

SWOSU Student Teachers and OKC Public School Students Spend Day Together

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Oklahoma City Public Schools Superintendent Karl Springer (second from left) and Southwestern Oklahoma State University's Bruce Belanger (far left), coordinator of student teachers and field experiences, are all smiles as SWOSU student teachers presented elementary school students with homework supply kits during a recent visit to Oklahoma City Pierce Elementary School.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University student teachers in Weatherford and elementary students in the Oklahoma City Public Schools both benefited from a recent one-day experience in Oklahoma City.

Thirty-two SWOSU students spent the day at seven elementary schools and two high schools as part of a National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education requirement for teacher candidates to have a certain number of hours throughout their preservice teaching training in diverse school settings.

SWOSU's Bruce Belanger, coordinator of student teachers and field experiences, and Shannon Freeman, administrator of recruitment and retention for the OKCPS, worked together to provide a meaningful experience for both the SWOSU students and OKCPS students.

SWOSU students provided 123 elementary students at Pierce Elementary School with a homework supply kit, consisting of a plastic school box, box of 24 crayons, a glue stick and two pencils. The kits were made possible by Wal-Mart, the SWOSU Department of Education and the SWOSU Public Relations & Marketing Office.

Belanger said Pierce Elementary School Principal Jenny Vesper specifically guided the students for this type of donation that would benefit the elementary students. The kits were sent home with students whose families are financially challenged and may not have these school supplies at home on a regular basis.

"One student teacher was inspired to donate an additional 60 boxes of crayons, paying for them out of her own pocket," Belanger said.

Ruth Boyd, interim chair of the SWOSU Department of Education, said the university was excited to provide this opportunity for both the student teachers and the Oklahoma City school children. Oklahoma City Public Schools Superintendent Karl Springer also stopped by Pierce Elementary during the SWOSU student teachers visit.