

Kara Krausse

Kara Krausse graduated from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh in the spring of 2007. We were fortunate to hire her at Luther Elementary that following fall. At Oshkosh she earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Spanish. She later earned her Master of Education in Teaching & Learning at Carroll University in September of 2011.

Kara's philosophy is that students need an environment where problem solving and critical thinking skills are fostered on a regular basis. In today's ever-changing diverse world, teachers need to be able to provide an environment that connects and reaches the whole child: emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially.

Kara has high expectations for all of her students. During the first weeks of school, she creates an environment that is safe, responsible, respectful, and enables students to be ready to learn everyday by modeling all behaviors, routines, and procedures. Being able to speak Spanish has allowed her to make meaningful connections with her families and makes them feel welcome and safe. Kara believes "If families share my philosophy and make a connection with my views, expectations, and procedures, then all students will feel the benefits and success of this relationship."

In terms of innovative projects and programs, Kara notes that technology plays a key role in her teaching style. One project in particular she uses is a program called "Flix-Time" where students can create videos using images, clips, and music. While teaching a non-fiction unit, the students pick a non-fiction topic of interest. To encourage critical thinking skills, each student generates three questions about their

topic of choice. Students find answers to these questions through research in addition to finding out important facts. Students then create a video using images from the internet, the content researched, and music to teach their fellow students what they learned. Another technology integration project Kara employs involves picking a person of interest during our biography unit and creating a “Facebook” page from the point of view of that individual. Students had to research an individual and find the necessary information in order to adopt their point of view. The “Facebook” page included a timeline, friends, and important milestones reached in a lifetime. This project required a high-level of critical thinking skills to write from the point of view of someone historical.

A positive change Kara sees in education is the adoption of “Common Core Standards.” Current education needs have adjusted to a more student-constructivist approach to learning. She also notes the collaboration is going to play a very key role for the future of education. Teaching is one of the most difficult jobs on the planet and a job that cannot be done alone. We need collaboration in order to make sure all students are getting the education they deserve.

A parent wrote the following: “Mrs. Krausse sends a letter to her incoming students the summer before school starts. Receiving that letter, was one of many times that I felt this indeed, was a truly special teacher. There were several things that struck me in the letter to her students-- here are a few of them: “I have some important expectations for you to follow. I expect you to be ready to learn everyday! It’s easy in the first few weeks of school as everything is new and exciting. The real trick is to keep the excitement going after the thrill of the newness is gone away. I expect nothing less than your best!. What can you expect from me? For starters, you can expect me to

care about you, I do! I love teaching. This is where I want to be and I wouldn't trade that for anything." The parent closed by stating that on many occasions she observed Mrs. Krausse demonstrating incredible compassion and drive in her commitment to her students and that is why she believes Mrs. Krause is one of those truly special teachers that really stand out! And that first letter is something that neither my son nor I will ever forget!

With great pleasure, we forward the nomination of Kara Krausse for the Kohl Fellowship Foundation Award.