry. I really won't know what it is like to be full-time teacher until I have my own classroom. It is always about experience and whatever I do in the classroom can be taken to my own classroom when I leave Bradley."

- Hilary Taxman

Hilary Taxman, Bradley Student Teacher



(continued on page 4)

(Roosevelt Magnet School continued)



Josh Darenfeld, Bradley Novice Teacher

“I have learned a lot while at Roosevelt Magnet School. I have realized that while students may be fidgety and talkative in class, this does not automatically mean that they are ‘bad’ kids. It may mean that they are not being challenged enough or that they have their minds on things that interest them the most like playing music or singing. These kids are incredible and all of them are extremely talented. Some of the kids that I thought were not very involved or interested in class turned out to perform the best on tests and projects. They also turned out to be absolutely incredible musicians and singers as I have been fortunate enough to observe them during some of my planning periods while at school. I have also learned to appreciate working with other teachers as a team. During ISAT testing, the teachers really worked together to make sure the students had enough time to practice their math skills and sharpen their reading and writing skills as well. I was able to get in all of my social studies material while throwing in days that were purely used to review language or math problems. The other teachers on my team were extremely grateful, and it

has really been fun working with and getting to know a team of teachers in the middle school. I hope to work in a setting just like the one at Roosevelt as far as support, friendship, and communication go. I also believe that the administration is fully committed to the well-being of the kids and are managing various issues in an excellent manner. Seeing them figure out solutions for things like discipline, test scores, and family involvement has also been fun.” - Joshua Darenfeld



Bradley art student, Tyler Brandon fixing the Roosevelt kiln so students can learn about pottery and firing.



Lindsey Bennett, Bradley Student Teacher, in the Roosevelt classroom.

The National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Conference



Jamie Taylor (Bradley student), Erin Nichols (Bradley student), Dr. Robert Wolffe, Dr. Helja Antola Crowe, Dr. Cecile Arquette, Dr. Patty Nugent, Dr. Sherrie Pardieck

At The National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Conference in

The National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Conference in March 12-15, 2009 in Daytona Beach, Florida was attended by several Bradley faculty and two Bradley students.

Dr. Cecile Arquette, Jamie Taylor, and Erin Nichols (undergraduate teacher education students) presented on Dialogue Journaling, a research project accomplished in the last year at Whittier Primary School.

The collaborative panel titled *Experiencing PDS* included Bradley University PDS professors Dr. Patricia Nugent, Dr. Sherrie

Pardieck, Dr. Bob Wolffe, and Dr. Heljä Antola Crowe as well as representatives from Illinois State University and Northern Illinois University. The discussion included issues and policies affecting university and school relationships, and the professional cultures within the partnerships.

Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center

“Having a simple, clearly defined goal can capture the imagination and inspire passion.”

Parker & Anderson (2006)

by Dr. Sherrie Pardieck
Site Coordinator



The faculty and staff have been very busy at Valeska Hinton Center. Following is a brief summary of some of the programs and activities that have transpired throughout the 2008-2009 school year:

- Nature was incorporated into the curriculum with the addition of many outstanding learning activities. Center Court featured learning displays that added an extra touch of interactive learning for the students and their families.
- The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) data continues to be collected and used for guiding reading instruction.
- Grandparents' Day was a great success as families spent the day with their children.

Families participated in learning activities in the classrooms, enjoyed a Thanksgiving meal together, and Professor Janet Jackson and her students provided free blood pressure screenings for the grandparents.

- Throughout the year, *JEAB'EM* continued as members of the Leadership Team filled in for staff at the school. In March, Ms. Beth Crider Olcott and Dr. Sherrie Pardieck spent time with Ms. McGrath, Ms. Jackson, and Ms. Bruno's kindergarten class as the teachers used their time for planning instruction.

- The librarian, Ms. Kylie Jacob, read stories to students for Monarch Mondays. The students would discuss the stories, return to their classrooms, and work on exciting learning activities. At the end of the program, the students voted for their favorite book which was *Once Upon An Amazing Motorcycle Dude*.

