

# Kareen Borders will serve U.S. Dept. of Education

Attributes success  
to community

**JEANINE STEWART**  
*of the Gateway*

The Peninsula School District has a nationally recognized star on its faculty.

Key Peninsula Middle School teacher Kareen Borders is beginning her year as a U.S. Department of Education classroom fellow this year — a position that required out-competing 750 applicants for 16 slots.

For one year, she will give feedback to the U.S. Department of Education on “how to fix the No Child Left Behind Act,” as U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan puts it.

Her role is already attracting attention. NBC News’ Education Nation producers have enlisted Borders’ voice to participate in a conference-call brainstorm session on what to include in their new initiative to create dialogue surrounding what works in education.

Borders attributes her success to factors outside herself.

“I’ve had a lot of support at the right time,” Borders said. “There are a lot of incredible parents that live here. There are a lot of pieces that are in place that make it easier for

me, and not only that, but at Key Peninsula Middle School. We have incredibly supportive parents, community and kids.”

Borders traveled to Washington D.C. in July to receive training from the Department of Education headquarters. The experience was extremely positive in its ability to give teachers a voice on policy-making, Borders said.

“There was an incredible focus on student learning and on the right thing,” Borders said. “It wasn’t like we were there just because they had to have some teachers there. We were genuinely involved in conversations and real partners. So I was really uplifted by that.”

Fellow Peninsula School District teachers may know Borders as the sixth- and eighth-grade science teacher at KPMS, who serves as a NASA Explorer program school team leader. Borders, who describes herself as a mother first, is also in the process of getting her doctorate from the University of Washington in educational leadership.

Her involvement in government policy extends outside of this new role. She is a national board regional coordinator for the state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Believe it or not, Borders said she is good at saying no to opportunities that don’t suit her.

Right now, she is excited for her new role.

“I think, a lot of times, policy is made, and there isn’t a link between the policy makers and the people it affects,” Borders said. “So this is a really unique opportunity to help bridge that.”