



Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Maria Garcia

SCHOOL: Curriculum Department

Position: Assessment Coordinator

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 18 years

Q. What is your role as district assessment coordinator?

A. I manage and organize most aspects of all district and state assessments. This includes ensuring kids and teachers have all the right materials and tools. We also have to ensure the correct tests are distributed and buildings have schedules set to get testing done in an efficient manner. The other big part of the job is using the information we get from all the assessments to help guide the district in some decision making.

Q. What are the assessments we use in our district?

A. We have screening assessments. These are quick and efficient and given in the fall, winter and spring. Screening assessments help make sure we are not missing students who need additional support. These fall in the district assessment category.

We also have several state assessments that are given at different times of the year, but many in the spring. These are called summative assessments and include Measurement of Student Progress (MSP), High School Proficiency Exams, and math and science End of Course Exams. We also have state assessments which look at the progress of our students who are learning English as a Second Language (ESL).

Q. How has the Oasis assessment tool helped our educators better utilize the data?

A. In the past, having information available to the teachers easily was a challenge. All of our testing information about kids lived in stacks of paper and in binders on shelves. With our online data management system, Oasis, we now are able to see historically all of our assessment information on individual students over time. Thanks to Ron Higgins for having the vision to develop this project.

Over 

MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM MARIA'S OFFICE:

My objective is to continually assess the assessments we use; the number, the type and their utility. We adjust our plan to be the most meaningful for our students and staff.



COMMENTS FROM MARIA:

We are trying to move away from the notion of making decisions about what to do for kids based on emotion instead of making decisions on whether students are making progress.

My family moved a lot when I was a child because of my father's job with IBM. I spent my high school years in the San Francisco Bay area.



I earned a bachelor's degree from U. of Minnesota and my graduate degree in school psychology from The College of William & Mary. My husband Roger is the district music coordinator and we have two college-age children.