- The faculty and staff are working with *Writing and Leading: The Four Trends* to identify reading and writing adaptations.

- The after-school programs of Terrific Tuesdays and Whiz Kids have provided students with creative learning opportunities. Student teachers Nicole Bruno, Lynne McCown, and Anna Robinson volunteered to help with the Whiz Kids program. Nicole worked with the Folk Arts Class, Lynne helped with Is It Magic or Is It Science, and Anna assisted with the Puppetry class.

- Social-Emotional, Creative Curriculum, and the Response to Intervention (RtI) were incorporated into the curriculum.

- Faculty and staff worked on the creation of a Family Lending Library. The intent is for families to have the opportunity to check out learning activities that can be used at home.



Valeska Hinton Leadership Team



Nicole Bruno, Bradley Student Teacher, in her classroom at Valeska Hinton

Student Teaching Notes

“I began student teaching at Valeska Hinton ECEC in January, 2009, and was thrilled to have the opportunity to work in such a supportive environment. I was placed in a kindergarten classroom with Mrs. Julie McGrath and Mrs. Karen Jackson. I have never met two teachers who complement each other so well. They exemplify a true teaching team. While student teaching, I have been able to use the Work Sampling System which is, in my opinion, the most effective form of authentic assessment. Every day I take anecdotal notes and pictures in order to assess the children in my classroom. For conferences, I had collected several core items that Mrs. McGrath and I were able to share with the parents. I had learned about the Work Sampling System in my classes at Bradley University, but I gained first-hand experience with using this form of assessment while teaching at Valeska Hinton Center.

Hinton Center.

From the moment I entered Mrs. McGrath and Mrs. Jackson's classroom, I was treated as a member of the team. Working with these two teachers has shown me the importance of collaboration when it comes to educating children. I was given the support that I needed to take over the teaching responsibilities and the feedback that I needed to grow as a teacher. I have also been able to develop and strengthen my classroom management skills which I will need in order to be an effective teacher. After my experience at Valeska, I feel confident in myself as a teacher and ready to have a classroom of my own.” - Nicole Bruno

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“Student teaching has been very rewarding for me perhaps because of, and in spite of, the challenges. Effective collaboration with an established teaching team has taken time, observation, and patience. I had to become familiar with the children and the adults in the classroom before I really became comfortable and willing to show my true personality and take educational risks. I learned to plan increasingly successful lessons and to better respond to children’s questions and focus on individual needs. With encouragement from Ms. Brown and Mr. Harris, I have gained a practical understanding of what a structured, yet spontaneous, learning environment feels like and how to create it.” - Anna Robinson



Anna Robinson, Bradley student teacher, in her classroom at Valeska Hinton School.

“Before beginning my student teaching at Valeska Hinton, I had field experiences at two catholic schools and a pre-kindergarten special-education program. Also, I worked in a private, upscale preschool for two years. These were wonderful experiences for me. They helped to shape my philosophy on education and my beliefs on how children should be treated.



Bradley student teacher, Lynne McCown, in her Valeska Hinton classroom.

These different programs had one thing in common. The majority of children they served came from upper-middle-class families who were predominantly white. Valeska Hinton serves a majority non-affluent African-American population. Because of this, I had prepared myself for a completely different experience than any I had before. My time at Valeska has been eye-opening. These children have very different experiences than others I have worked with in the past. Many of them are dealing with issues as six- and seven-year-olds that I, as a 23-year-old, don’t know if I would be able to handle. The topics of their conversations make

me worry that they have lost some of their innocence. When I really listen to them, though, I realize that the way they talk about these issues shows that they still process information in a way that is very on-target for children their age. There seems to be an element of innocence that cannot be lost just because they are children. My first-grade experience with Ms. Pettinger and Ms. McKenzie has shown me that regardless of experience, children are children. It is a lesson I will take with me into my teaching career.” - Lynne McCown

