



BLUE VALLEY SCHOOLS
COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT
15020 Metcalf Ave.
Overland Park, KS 66283-0901
913-239-4000

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Two Blue Valley teachers win first year teaching award

The Kansas State Department of Education recently named two new Blue Valley teachers as recipients of the Kansas Horizon Award because of their dedication to helping their students achieve success.

Abigail Clark, fifth grade teacher at Indian Valley Elementary, and Jessica Edwards, Communication Arts teacher at Blue Valley High, are this year's honorees. Both are in their second year of teaching at their respective buildings.

The Kansas Horizon Award program identifies and recognizes exemplary first year teachers who perform in a way that distinguishes them as outstanding. The Kansas State Department of Education honors 32 Kansas teachers with the award each year.

Clark received her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Kansas State University. Stephen Heinauer, IVE principal, says that Abby is a dedicated professional who understands that positive relationships are essential for student learning.

"Through positive relationships, Abby impacts the lives of each Indian Valley Elementary student and staff member who interact with her," Heinauer said. "Through the established, positive relationship, students step out of their comfort zone, into an amazing world of learning. Abby's natural ability to personalize student learning each and every day truly provides education beyond expectations."

At Blue Valley High, Edwards teaches Communications Arts and serves as the freshman class sponsor. She received her bachelor's degree in English Literature from Kansas State University and a master's degree in Education from Avila University.

"From day one, Jessica has demonstrated a keen sense of the art and science of teaching," said Scott Bacon, Blue Valley High principal. "Her demeanor is upbeat and engaging and her instructional delivery has been strategically delivered in a manner that is way beyond her years. She is a tremendous collaborator who is not satisfied with anything less than a high level of learning for all of her students."

The honorees will receive official recognition during the KSDE KEEN conference in February. Blue Valley will recognize these outstanding young teachers during the February Board of Education meeting.

CONTACTS: Communications Department, (913) 239-4347