

## **STEM Teacher Externship Newsletter article for Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities**

### **Building School + Business Partnerships through STEM Teacher Externships**

The Iowa STEM Teacher Externships Program aims to build bridges between Iowa's workplaces and STEM educators across the state by having teachers work at local businesses, organizations and other workplaces alongside knowledgeable and skilled employees for six weeks during the summer.

Since the program launched in 2009, over 850 Teacher Externs have worked at more than 250 Iowa workplaces, building long-lasting school-business partnerships across Iowa that provide educators with the ability to improve student STEM experiences and career knowledge.

Iowa STEM Teacher Externships are full-time professional development experiences that operate during six weeks in the summer. The Host will identify a hands-on project that contributes to an organization's bottom line. A flexible work schedule may be negotiated between the Workplace Hosts and STEM Teacher Externs. STEM Teacher Externs must devote 200-240 hours at the Workplace Host site to complete the experience.

Hosts are encouraged to cost-share the expense of the STEM Teacher Extern through a tax-deductible donation for up to half the cost or \$3,000. In an effort to generate more interest in Energy Sector Externships there is an Iowa Economic Development Authority Grant to help with the host cost share.

The Iowa STEM Teacher Externship Program is a great opportunity to spread the word about Iowa Municipal Utilities to educators and students. Each Teacher Externship experience is different and matched to the interest of the Host and the Extern. Here is Lone Tree Teacher, Jessica Howard, and Muscatine Power and Water's STEM Externship story.

Jessica collaborated with Muscatine Power and Water's (MPW) HR and Marketing departments helping with projects including the Customer Appreciation Day event, Employee Recognition Programs, and exploring the different departments at MPW. From water, power, communications and internet, MPW allowed for a unique experience for Jessica to explore and bring back to her classroom. Specifically working on helping different departments bring their education for customers to fruition, creating custom designs, and working across organizational boundaries to help fulfill needs.

Here is what Jessica has to say about her time with MPW: "My experience at Muscatine Power & Water was phenomenal. I probably would not have chosen that as one of my top picks for an Externship without the push and I am so glad the IEDA Grant gave me that push! I have so many applicable skills and insights

into future jobs and the future of our energy sources that I wouldn't have had if I wasn't able to be at MPW. In my classroom, I have used the real life engineering skills that I learned first hand from MPW engineers to teach and educate my students, as well as, looking at industry trends and job opportunities. MPW has been amazing at welcoming my students into their company as well as supporting my classroom by visiting and providing resources and information.

And here is what Extern Host, Muscatine Power and Water had to say about the experience. "We loved having Ms. Howard with us, not one, but TWO summers. We wanted more opportunities to take our work to the schools but struggled developing content geared towards students. Jess learned from us and used her skills to develop that content with us. Very highly recommend the extern program to other employers! These partnerships are important and beneficial to both parties."

Check out the links below to start your 2024 STEM Teacher Externship Experience!

For examples of jobs Externs have held in the past, visit:

<http://www.iowastem.org/educators/externships/externships-faq>

To request more information about hosting a Teacher Extern, complete a Workplace Host Interest form at:

<https://iowastem.org/externships-host-interest>