

May 12, 2017

Dear Steele Staff and Families,

I thought I would share a bit more about myself and the path that led me to Steele Elementary.

I grew up in a small town in southern Indiana with two brothers and a sister. My older brother is a Chemistry teacher and softball coach at the high school we attended. My sister is a high school English teacher in Evansville, Indiana. My younger brother has the heart of a teacher; however, he puts his leadership skills to use working for Google. When I graduated from college, my adventurous spirit took me to Houston, Texas for my first teaching job in the Aldine Independent School District. While in Houston, I taught 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, and served as an assistant principal.

After 10 years in Texas, I moved to Overland Park, Kansas for my first school leadership position. During my 13 years in Kansas, I was given the opportunity to be the founding leader of Delaware Ridge Elementary School, an Expeditionary Learning School. In 2010, Delaware Ridge was identified as an EL Mentor School and served as a model for schools across the EL network.

An unintended consequence of moving to Kansas was meeting and marrying my husband, Doug. Doug came with two special gifts, Meghan and Kate, my step-daughters, who at the time, were just entering their teens. Meghan is now an architectural engineer in Lenexa, Kansas. On May 19, Kate is graduating from Nursing school. She will begin her first job at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City this summer!

In 2014, Doug and I moved to Colorado to pursue new professional opportunities and to explore the endless outdoor adventures Colorado has to offer. After serving for two years as a Director of Elementary in the Douglas County School District working with 16 elementary schools, I missed the day-to-day interaction with teachers, students, and families. I am deeply invested in the growth and development of teachers and students, which is why I decided to leave my district level position to pursue a school leadership position. Over the last several months, I have explored school districts and schools in the Denver Metropolitan area and found myself drawn to the vision and mission of Denver Public Schools, and more specifically, Steele Elementary. I am excited for the opportunity to serve as your next principal.

Over the last two weeks, I have been able to spend time at Steele working with Kevin and the staff to ensure a smooth transition. I have also spent time in classrooms with teachers and students. Last Wednesday, I happened to visit the Science Lab when a group of 4th graders were building rockets with Mr. Sodano. On Friday, the kindergartners asked me important questions, like, "What's your favorite color?" I like most colors, but shades of blue are my favorite. "When will you be our principal?" Officially, July 24th, but you will see me at Steele throughout the months of May and June! "Do you have a boyfriend?" No, but I do have a husband. "Do you have any daughters or sons?" Yes, I have two step-daughters, Meghan and Kate. On Saturday, digging in to help get the gardens ready was a wonderful opportunity to meet more families.

The Steele Art Show was quite impressive! I loved seeing the artwork inspired by Mrs. Ungar and created by the very talented Steele students. It was wonderful to meet many of you at this amazing community event! I look forward to seeing you at the Wash Park Home Tour on Saturday!

Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Cindy Kapeller