



Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Sarah Kapocias

SCHOOL: Green Park Elementary

Position: First Grade Teacher

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 8 years

Q. How has the legislative action leading to lower class size helped you?

A. Green Park is a very diverse school. This year I have 17 students in my class which is excellent. Lower class size makes it much easier to meet the needs of all my students. There are kids from all kinds of backgrounds, including many with trauma impacted childhoods. Many of my students are still working to develop their social and self-regulation skills. This is important as they further develop their academic skills. It is easier to build community and compassion for others with fewer students.

Q. How have rigorous learning standards impacted your teaching?

A. We work hard to help students meet all of the standards. There are a lot of great resources available even at the first grade level. These resources help us raise the bar as we strive to help our students achieve their highest potential.

Q. Why is writing so important to your first grade students?

A. My students are writing chapter books which may seem advanced for first grade students. They enjoy writing and creating their own books. I like to teach writing because it give the kids a chance to work at their own level and without singling anybody out. They work until they finish a book and start on the next one. Some students may take longer than others and that is okay.

Q. How do you involve parents in your classroom?

A. I do a lot of texting to parents. I love taking pictures of my students while they are working or as they complete a project. I send parents the pictures. I also try to have one-on-one contact with parents when students leave the building at the end of the day. If a student is struggling, I will invite parents to meet with me and we work together to find solutions.

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MOMENTS & MEMORIES
We love to collaborate at Green Park. It's been fun having smaller class sizes and four classrooms. We are able to group for reading and math so it gives us a chance to know all of the first graders.



COMMENTS FROM SARAH:
I love the kids. My first graders are fully motivated and happy to be at school. They work really hard and are full of love. I leave feeling good at the end of the day.

I grew up in Baker City, Oregon until age 12 and then we moved to Walla Walla. I attended Pioneer Middle School and went away to a high school boarding school in Connecticut.



I have a daughter in 8th grade and two stepsons in 7th and 5th grades. I also teach six Jazzercise classes a week.