Dr. Beth Bussan to Retire

Dr. Bussan will be retiring at the end of this school year. The faculty and staff have been most fortunate to have Beth as Principal of Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education. She came to the Center in 2004 with a breath of fresh air, and she has graced us with her love, care, and respect for everyone in the educational community. Her e2 passion for the teaching and learning process has excited and transformed us as we tackled new ways of thinking and incorporating research-based programs and learning activities. Throughout the years, she has been a true advocate for students, families, teachers, and the community. We will miss her loving touch and her energetic spirit, however, we know she will continue to work tirelessly and be a proponent of quality educational programs. She leaves with our love, and we wish her much joy and success with all her new endeavors.



Kemper Teaching Academy and PDS Spring Celebration

A combined Teaching Academy and Spring Celebration was held on Wednesday, April 22, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. in the Bradley University Garrett Center. The theme was: *Joy in Teaching and Learning*. Dr. Nancy Sherman, from the Bradley Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development, shared ideas of how to enjoy working in our educational settings and how to spot signs of stress in students.



Dr. Nancy Sherman, Bradley University Professor, ELH Department.

Each Professional Development School as well as each Site Coordinator was recognized and thanked for the hard work and efforts they have given during the past school year.

“The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards” - Antatole France

Whittier Primary School

FIVE FANTASTIC STUDENT TEACHERS!

by **Dr. Cecile Arquette**
Site Coordinator



Whittier Primary is very welcoming to Bradley Teacher Education students as they learn to be teachers. Whittier's doors are always open to BU students for early field experiences, tutoring opportunities and volunteer work. This spring, five students were welcomed to hone their craft at Whittier. Here is what they had to say.

Jody: "Student teaching has opened my eyes to the world of the first-grade reader. It's very rewarding to watch beginning readers blossom in my classroom. One unfortunate thing I have learned since I've been in the classroom is that many students do not read at home. Therefore, it is important to teach students the skills they need to improve their reading and give them the gift of time to put those skills into action. As my class has taught me, "the more you read, the better READER you'll be!"

Standing: Jody DiOrio, 1st grade
Samantha Demeritt, 2nd grade
Cassandra Dowd, 4th grade
Seated: Jessica Beiswanger, 2nd grade
Erin Brennan, Kindergarten

Samantha: "Student teaching is one of the most motivating experiences I've had throughout my educational journey at Bradley University. Whittier has provided me with an inspirational teacher who has helped me grow as an educator. Whittier provides amazing supporters throughout the school who have made me want to become a better individual and teacher. I would not trade this experience, and I will truly miss Whittier and the children! My passion for education has deepened throughout student teaching."

Cassie: "My student teaching experience at Whittier has taught me the importance of collaboration with my colleagues. I know I can go to fellow teachers for ideas or inspirations for a lesson, and seek support and encouragement from them."

Jessica: "Student teaching at Whittier Primary has taught me that each day at school is going to be different. The students surprise me every day! This changing environment has done wonders to help prepare me for my future as an elementary school teacher. I am looking forward to seeing what my last month of teaching of will bring."

Erin: "Student teaching is a time to take all the knowledge I have gained from my Bradley classes and apply it to a real classroom. In my kindergarten classroom, I face challenges and obstacles anywhere from bathroom accidents and teeth coming out, to nonstop tattling and students who fall into a deep sleep during rest time and refuse to wake up. It may be a loud environment, but I can see that my students are grasping their letters and sounds and other kindergarten concepts. Even though some lessons are executed better than others, every day is a new day. Therefore, I feel that my student teaching experience will provide a strong foundation as I practice, learn from, and modify my teaching skills."

PDS Partnership Leads to Research

The meshing of teacher and student needs at the PDS site, with university students' learning and research, exemplifies the philosophy of PDS. For the past three years, students in Dr. Arquette's Language Arts Methods and Emergent Literacy classes have been writing with Whittier students in dialogue journals. (A dialogue journal is writing done between a student and another person, usually an adult, but sometimes with another student).

