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IN BRIEF is published three times a year by Skokie School District 68.

Have a question or a comment? Want more information? Visit www.Skokie68.org or call the district office at (847) 676-9000.

Science students 'reach for the stars' with help from Northwestern

When a tall guy in his 20s rolled up to Old Orchard Junior High on a skateboard for the first day of school, students were quick to admire his mode of transportation. They figured he wasn't a student, but he didn't seem to be a teacher, either.

As it turns out, he's a little of both. He is Matt Schuchhardt, a graduate fellow at Northwestern University who will be at OOHJH as part of the Reach for the Stars program sponsored by the National Science Foundation.

The program places STEM graduate students in K-12 science classrooms for 10-15 hours a week throughout the academic year. (STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics.) The goal is to improve graduate students' communication and teaching skills while contributing to STEM content and instruction for their K-12 partners. The underlying idea is that the fellows will serve as role models for the younger students, increasing interest and encouraging more of those students to pursue STEM fields at college and afterward.

Schuchhardt's background is in computer engineering. His research at Northwestern involves collecting biofeedback from people as they work with computers, then using that information to redesign computers in ways that improve users' experience.

Schuchhardt will team up with Andrew

Augustine, who teaches seventh-grade science at OOHJH. According to Supt. Frances McTague, "Matt will be working with Andrew in planning new science lessons that are part of our curriculum but could be augmented by Matt's real-world experience in STEM activity." She said Schuchhardt may also spend time in sixth- and eighth-grade science classes, and math classes.

Augustine explained that the seventh-grade science curriculum begins with the study of light, progresses to microscopes and cell biology, and finishes up with earth science. During the light unit, for example, Schuchhardt could help students devise a computer model to see how light reflects off different surfaces and test it in class.

"District 68 is pushing technology, and with Matt's background in computer engineering he should be able to help our students and foster their interest in that area," Augustine said. "This gives us a person who really knows this field."

In the first year of the Reach for the Stars program, Northwestern has placed graduate fellows in six Chicago-area schools, including both Niles Township high schools. OOHJH is the only middle school participating. "Old Orchard is fortunate to be part of this program and we're really looking forward to it," Augustine added. "It all comes down to the kids—what gets them excited gets me excited."



(Back row, from left) Jen Anderson, Derek Fugate, Bryan Kelly, Trevor Nicholas, Jeff Kaplan; (front row, from left) Kate Whitehead, Judy Wheatley, Amanda Steegmueller, Paula Kim, Erica Brand, Christine Perkins, Allison Yoder, Katie King. Not pictured: Dan Anderson, Mary Helmstetter, Abby Livers, Melissa Roter.

Welcome, new teachers

Daniel Anderson, part-time P.E. teacher at Highland, graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a bachelor's degree in physical education. He was a teaching assistant at Devonshire last year and will be a teaching assistant at Highland this year in addition to his P.E. role.

Erica Brand, sixth-grade science teacher at OOHJ, received a B.A. from the University of Iowa and a master's in elementary education from National-Louis University. She student taught in seventh- and eighth-grade science at Aptakisic Junior High School.

Derek Fugate, seventh-grade social studies teacher at OOHJ, received a B.A. from Wittenberg University in Ohio and is working on an M.A. in elementary education at National-Louis University. He completed student teaching at Lincoln Hall Middle School and was a special education teacher assistant at Middleton School.

Mary Helmstetter, kindergarten teacher at Devonshire, received a B.S. in elementary education from the University of Illinois. She student taught at Westgate Elementary School in Arlington Heights and worked at a Sylvan Learning Center during the summer.

Jeffrey Kaplan, first-grade teacher at Jane Stenson, graduated from Indiana University with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. He was a teaching assistant in the ELL kindergarten class at Jane Stenson School last school year.

Bryan Kelly, social worker at Devonshire, received a bachelor's degree in education from Illinois Wesleyan University and a master's in social work from the University of Illinois. He did his internship at Niles North High School last school year.

Paula Kim, social worker at OOHJ, received a B.A. from Northwestern University and a master's in social work from Columbia University in New York. She worked for three years in the Chicago Public Schools.

Katie King, kindergarten teacher at Jane Stenson, graduated from Purdue University with a bachelor's degree and from North Park University with an M.A. in education. She was a teaching assistant at Jane Stenson School last school year.

Abby Livers, kindergarten teacher at Highland, graduated from Indiana University with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She worked in Wilmette District 39 last year as a paraprofessional and long-term substitute.

Trevor Nicholas, general music teacher at Highland, received his bachelor's degree in music education from North Park University. He was a long-term substitute in general music last year at Highland School.

Christine Perkins, kindergarten teacher at Jane Stenson, received a B.S. from Michigan State University. She taught at Pope John XXIII School in Evanston for five years.

Melissa Roter, fifth-grade teacher at Highland, has a B.S. from the University of Michigan and a master's in education from DePaul University. She did her student teaching at Greenbriar School in Northbrook and Todd Hall in Lincolnwood District 74.

