

Teacher Feature

Keri Sidle

Education Specialist, Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Program

Where and what did you teach before coming to Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC)?

I graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Agricultural Education and Communication. My first teaching position was at Oakleaf High School where I started a Plant Biotechnology Academy. The goal of the academy was to have a team of teachers incorporating agriculture content across curricula to give students that real world application of academic content. After 4 years teaching agriculture at Oakleaf High School, my husband's job moved us to Minneapolis. The last two years I taught agriculture classes for 5th grade through 8th grade students at Rockford Middle School. Every student was enrolled in an agriculture class for one quarter each year. I planned my curriculum topics around Minnesota science standards for each grade level. This allowed me to work closely with each grade level science teacher for at least one unit each year.



Keri Sidle, new MAITC Education Specialist

What influenced your decision to join the Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Program team?

I've always thought my strengths lie in helping students to become more agriculturally literate. I taught in suburban/urban schools with very few traditional "farm kids". Not growing up on a farm myself, I have strived to reach a non-traditional group of students and show them the world of agriculture. Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom will allow me to do that on an even larger scale by supporting teachers state-wide. I am excited to start this new role with Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom and support teachers as they help to shape agriculturally literate students.

What MAITC projects are you looking forward to working on?

I am looking forward to continuing the AgMag publication that has been in existence for 30 years. We have a great team of a designer, writer, teachers and content experts that work together to produce the issues of the AgMag and AgMag Jr.

In addition, since I spent a great deal of time developing school gardens at Rockford Middle School, coming up with new ways to strengthen MAITC school garden programming is very

exciting! It's a little more of a challenge in Minnesota to incorporate school gardens than in areas with a growing season that fits into the school year but still a valuable teaching tool for schools.

MAITC exists to support teachers and I am hoping to expand the number of in-service workshops we offer to school districts. Please contact me if your district is interested in a customized teacher in-service workshop that will share resources offered by MAITC.

I also want to be sure that teachers utilizing our resources (the AgMags, placemats, Food for Thought Maps) realize that we are thrilled to send you color printed copies for each student in your classes. Please do not feel like you should only order a handful of resources and then make copies at your school. That's what we are here for!



Keri Sidle works with Rockford Middle School students in their school garden.