

CESA 6 RITE Program Helps People with Passion for Teaching

Licensure program focuses on teacher shortage areas

Angie Schlitt was a couple courses shy of earning her teaching degree when a scheduling snafu lead her to graduate in 2003 without it.

With a bachelor of art and minor in art history, Schlitt found jobs in marketing and administrative work for insurance companies. She got married and had two daughters.

But she was unhappy and stressed at work, longing to be more creative. She took a job as a paraprofessional at Erin School helping in the art room and her passion was reignited.

“I knew, yeah, this is what I need to do. I need to get my teaching license,” Schlitt said.

She turned to CESA 6 and its **Residency in Teacher Education (RITE) Program**, a DPI-approved alternative pathway to teacher licensure. After a 10-month hybrid program of online coursework, monthly on-site instruction and student teaching at Erin School and Slinger High School, Schlitt is poised to get her teaching license in EC-12 Art Education.



“It’s just been amazing. I’m very, very happy that I did it,” said Schlitt, who fought back tears as she talked about pursuing her dream. “I think I’ve wanted to be an art teacher since probably I was in 2nd or 3rd grade.”

Schlitt is one of 28 RITE candidates graduating in May 2018 with more teacher candidates anticipated to graduate throughout the remainder of 2018. Since 2015, the CESA 6 RITE Program has helped 138 teacher candidates earn teaching licensure. The program trains teachers in WI teacher shortage areas, such as technology and engineering education, cross-categorical special education, english as a second language (ESL), secondary science, math, art and music. Candidates must have a bachelor's degree, or higher, in the desired field of licensure from an accredited Institution of Higher Education with a cumulative 2.75 GPA or higher. Special Education and ESL candidates may possess a bachelor's degree in any area.



Also graduating is Brent Hug, who earned a degree in landscape and interior architecture in 2015 from UW-Stevens Point. He worked in finished carpentry landscaping and began serving as a substitute teacher in fall 2016, helping out in the Cedarburg, Slinger and West Bend school districts.

He was hooked.

One of the schools told him about the RITE Program and he enrolled by summer 2017. “It was an awesome experience for me. It was a lot of work but it’s totally worth it.”

Hug has been teaching technical education classes at Slinger High involving architecture, engineering, photography, building construction and metal technologies. Unlike Schlitt who was student teaching, Hug was hired by Slinger on a Wisconsin DPI one-year license with stipulations while he earned his full licensure through RITE.

“I absolutely love it and wish I would have done it sooner,” Hug said. “I’ve learned a lot just by teaching.”

Tamara Draxler already had nearly 25 years of teaching experience when she enrolled in the RITE Program as a way to earn a Cross-Categorical Special Education (MC-EA) teaching licensure.

After 16 years teaching second grade at a Catholic school in Milwaukee and five years serving as Director of the Huntington Learning Center, Draxler stepped away and then began subbing at her daughters’ elementary school. The subbing quickly turned to working as a special education paraprofessional there for the past five years.

Her daughters now 15 and 12, Draxler said she is ready to go back to teaching and wanted to add special education to her regular teaching licensure.

“The time was right to make a change,” she said, so she enrolled in RITE and began working toward her new license. She worked as an Educational Aide, while balancing her family life with classes, homework and residency placement.



Draxler was happy to be away from her children only once a month instead of three times a week in traditional classes. RITE candidates attend classes Friday night and Saturday once a month; the rest of the work is online using Google Classroom.

“It’s a very efficient, cost-effective way to obtain a new license,” she said.

RITE candidates set up a Facebook group to collaborate and bounce ideas off of each other. Draxler made friends with two classmates from LaCrosse and Ripon, adding, “We will lean on each other for years to come.”

If you are interested in learning more about the RITE Program, please contact Nancy Jaeger, RITE Director at njaeger@cesa6.org or 920-236-0508 or see www.cesa6.org/services/rite.