Amanda Steegmueller, fourth-grade teacher at Highland, graduated from the University of Illinois with a bachelor of science degree. She student taught in fourth grade at Edison School and was a teaching assistant in the District 69 preschool program for two years.

Judy Wheatley, gifted and talented teacher at Devonshire, has a B.S. in elementary education from the University of Illinois and a master's from National-Louis University. She was a fourth-grade teacher at Jane Stenson School from 1991 through 1997 and a gifted education teacher at Highland School from 1997 through 2000.

Kate Whitehead, special education kindergarten teacher at Highland, received her B.S. from Eastern Kentucky University. She has been teaching developmental kindergarten for the Niles Township District for Special Education for six years.

Allison Yoder, sixth-grade special education teacher at OOHJ, received a bachelor's degree from Winona State University and a master's in special education from Grand Canyon University. At Devonshire School, where she finished her student teaching in a special education classroom, she was a one-to-one teaching assistant for more than a year and last year was a long-term substitute art teacher.

New position merges technology, teaching

Along with all the other new staff members, District 68 is pleased to welcome Jennifer Anderson as its Director of Instructional Technology.

This is a new position, created in conjunction with the district's increased emphasis on using technology to teach students and track their progress. According to Superintendent Frances McTague, "The position is designed to support



Jennifer Anderson

development of integrated technologies into teaching and learning."

The district wanted someone with expertise in instructional technology, particularly in the area of storing and analyzing student achievement data. "Analyzing data is my specialty," Anderson said.

"District 68 has all sorts of

good tools in place for handling interventions and monitoring information about student achievement. Now we want to see what we can pull out

of all that data and how we can use it even more effectively to make decisions."

The district also wanted someone who could train teachers and help them integrate technology—both hardware and software—into their classrooms. For examples, interactive whiteboards are installed in more than half of the district classrooms and more are on the way. "My impression is that teachers love these 'smartboards,' and I'll be running some professional development workshops to increase their use and effectiveness," Anderson explained. "My push is to maximize use of the technology tools we have in place."

Anderson's other responsibilities include updating and refreshing the web sites for District 68 as a whole and for individual schools. She would like to see every teacher in the district have a presence on the web. She also is working on an overall vision for the district's electronic communications.

For the past three years Anderson has been

Continued on back page

Nominating process begins soon for board candidates

While the next election for the District 68 Board of Education won't be held until April 5, 2011, the process is already under way for potential candidates.

Dates for circulating and filing petitions to run for the Board have been moved up to accommodate early voting, which allows voting up to 22 days before election day. As a result, election officials must have everything ready a month earlier than they did before early voting went into effect.

Three of the seven seats on the District 68 board will be on the ballot in the April election. The terms of board members David Ehrlich, Paul Livieri and Tanja Tuck come to an end in 2011. District residents interested in running can begin collecting signatures for nominating petitions on Sept. 21, 2010. Petitions must be filed between Dec. 13 and Dec. 20, 2010—about five weeks earlier than in previous years.

Running for a seat on the board is a nonpartisan process, so candidates do not have to declare a party affiliation. A candidate must be at least 18 years old,

a U.S. citizen, a registered voter, and a resident of the school district for at least one year prior to the election.

More information about eligibility, required forms and filing deadlines is available from the Cook County Clerk (www.cookcountyclerk.com) and from the Illinois Association of School Boards (www.iasb.com/elections/qualifications). Forms can be obtained from the County Clerk's office or at the District 68 Educational Service Center, 9440 Kenton Ave.

District 68 has convened a nominating committee to review and endorse potential candidates. Anyone interested in running for the board seat is encouraged to meet with the committee. Applications for endorsement by the committee are available at the Educational Service Center or they can be downloaded from the district web site (www.skokie68.org). Completed applications for the nominating committee must be returned by noon Sept. 24. Interviews will be held Oct. 3.

For more information, contact Supt. Frances McTague at 847-676-9000 or fmctague@skokie68.org.

IN BRIEF

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Board of Education meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month in the Educational Service Center at 9440 Kenton Ave. You are invited to attend.

In Brief is written and produced by Complete Communications, Inc. Skokie, IL.

Technology

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an implementation coordinator at LiveText, Inc., which provides web-based tools for developing, assessing, and measuring student learning, primarily at the university level. She also has five years experience in nearby school districts. She worked in instructional technology at New Trier High School in Winnetka, and taught information literacy at Hawthorn Middle School in Vernon Hills, where she developed a “21st century literacy” curriculum as part of her master’s program.

She enjoys being in the classroom and expects to use a hands-on approach working with students and teachers.

Anderson received a bachelor’s degree from Juniata College in Pennsylvania and a master’s in education from North Park University in Chicago. She is working on her doctorate in instructional technology management from Northcentral University, an accredited online university based in Arizona.



Join Us at Fall Fest!

5–7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 16
Old Orchard Junior High School
9310 Kenton Ave.

**For currently enrolled District 68 students
and their families**