



Teacher Spotlight: Kit Howard
1st grade teacher, Trailside Elementary School

Where are you from?

Omaha, Nebraska

Kids/Family?

Husband, John, who teaches 4th grade at PPES

Two kids: Jensen (23) and Kate (19), both of whom are PCSD alumni

Hobbies/Passions?

Running, biking, and anything outside. Love dogs too!

Education

- University of Nebraska: BA, Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, and Special Education
- MA, Education Reading and Literacy Development
- Endorsements in gifted learning, ESL, reading, and technology
- Working toward becoming Board Certified

What inspired you to become a teacher?

I had trouble learning to read, yet all of my teachers made me feel good about myself and made learning something that was hard fun. I absolutely loved going to school. As a teacher, I can help kids through challenges they may face in learning and identify their individual strengths by focusing on the whole child. Every child has a gift to give; you just have to find it and help make it shine.

What is Wilson Foundations® and how does it help kids K-3 become proficient readers?

When I grew up, reading was taught using whole language teaching. The instruction was incidental. This approach let kids to select their own reading material and emphasized the recognition of words, not the phonetic sounds the letters made.

Foundations helps kids understand why words are spelled the way they are and how the letters sound instead of memorizing words and word lists. Focusing on spelling and phonetics that are basics to English language sets the stage for reading proficiency. Foundations makes learning to read fun while laying the groundwork for lifelong literacy.



How does Foundations benefit students who need additional support to become proficient readers?

In order to learn to read, different systems and networks of the brain must work together. For children who may struggle to recognize letters or process sounds and phonetic, like children with dyslexia, Foundations provides a multi-sensor, systematic, and explicit way of teaching kids, with the goal of automaticity – or an automatic response - when they read. From language comprehension, phonetic awareness, and word recognition, Foundations helps ensure that kids understand all the parts of a word and how those parts work together.

What does PCEF mean to you?

I am so grateful for all of the support that we, as teachers, receive through PCEF. Foundations, which is funded by PCEF, has been the most impactful program in improving my students' reading skills. It is incredible to teach in a community where the teachers and schools feel supported and have access to resources we need to make sure all of our students have what they need to learn and thrive.