During the second year of the project, Dr. Arquette interviewed Whittier teachers and university students to find out how to improve the project. This fall (the third) year of the project, she decided to interview Whittier students to get their point of view of the project. Dr. Arquette received support for this research from the offices of CRS and OTEFD on the BU campus. This enabled her to hire Jamie Taylor and Erin Nichols as research assistants, and supported their travel to present their research findings.

Jamie and Erin (along with Carrie Hoffman, Dr. Arquette's graduate assistant) interviewed a total of 104 Whittier students. They also helped write a presentation proposal, which was accepted for the National PDS Conference. Jamie, Erin and Dr. Arquette traveled to Daytona, Florida for the presentation in March and are continuing their collaboration, co-authoring a paper to be submitted to a national professional teaching journal.



Bradley students Jamie Taylor and Erin Nichols at the NAPDS Conference

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A Successful Publishing Project

As reported in the Fall, 2008 newsletter, all classrooms at Whittier were able to participate in creating professional-looking hardbound books. This program is courtesy of Student Treasures Publishing, a company that provides book kits for students at low, to no cost. In Whittier’s case, there was no cost to the students or teachers as each initial book was free. We are planning to continue this school-wide writing initiative next year with a publication date in the Spring.

Get to Know Our PDS School Principals!

Roosevelt Magnet School

“Being the new principal at Roosevelt has been very interesting and challenging. It is my first principal-ship and I have been blessed with two excellent, hard working, and very supportive assistant principals (Brett Elliott and Jacqueline Neiukirk). We are a very unique, nontraditional team, but Roosevelt is a very unique, nontraditional school. The three of us work very well together. Their support means a lot to me and it keeps me encouraged. I have learned that change takes time, and I am not always patient.

I am pleased with the support the administrative team has been getting from parents and the district. One of the greatest challenges has been student eligibility and discipline. As a team, "WE" see this as being the most important mission that we have this year. The focus is on academic achievement, and students must have passing academic and arts grades to participate in any performance (in or out of school) or extracurricular activities. Our parents are extremely supportive of these efforts and they continue to let us know that this is what they want for their student (s).

We are seeing a turn-around in the classrooms. Students are working very hard to keep their grades up. Roosevelt students have always been able to rise to any occasion, but "WE" want to make sure that they are always doing their best and not just when they feel it is beneficial for them.



Mrs. Noly Branscumb,
Principal
Roosevelt Magnet School

The emphasis for the school, and everyone in it, is on accountability and responsibility. Everyone has a job to do and the expectation is that it is done to the best of their ability with no excuses. This goes for the administration, the staff, the students, and the parents. We all have to work together for the good of the students. We all have to take responsibility for our strengths and weaknesses without making excuses for them. We are accountable for our successes and our failures. We want results, not excuses. We do not have a problem unless we can come to the table with a solution.

It is very important that we, as a school, help educate the future teachers. There is no substitute for “hands on” experience. It is important to us as administrators because one never knows what the future brings and many of our novice and student teachers do end up working for District 150. If we can help to train them, we



Roosevelt Magnet School

can take responsibility for making them the best that they can be which can only help us in the long run. It is also important as a weeding-out process. Not everyone can be a teacher and the earlier they find out, the better off everyone will be. Most of what is learned about teaching does not come from a book, but from classroom experiences.

Roosevelt’s staff, students, and administration worked very hard for the Spotlight School Award. Many look at our population and feel that we cannot be successful in academics. The principal from last year, Mrs. Taunya Jenkins, made sure everyone understood that our students could be academically strong if everyone did their part and set their expectations high. As a school, Roosevelt’s staff and students worked very hard over the two years that I was an assistant principal under her leadership to meet these expectations and to help our students become academically strong, responsible, and accountable for their education.”

