



Jill Kopish Afterschool Program STEM Teacher

How long have you worked for PCSD? What grades have you taught?

I have worked for PCSD for 5 years. I first taught at PCHS as a science teacher. I taught 9th grade physical science, 10th grade Biology and 11th and 12th grade Space Science. More recently, I was the Science Specialist at JRES for 2 years. I have been teaching the STEM Afterschool Program for 2 years.

Where did you go to college? Degree in?

I have a Bachelor of Science from Michigan Technological University (MTU).

Kids/Family?

I have two boys. My oldest, Bryce, is a junior at PCHS. My youngest, Sean, is in the 5th grade at JRES.

Hobbies?

Skiing, biking, sewing, machine embroidery, knitting, candy making, chocolate molding, cake decorating, tatting and gardening.

Who/what inspired you to be a teacher?

I had a great aunt who was a teacher and she kept bugging me to get a teaching certificate. I had a bunch of unassigned electives, so I decided to go for it. I really got in to teaching when my youngest was in Kindergarten. I noticed he wasn't learning any science so volunteer taught science to his class. The kids loved it and I got the "teaching high" working with them. I was hooked. Growing up, I also had many great science teachers that challenged me and helped shape and develop my great love of science. I absorbed all they taught me, always wanting to learn more.

What keeps you teaching?

I like the challenge of bringing understanding to whatever subject in science I teach. Some subjects are a bit complex so I must work to make it understandable and memorable to my students. I also get great delight in introducing areas of science that students may not have any experience with. When they have fun, I have fun and vice versa. I delight in seeing their understanding increase and their love of science grow. I have created a few science "groupies". One group in particular chants, "Sci-ence, sci-ence" when they see me coming down the hall. How can you not feel empowered with that kind of reaction?



What do you consider to be the key benefits of the Afterschool Program?

For students and parents, I think the key benefit of the Afterschool programs is the peace of mind that there is a safe, nurturing environment for young students to go to when going home after school is not an option. I like that the students get to do lots of hands-on learning in Afterschool STEM. I believe they learn and retain more through a hands-on learning approach. Who knows, they might even discover a field of science that they really like that they hadn't thought or known about before.

How has PCEF's funding made an impact on the Afterschool STEM Program?

Funding by PCEF has helped my programs grow from just two elementary schools to all four. I'm able to reach more students and have a greater variety of lessons. Not only are there Afterschool Science lessons but STEM lessons too. I'm also able to offer better and more materials for my students to use in learning.