

## How one Oakland teacher spent her summer

By Katy Murphy

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*Stephanie Butler, a technology teacher at Elmhurst Community Prep Middle School, recently completed a summer fellowship through Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education. She wrote this piece about her experience. -Katy*



Quite often we hear about what's going wrong in the Oakland school district. This is about something that has been going right for me three years running. It is called IISME (pronounced "is me"). The acronym stands for [Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education](#). The program was established in 1985, and its objective is "to transform teaching and learning through industry-education partnerships."

Translation: I work in corporate America during the summer with the expectation of applying the skills I've learned when I return to the classroom in the fall. It is a paid summer position at the end of which I must submit a report that explains what I intend to take back to the classroom. Once I have completed everything in the plan, whether it is a unit for my students or a professional development for my colleagues, I receive a grant.

My experience with IISME has been both rewarding and uplifting. The rewards have been vast. I am a fourth-year technology teacher, and I have built valuable relationships with veteran teachers from many districts who have been willing to share their expertise. This interaction alone is immeasurable. I believe every veteran teacher has a story to share that can help newer teachers improve their pedagogy.

Even greater, I walked away from my experiences feeling respected as a public educator. With the constant bombardment of negative press pointing at the failures of public education, my IISME experiences have been quite refreshing.

I have learned how to build and maintain computers at Lockheed Martin, which is a skill I have definitely had to use in my classroom. This is also a skill that I have passed to my students. I have eighth graders who can take apart and put a computer lab back together again.

At IISME, we spent a great deal of time blogging about a wide variety of educational issues. The students in my classroom have also been exposed to this technology tool. We created blog sites by grade level last year and students were required to blog daily.

My most recent experience at the AC Transit Training and Education Center showed me that seeking perfection is not the goal. The goal is not to accept mediocrity. What a great lesson! This is a one I had already learned, but clearly I needed to hear it, see it and experience it again. I will definitely pass this on in my classroom this school year. Mediocrity is not acceptable! Thank you AC Transit, and thank you IISME!

Whether you are local corporate sponsor or a teacher, if you want to know more about my IISME experiences, feel free to email me at [stephanie.butler@ousd.k12.ca.us](mailto:stephanie.butler@ousd.k12.ca.us).