



Student teacher Sara Stull reads "I Need a Lunch Box" to Victoria Flynn's morning kindergarten class at Wycallis Elementary School. Stull led into story time by asking the students about something they always really wanted.

CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/FOR THE DALLAS POST

TEACHING

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is the first year the Wyoming Valley West School District has offered fully-inclusive classrooms where with learning disabilities are mainstreamed in a regular education classroom. Stull was in fourth and fifth-grade education classrooms and monitored special education students.

"If I see them struggling in a regular math classroom and not getting the concepts, I'll pull them out for the next class," she said. Stull also accompanied students to a special reading

class and to take tests. What surprises Stull the most about special education is the interaction within the classroom between the special and regular education students. She was pleased to see how well the children got along and the willingness of the regular education students to help their peers.

Stull's biggest challenge with special education is coordinating what she teaches with the lesson plans of regular education teachers. Outside of special education, she has had the opportunity to co-teach reading and Social Studies classes.

With some student teaching already under her belt, Stull was not one bit apprehensive

when starting her placement at Wycallis Elementary.

"You kind of work out your kinks in your first placement and can go into your second smoothly," she said.

At Wycallis, Stull is in the kindergarten classroom of Victoria Flynn. Because kindergarten is half-day in the Dallas School District, Stull teaches two different groups of students on a daily basis.

Upon graduation in May, Stull will be state certified in elementary education, special education and early childhood education. She will be able to teach pre-kindergarten through sixth-grade regular education and pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade special education.

TREASURE

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She took attendance, with the assistance of the class, by clapping the syllables aloud in each child's name.

Stull led into story time by asking the students about something they always really wanted.

Kurtis Ryniac said a dirt bike. Nico Giambra wants a Nintendo DS system.

"Today we're going to learn about a boy who really wants something," Stull told the class. "What would your favorite lunch be?"

Siranda Teetsel was quick

to reply she would eat her favorite food - olives. TJ Herron laughed as he said he would want pizza and pickles.

The questions led up to the story "I Need a Lunch Box." First, Stull flipped through the pages of the book and had the children preview it by looking at the pictures. She allowed them to comment about what appeared to be going on in the story. They became increasingly excited and asked Stull to read the book to them.

"I'm going to read it now, but I need good listeners," the student teacher informed the class.

And listen they did - very quietly. Stull asked questions

of the students and some students even remembered what foods the character in the story wanted to put in his lunch box.

In Stull's first week at Wycallis, the kindergarteners were putting on a play and she jumped right in to help.

"The big thing she does is being prepared," Flynn said of Stull. "With kindergarten, you really need to have the environment prepared and ready to go. She transitioned very easily into taking over the lessons."

Stull is teaching reading and math lessons in both the morning and afternoon. On April 16, she also assumed responsibility of computer lessons on Wednesdays.

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"I don't even remember if we had report cards," she said.

After a year at Idetown, Prater was hired in Forty Fort where she taught for two years at the Fort Street Elementary School.

"I lived in Forty Fort," she said. "It was much better. At the time, Forty Fort wouldn't hire teachers until they had experience."

Because teachers in the Forty Fort School District were not allowed to be married, Prater was forced to give up her job when she got married.

She returned to teaching in 1953 when her husband, Willard, became ill with multiple sclerosis. She was the third married teacher allowed back into the Forty Fort district. She taught kindergarten for two years and third grade for 10 years at Durkee Elementary School on Crisman Street before retiring at age 65.

The mother of three children, Willard, 80; John, 74; and Betsy, 69, Prater also has 11 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren. Her oldest great-grandchild is almost 20 years old.

"I enjoy my grandchildren," she said. "That's what I live for."

Since 1972, Prater has also been writing in a diary daily. She

doesn't remember why she started keeping the diary, but knows it was a result of the flood of 1972 to which she lost many personal belongings, including photographs of the Idetown School. When Prater was contemplating throwing old diaries away, her granddaughter, Debra Chapman, insisted she keep them.

In March of 2002, Prater moved in with her son, John, and daughter-in-law, Ingrid, in their Plymouth Township home.

Although no longer able to walk and uses hearing aids, she remains active by knitting and mending, doing crossword puzzles and writing letters to her two children who live out of town.

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