



Danielle Van Dyke

# Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Danielle Van Dyke

SCHOOL: Berney Elementary

Position: Third Grade Teacher

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 3 years

Q. Why do you convert your classroom into a campground to promote reading?

A. We have a camp out as part of our fall theme. We try to make it a celebration as part of their Accelerated Reader accomplishments. It is a culmination of meeting their reading goals. We pitch a tent so they have an exciting place to read. We do stories around the camp fire. This is an opportunity to read and also tell stories. It promotes literacy with a fun theme.

Q. How does the Accelerated Reader program motivate students to read?

A. Accelerated Reader promotes reading at home. They can read books at home and then come in and take a quiz. This program also challenges students to explain what they have read to make sure they understood the book. It's a great self check program and it pushes them to read more.

Q. What are your expectations regarding reading at home?

A. I believe kids should be kids, so I want them to have time to play. I think 15 minutes, five nights a week is a very reasonable goal. I understand if they are busy Wednesday night and then they put in the time on Saturday.

Maybe they're busy two week nights, so they do it over the weekend. As long as they read 15 minutes, five nights a week I'm happy.

Q. Do you encourage parents to read with their children at this age?

A. Absolutely. Students love to have their parents involved in their learning. Reading together allows parents to ask questions about the book and its characters. When parents read with their children, it also sends a message that reading is important.

Over →



MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM  
DANIELLE VAN DYKE'S CLASS:



COMMENTS FROM DANIELLE...

Visitors to Berney will see kids learning at a high level, small group instruction, teams working together, staff collaboration and a lot of similarities because we often share ideas and strategies.

I use student assessment data to help me design lessons. I can see what areas are in need of more support and work these into my lessons.



I have a lot of parents come in and volunteer in the classroom. Each week I do a parent connection letter and a homework chart. I work hard to communicate with parents.