



Amber Ferraro

Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Amber Ferraro

SCHOOL: Blue Ridge Elementary

Position: 4th Grade Teacher

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 3 years

Q. What do you attribute to the academic gains at Blue Ridge?

A. Our teachers are willing to collaborate with each other and integrate different instruction into our curriculum. For example, Kristen Garcia and I are integrating math and science using our word walls with math and science words. We also integrate reading into the math curriculum. If a student is asked to give an equation, $5 \times 4 = 20$, I will say "Tell me a synonym for "is?" They will tell me "equals." This strategy strengthens vocabulary skills.

Q. How do students feel about this new found academic success?

A. They are really excited and starting to feel like they are succeeding. They get an entire hour for each subject through the platooning program. This is really neat for the kids. They are working hard and the achievement gaps are narrowing.

Q. How do you continue to help students transition into English only instruction?

A. We have a program called "Bilingual Buddies." We link students with each other according to their math skills. The instruction I provide is solely in English. The students in the transitional bilingual program transition to English only the second half of third grade. These students are working together to better understand their math curriculum and to help with language barriers.

Q. What are your strategies for keeping parents involved and informed?

A. During goal setting, it is really important that parents come in so we can meet to set goals for each content area. Parents are willing to help as long as they know what is going on in school. We send postcards home once a month to connect with parents. We also call and send emails. Parents want their children to succeed and it is important to keep the lines of communication open at all times.

Over



MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM
AMBER'S CLASS:



COMMENTS FROM AMBER...

I grew up in west Yakima and attended West Valley High School. I graduated from WSU with a teaching degree and Grand Canyon University for my master's degree. My husband Levi is an excavation contractor. We have a daughter who was born in July.

The Blue Ridge Health Center allows our students to be seen right away. Many parents are not able to get off work during the day to take their child to see a doctor.



We send homework home every Monday and it is due on Friday. If students do not finish their work during the school day, then there is additional work they need to complete at home.