



## 2009 Alumni Honor Roll | Reasons to Believe



Role models who give us *Reasons to Believe* in the power of education

### Deirdre Daniels

F.L. Schagle High School, 1986

From an early age, Deirdre Daniels was taught by her parents to believe in herself and today she is motivating students in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools to do the same.

As a first grade teacher at William Allen White Elementary School, she knows the influence she has on her class and she strives each day to inspire them.

Daniels comes from a long family line of teachers. In fact she is a fourth generation African American educator. Her love for classroom teaching was enhanced while she was a Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teacher.

She began working as a para for the district in 1991 and she knew right away that working with students was her calling.

"I felt like I was impacting so many lives," she recalls.

That feeling combined with the encouragement of her colleagues sent her back to school to earn her teaching degree. She received assistance through the district's Employee to Teacher Program, a tuition reimbursement program that supports employees working on their education degree. She received her bachelor's degree in 2004 from Pittsburg State University.

All of Daniels' former teachers influence her job every day; she works to set the same standards they set for her, and she remembers their passion and guidance. One of her favorites was high school English teacher Mrs. Young. She and her husband were missionaries and she told fascinating stories of her travels.

"She was always giving advice. She was serious about learning and made us accountable for our learning," Daniels remembers. "And she cared beyond just being that teacher in the classroom."

Daniels is a member of the Beta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated and the Friends of Alvin Ailey.

Her advice for today's students is "shoot for the stars."

