



Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Sarah Rathbun

SCHOOL: Edison Elementary

Position: 1st Grade Teacher (Dual Spanish) YEARS IN DISTRICT: 3 years

Q. Why is the dual language program important for students?

A. Research shows learning a second language is good for brain development and is something students find fun. If you observe two-year-old children watching Dora, you will see they enjoy repeating and practicing the Spanish language. It is similar with the first grade students. Learning a second language requires a lot of interaction and first graders are professionals in this area.

I teach the Spanish instruction in the first grade dual immersion program. I teach science, social studies and language arts. We mix up the students throughout the day so they are used to a lot of transitions.

Q. What results are you seeing with your students?

A. When we start a new school year it is always a challenge to teach the students the classroom procedures and routines. Our kids have already come so far in just a few weeks. I am really impressed with their growth and they are so happy to be here.

Q. How did you learn Spanish to become a dual language teacher?

A. I never took Spanish in school. I grew up in Canada so I learned French. After high school I went to live in Bolivia where I learned to speak Spanish. It came a lot easier to me than other people who didn't already have a second language. I went back to university and studied Spanish after living in Bolivia.

Q. What are your goals for the students this year?

A. We are stressing the importance of writing this year. We are writing in every content area in Spanish and in English. We are learning conventions, how to be creative, and to make summaries. These are all areas we are focusing on this year.

Over

MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM SARAH'S CLASS:



COMMENTS FROM SARAH...

My husband is biomedical engineer at Walla Walla General Hospital. We have two children -- a 2-1/2 year hold daughter and a four-month old son. We also have two foster kids living with us at this time. We have a very busy household.

We like to camp and explore the areas in Walla Walla. It is very different terrain from Canada and there is a lot to see in our area.



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