



Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Shannon Ahrens

SCHOOL: Garrison Middle Schools

Position: Science Teacher

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 16 years

Q. What are the students in your science classes working on?

A. My 7th graders are working on mitosis and miosis and my 8th graders just started astronomy. We are looking at the stars, the sun, and galaxies. We use a computer program which helps track the rising and setting of the moon and allows us to track other elements of astronomy.

Q. Have you seen a lot of academic growth since the beginning of the year?

A. Absolutely we have seen academic growth, especially in terms of students writing conclusions.

All middle school science teachers give the same pre-test at the beginning of the year. Throughout the year we do instructions and then we start testing students when we feel they have had enough practice. Eighty-five percent of my students improved in their conclusion writing when we did the post test.

Q. How do you work with your fellow science teachers to streamline science instruction?

A. We have a really strong professional learning community at Garrison Middle School. We talk about what our students are learning and some of the misconceptions they are having so we can figure out ways to approach these issues.

Q. Does it help with transition being married to a Wa-Hi science teacher?

A. It does help. This year middle school science teachers have started meeting with high school science teachers – twice so far. It is nice to see what everybody is doing and thinking about. We have started to delve into engineering and it's nice to have Rob's leadership in these areas.

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MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM SHANNON'S CLASS:

Middle school teachers across the district collaborate about three times a year as a professional learning community. We have some really strong discussions about student learning.



COMMENTS FROM SHANNON:

I attended kindergarten through 12th grade in Colville, WA. I graduated from EWU with a Bachelor's Degree in Education and a Bachelor's in Science in Biology with a minor in chemistry.

I am married to Rob Ahrens who is a science teacher at Wa-Hi. We have two sons; Mason who is a senior at Wa-Hi and Seth who is a 7th grader at Pioneer.



I like to read. I love watching sports -- both my own kids and professionals.

I especially enjoy baseball. I scrapbook, work out at the YMCA and travel.