

Local Teacher Enjoys Fellowship Program

A select group of 188 Bay Area teachers have relinquished their summer vacations at the beach for a chance to get a taste of unfamiliar territory: Corporate America. Last month, Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education (IISME), a nonprofit that partners with companies and universities in an effort to improve math and science education in the Bay Area, launched its annual Summer Fellowship Program for the 23rd consecutive year. For the first time, the San Francisco 49ers got into the action.



The Club created a Football Operation Summer Research Fellow to offer one

local math teacher, Alyson Butcher who works for the West Valley- Mission Community College District, an opportunity to work closely with the Football Operations Department to analyze data and discover trends that will give the team a strategic advantage on the gridiron.

"Utilizing Alyson's talents has opened up a new opportunity for the 49ers to take a fresh look at NFL stats," said Lal Heneghan, Executive Vice President of Football Operations. "In this new age of sports, every leg up on the competition helps."

The IISME program helps local companies and universities select K-16 teachers for paid fellowships for scientific, mathematic, or technical projects. Once the school year begins, IISME Fellows are able to leverage their newfound skills and experiences into powerful lessons and updated curriculum for their students.

"Instead of teaching summer school, I decided to do something different to gain a new experience and get away from the classroom," said Butcher who teaches all levels of math from calculus to trigonometry to statistics at West Valley and has been in the IISME program for five years. "I love being able to use my brain in a different way. The whole change of environment helps get your sanity back and gets you refreshed for the fall. During the Fellowship, I have the opportunity to develop curriculum that I'll use when teaching. There are so many positives to the program I can't imagine doing anything else during the summer."

IISME Fellowships also provide companies and universities with skilled, cost-effective professional summer employees. Fellowship sponsors experience a direct way to reach their future workforce through one-to-one contact with teachers. IISME has awarded 2,375 Fellowships to teachers from 561 schools in the Bay Area, impacting more than 1.6 million students. This summer, fifty-two sponsors are supporting the 188 teachers, including 35% from high needs schools.

This year has been one of IISME's most successful in terms of the number of teachers and sponsor organizations eager to participate in this unique fellowship program. "We are excited that over fifty new and returning sponsors are opening their doors to IISME Teacher Fellows," says Jennifer Bruckner, IISME's Executive Director. "We are delighted to be able to provide this invaluable professional development experience for so many Bay Area local teachers this summer."