6-6-2013

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Leah Hoyt ’13 Builds Connections while Student Teaching with Alumna

Summary: Leah Hoyt ’13 is mentored by cooperating teacher Katie Graham LaPointe ’01.

(June 6, 2013)-Leah Hoyt ’13 spent the spring semester student teaching with Katie Graham LaPointe ’01, an English and reading teacher at Brooklyn Junior High School in Brooklyn Park. Hoyt spent several weeks observing LaPointe’s classroom before taking the lead for the final two weeks of her service. According to Hoyt, this “control of classroom responsibilities and activities” was an important aspect of her professional development, and she appreciates the agency LaPointe allowed her to exercise during their time together.

With the common ground of a Morris education, the two were able to build their lesson plans on like concepts and strategies. Pointing to similarities in their experiences as Morris students, Hoyt laughingly notes that both women even rented “the same blue house [in Morris]!” She appreciates having had the opportunity to work with a skilled teacher like LaPointe, and she feels inspired by the fact that they both attended the same institution. Hoyt notes hopefully, “maybe someday I’ll be that good.”

“Katie was very helpful,” she says. “She talked openly about situations and gave me a lot of freedom to interact with students’ parents. I was happy to have her as a resource.”

LaPointe was not the first Morris alumna to encourage Hoyt and her dream of becoming a teacher. Hoyt’s parents, Troy ’86 and Darcy Ayers Hoyt ’86, also earned degrees in education at Morris, and they supported their daughter’s decision to follow in their footsteps. In fact, Hoyt comes from a family of teachers. Troy and Darcy teach at the elementary level, her sister, Brianne, teaches early childhood in Alaska, and her younger sister, Mariah, hopes to someday become a high school teacher.

Now that she is finished student teaching, Hoyt is looking for a full-time appointment in a southwest Minnesota school district. She is licensed to teach elementary and middle-level communication arts and literature, and she looks forward to working in either or both fields over the course of her career. As she ponders the future, Hoyt adds that she, too, would like to one day act as a cooperating teacher for a Morris teaching candidate.

“I think it’d be cool to see what Morris is doing and how it has changed...to see what [the students] know and what they’re doing.”

According to Gwen Rudney, Division of Education chair, student teaching placement is critical. In order to ensure a good fit between a Morris teaching candidate and his or her cooperating teacher, the division relies heavily on a school’s administration to facilitate meaningful partnerships. The division has also worked to build and maintain relationships with districts throughout Minnesota to ensure positive learning experiences for students in the education program. In a recent survey, 100 percent of respondents reported positive communication and partnership with Morris education programs.
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