

Tally Moore – Pre-K

Ever since she can remember, Tally Moore has known what she wanted to do. “I’ve always known school is where I wanted to be,” she says, “even when I was a little girl. I loved school!” That’s what drew her family to Topeka Collegiate when their older daughter was ready to start school. “I wanted what I had in school, the warm, family feeling, rich with traditions.” They found it at TCS. “It was so great,” she remembers, “during **Taylor’s** kindergarten year I used to get teary-eyed.” Now she’s teaching Pre-K and loving it.

“This age is magical,” Tally says of four-year-olds. “It’s such a fun age. Everything is new to them. They’re learning so many new skills and they’re so excited. They want to keep building on that.”

Tally earned a bachelor’s degree in social work from Washburn University, and a master’s degree in social work with an emphasis in school social work, also from Washburn. She began at Topeka Collegiate as a paraprofessional in Pre-K, became a long-term Pre-K substitute during a colleague’s maternity leave, then took over fulltime in the Pre-K classroom.

The students come with different abilities. Some are recognizing colors, numbers and letters. Others are writing their names, others are learning to tie their shoes and zip their coats. Together, they learn pre-reading skills; the letters of the alphabet and letter sounds. The Zoo Phonics curriculum pairs a movement with each letter of the alphabet. “It helps cement what they learn,” Tally explains. “It’s fun because they really get into that, and they use it. They’re constantly saying ‘Look, there’s Allie Alligator!’ On Back-to-School Night parents are excited to see the Zoo Phonics friends because the children have come home singing the song and it finally makes sense to them.” From Allie Alligator in August comes a large sight word vocabulary by the end of the year.

Tally enjoys watching her students develop socially as well as academically. “We work on problem solving with peers and they’re so proud of themselves when they do what they’ve been shown,” she says. “They’re even more bonded because they’ve solved whatever it is together. ‘Mrs. Moore,’ they say, ‘we worked it out!’”

It warms this teacher’s heart when children want to please her and are excited to share things with her. “They’ll bring things from home and tell their parents, ‘Mrs. Moore will want to see this,’ or say to their parents after an at-home art project, ‘Mrs. Moore would be so proud of me!’” It doesn’t get much better than that.

