



WELCOME to our SSN Team



Mrs. Melina LaPorte

Lead SSN Teacher

 MMLaporte@dcsdk12.org



★A Little About Me:★

This year will be my 15th year of teaching, 14 of those years as the SSN Teacher here at Pioneer. Teaching is a second career for me and I believe, truly my calling. It started over 30 years ago when I was a college student at Western Michigan University. I was studying behavioral psychology and wanted to work with abused and neglected children. My roommate, and many of my friends were special education majors and while I was intrigued, I was set on my own course. I was working as a hostess at a restaurant when I met a co-worker who had a second job working at a "special school". She worked as a paraprofessional and talked about the students and how much she loved working with them. I always loved working with kids (and I hated working at a restaurant), so I went over to that school and asked for a job. I will always remember what the teacher who interviewed me said when she offered me the job "I think you're crazy, no experience, no idea what you're in for....you'll either love it or you'll quit within the week". I loved it! It was the first time I had ever worked with kids with disabilities and I really loved it and I was good at it. I worked at that school on and off for several years while I put myself through college. It led to other jobs as well. I fell in love with one of the boys I worked closely with, he was six and melted my heart. I would always hand him off to his mom at the end of the day and because he had a younger brother with the same syndrome, mom always had a helper with her. I inquired about the aide and soon applied for the job. This led to many years of working in homes with the most amazing families as a respite care worker and CNA service provider. Thirty years later and I still keep in touch with those families. My in-home respite work soon led me to Respite House (one of my most favorite jobs ever besides teaching). The community service agency I worked for purchased a home in a lovely neighborhood and we provided respite to families on weekends and school breaks. The kids would come once a month from Friday afternoon until Sunday night and then 2 weeks in the summer. We were a bunch of college kids providing much needed respite to families and loads of fun for the kids. We went to see movies, zoos, parks, you name it and we took the kids. We had kids with all abilities, some with significant physical and medical needs, some with autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and some kids with significant behavioral needs as well.

Finally, after a lot of hard work, I graduated and got married. We moved to Chicago for my husband's job. I was freshly out of college and living in the big city. I found a job as a case manager at a 150 bed skilled nursing facility for kids and adults with significant special needs. I didn't even know those places still existed. This was the toughest and most heart wrenching job I have ever had. It was supposed to be a pediatric facility but we had adults as well, there was nowhere else for them to go. I worked there for a year and a half when the state finally decided to close them down and move everyone to community services. During this time, of finding new homes for all those people, I connected with one of the agencies and was hired as a case manager for adults with disabilities who lived at home or in a community setting. I oversaw residential, day programs and employment services. In addition, I worked with families to help coordinate respite care and in home services. I also worked as a school advocate. I continued as a case manager for 12 years in Chicago, Florida and New Hampshire, as we moved around the country for my husband's job. I have a great deal of knowledge regarding services for adults with disabilities. While I enjoyed what I did, I kept thinking about teaching so I quit my job in New Hampshire and went to work as a special education aid at a high school. My plan was to get my teaching certificate through the state's alternative licensure program. Before I could start the program, my husband was offered the promotion that brought us to Denver. I decided when we moved, to pursue a masters degree in special education. I worked at Pioneer as a special education EA while working on my degree. I graduated after two years and was hired as a mild/moderate learning specialist at Copper Mesa Elementary in Highlands Ranch. I loved Copper Mesa but my heart was calling me back to work with kids with the most significant needs. Pioneer's SSN teacher was leaving and I applied, it was like coming home.

Mrs. Kiki Bailes

Educational Assistant

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I tell you this story because you trust me with your most precious gifts everyday. I appreciate your trust and want you to know that while no one will ever know your child as well as you.....I and my team have a lot of experience and expertise. I have an extraordinary team of people who will work hard on your child's behalf to help them learn and grow everyday. We have a vast array of knowledge among us and we continue to learn more and more all the time. We value working collaboratively with families and know that if we work together we can push kids farther and lift them higher!

🍷 **My favorite Color is:**

☕ **My Favorite Drink (coffee, soda, tea) is:**

🍪 **My Favorite Sweet Treat or Snack is:**

🍽️ **My Favorite Restaurant or Takeout Spot is:**

🛍️ **My Favorite Store or Gift Card is:**

🕯️ **My Favorite Scent (candles, lotions, etc.) is:**

★A Little About Me:★

My name is Kiki Bailes and I am an Education Assistant IV in the SSN program here at Pioneer Elementary. I first joined the Pioneer family over thirteen years ago as a parent volunteer in the classroom, and working with the PTO, when my own children started Kindergarten. Then eight years ago I joined the Pioneer staff as part of our Education Assistant team. As an EA I focused on assisting teachers and students in small groups and one-on-one. I also got to know all our students, building so many great relationships, during their lunch and recess periods. I have also served as an IA working with small groups in Pioneer's WIN program. Last year I began to work with the SSN team. I have loved learning new ways to support our students. I am thankful for our kids everyday! Many students will recognize Mrs. Bailes and her dog Layla walking on the local trails after school. Outside Of Pioneer I enjoy traveling, exploring, reading and being a mom to my teens.

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★A Little About Me:★

My name is Jo-Ann Brunette and I am a Significant Support Needs Educational Assistant at Pioneer Elementary with over 11 years experience. I Have been a part of the Pioneer Family since 2010. I live in Parker with my husband of over 30 years Paul and our grown daughters Julie and Kylie.

I look forward to working with your child from Kindergarten to Fifth grade.

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Mrs. Jo-Ann Brunette

Educational Assistant

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Mrs. Lesa Flickinger

Educational Assistant

★A Little About Me:★

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Brittany DeLemos

Educational Assistant

✉ ADD EMAIL & PIC

I lived in the Chicago area for 33 years with my husband and 2 children. In May of 2014 we relocated to Colorado due to a job transfer for my husband. I have a Certified Nurse Assistant certification with 10 years of caregiving and interaction with families and loved ones.

I served in our children's school for 14 years volunteering on the PTO, classroom monitoring, Market Day coordinator and working on school events. Later, I became a staff member of the High School working as a substitute teacher, was manager of the school's concession stand for athletic events and headed the High School lunch program for 5 years while also being a coach's wife. I was honored to be the recipient of the Phil Sokody Character award presented by Westminster Christian High School.

I joined the Pioneer family in August of 2014 as an Educational Assistant IV. I have trained in restorative practices, playground safety, wheelchair transfers, medication administration, CPR, first aid and CPI.

This job has been a blessing in every way. The kids are amazing and our staff is top notch!

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★ **A Little About Me:** ★

I was born in San Diego California and lived there until I was 7yrs old. Then moved to Hawaii and lived on Pearl harbor for 3yrs. I moved to Colorado in 1994 after my dad retired from the Navy. I have 2 brothers (younger and older) . I have been married for 19 yrs to my amazing husband Marshall and we have two kids, a son Bryson who graduated Class of 2024 he is 19 yrs old and my daughter Peyton who is a Sophomore in High school she is 15 yrs old. We have 3 dogs (Roxy the mutt, Finley the Newfoundland and Cali the Great Dane). I love to be outdoors, spending time with my family, friends and crafting.

I have been at Pioneer since June of 2008. I have worked in the BASE program (I did kindie enrichment, intercession and before and after school) then the AN program for many years and this is my 4th year in SSN and I love it. Love working with these amazing ladies and kiddos..

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Mrs. Dawn Squires

Educational Assistant

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