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Springfield teacher taking two month research trip to Antarctica

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Western Mass News photo

SPRINGFIELD, MA (WGGB/WSHM) -- A Springfield science teacher is leaving her class for the next two months to head to Antarctica.

Bridget Ward is one of only five teachers across the country selected to take part in a worldwide research study.

"One, it's going to be really cold," said Ward, a biology teacher at Springfield Central High School.

Ward is gearing up for a trip of a lifetime.

"I'm really excited and I don't think it's quite hit me yet that it's actually happening. I think after today, being my last day teaching until I come back after thanksgiving that it will hit me," Ward explained.

For the next two months, she will be part of a team researching baby seals in Antarctica.

"As their pups are born about 50 pounds, they grow four pounds a day and an adult will weigh 1,200 pounds, so we're trying to figure out how they stay warm at 50 pounds until they grow that big," Ward noted.

She's doing this with the organization PolarTREC.

"It's a teacher program and they send different teachers around the United States, usually 12 a year and five of us are going to Antarctica," Ward added.

The selection process wasn't easy. Ward told Western Mass News that a football player would have a greater chance of being drafted into the NFL than a teacher being accepted into this program.

While it's been difficult to walk away from her current students, Ward's leaving them in good hands.

"I'll have a full time sub. I made all the lesson plans for them, so they will continue in their education," Ward said.

Although she'll miss her students at Central, this is an experience she'll be able to share with them.

"I will also be posting journals on my website for PolarTREC. It's 'Growing up on ice' is my journal name and they will be following along and ask questions. I really hope they know the majority of the reason I'm doing this is to bring it back to them," Ward said.

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