



LAB SCHOOLS SPOTLIGHT

Mike Jones

Life in the Laboratory Schools

Metcalfe's Middle School Science, Mike Jones, first came to Illinois State University for his undergraduate studies, graduating in 1995. After teaching in schools around central Illinois, he made his way back to ISU and has been teaching in the laboratory schools for the past six years, this being his 25th year in the classroom. His daughter, Katy, attended Metcalfe and UHigh, and is now attending IMSA in her sophomore year. Jones's son, Parker, is in the eighth grade at Metcalfe and his wife, Erika, also works at ISU as an assistant comptroller. He has two masters degrees in Curriculum and Educational Administration and Foundations.



Outside of the Classroom

Outside of the classroom, Jones is very involved with partnerships at Illinois State University. Over the years, Jones has taught methods classes for early childhood, elementary, and middle school science. This semester he is teaching TCH 239 - Teaching Scientific Inquiry.

Additionally, Jones has partnered with Dr. Mahua Biswas to assist in obtaining a scanning electron microscope for ISU. They are working on an outreach piece with writing curriculum on scale and proportion. Through his work serving on the advisory board at CeMaST, he is working to rewrite the Illinois Science Assessment questions (along with UHigh teacher, Donieka Solberg).

Jones also has an ongoing partnership with Northern Illinois University on their STEM outreach program. Using the theme, "Love the Book, Live the Science," he has developed curriculum, as well as tested others' curriculum, around fiction books centered around Science. In addition, Jones is one of two ambassadors (the other being Metcalfe teacher, Zack Gilbert) for National Geographic's Geo-Inquiry project, which looks at how to teach Geography through an inquiry lens. Through this project, he has worked closely with the Illinois Geography Alliance to put on summer workshops and training. This work comes in addition to his ten years of working with Brainpop as their Science advisor. Jones works on curriculum development, leads professional development, and has a role in the launch of their new science curriculum using virtual reality and data manipulation. Jones also works with Metcalfe's Kristi Sutter to coordinate and teach as part of the Movable Feast. This tech program is an intensive week over the summer that allows teachers to know and explore technology for use in their classrooms. Over 14,000 teachers have gone through the program over the last 20 years.

Jones' "why"

Jones explains that with his rich experiences at Illinois State University, and because of the many ISU faculty that have mentored him throughout the years, this is his chance to give back to the learners in our school, the community, and Illinois State University. "I don't know who will benefit from my work, but maybe some student will learn to love Science a little more, and that is what matters." Through his work, countless students now have access to quality science education materials.