Manual Middle and Manual High School



Dr. Sharon Desmoulin-Kherat
Principal
Manual Middle
and Manual High School

Dr. Sharon Desmoulin-Kherat became the principal at Manual High School in the school year 2008-2009. Prior to this she was the principal at Whittier Primary School. While not only having the challenges of being the new principal, she also had the challenge of directing Manual through their restructuring process which began this school year as well.

Dr. Kherat said as the new principal, she has been trying to provide support to staff for a variety of strategies to meet children where they are. She said that the Leadership Team as helped her adjust to her new role, and that they are very focused and committed to the school and its success. Dr. Kherat said she has been experiencing many exciting things and has been seeing a lot of progress. She contributes much of the success at Manual this far to her team members and their commitment to making the re-building a success.

Dr. Kherat's focus, thus far, as been to improve student learning through methodology, instruction, a formative assessment, classroom management, and professional development. Dr. Kherat is dedicated to making sure that each child at Manual is successful in their learning

and that all staff is committed to helping each child reach their potential. She has been working busily at getting things up and running and implementing the new model. Dr. Kherat says that she is excited at being a part of Manual and is looking forward to the upcoming years.



Manual Middle and Manual High School

Whittier Primary School

"This has been a fantastic year as the Principal of Whittier Primary School. We have great students, families, and a terrific staff. Some of my experience this year included leading the staff through several new initiatives including RTI and PBIS. We have worked together to improve behavior in our school as well as provide targeted interventions for our students. I have truly cherished this year and have learned a great deal about myself, this profession, balance, and life. A school is a business of people and I appreciate everyone I have been honored to work with and meet.

My biggest challenge has been making sure that everything we do is aligned with our mission and vision. We approached and implemented these initiatives with integrity and worked tirelessly to make these programs work to benefit our students. We have become more data driven and there is a "rhyme and reason" to all that we do here. The staff is focused on student achievement and we work very hard to meet the individual needs of all of our students.



Mrs. Renee Andrews
Principal
Whittier Primary School

The PDS partnership has greatly benefited our school. This partnership has challenged and allowed us to implement a school-wide book-writing project and a great journaling project. We have been the recipients of hours of volunteered time from Bradley students that help us meet our students' needs. The PDS Partnership also allows us to provide high-quality experiences for Bradley students. We are very grateful for, and proud of, this partnership."



Whittier Primary School

Joy is the gift of giving through teaching. There will always be someone who needs you, someone who needs something from you. The question for those who teach is whether teaching is the way for them to give. For most, the answer is yes.

Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Center

Dr. Beth Bussan, Principal
Valeska Hinton

Dr. Beth Bussan has been the principal at Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center for five years. Prior to Valeska, Dr. Bussan was employed with Peoria Public Schools District 15 as a coordinator working with various early childhood and special education programs. When Dr. Bussan became the Principal of Valeska Hinton, she said her biggest challenge was getting used to the idea of staying in one place during the day as she was used to running all day long. Dr. Bussan used the book by Linda Lymons "How Do You Know They Care: A Principal's Challenge" to begin her work at Valeska. She began by forming relationships with her staff. She has worked diligently to provide her students and families with cutting-edge teaching practices to give them the best learning experience possible. Dr. Bussan said she is pleased with Valeska Hinton's participating as a PDS school with Bradley University. She stated that Valeska has benefited from participating and Sherrie Pardieck, site coordinator from Bradley, works

extremely well with the staff which takes Valeska to the next level of thinking. She hopes the collaboration will continue for many years.

Dr. Bussan spoke very highly of all the Valeska Hinton staff and about their care and commitment to educating children and their families. She stated that being at Valeska Hinton is "A great sunset to my career." Dr. Bussan is retiring from District 150 this year and will be greatly missed by her staff, students, and families. She said that what is most memorable to her, in her time with the district, is how she was able to work together collaboratively with the aim to educate the next generation of people and doing that with the upmost care and commitment.



Valeska Hinton Early Childhood
Education Center

Professional Development Schools

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