

Hello. My name is Valerie Tollefson. I live south of Hiawatha where my husband, Mark Tollefson, currently farms with his family's nearly century old dairy and crop farm. We have three grown children who are all graduates of Hiawatha High School. Our two oldest, Seth and Leah, live and work in Emporia, and our youngest, Annie, is a student at Mid-America Nazarene University in Olathe. Crocheting, playing the piano, SuDoKu, and crossword puzzles fill in the gaps of my infrequent free times at home.

After working for three years as a paraeducator at Hiawatha Middle School, working primarily with eighth grade students, I enrolled at Highland Community College and Missouri Western State University and earned Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education with emphasis in Mild/Moderate Cross-Categorical Disabilities (Adaptive Special Education). Since my December 2006 graduation, I have been employed as an IRC Instructor at HMS and spent my first two years working with sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. At present, I have made full circle and am again working primarily with the eighth grade team providing special education services and consultation to students and staff.

I am especially excited about the implementation of the Multi-Tier System of Supports program at HMS. The students I service receive instruction of core content concepts within the regular education setting for the majority of their educable time. When necessary, they receive more extensive and individualized instruction to reinforce the concepts being taught. This program allows both regular and special education instructors' opportunities to collaborate and co-teach. I believe this will improve the blend of expertise in the content area being taught with the intervention techniques of specialized instruction; which will potentially have an overall positive impact on more students.

