



Walla Walla Public Schools Classroom Close-Up



TEACHER NAME: Alicia Quackenbush SCHOOL: Pioneer & Blue Ridge

Position: School Psychologist

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 6 years

Q. What is the role of the school psychologist?

A. We help ensure all students are successful in school academically, socially, behaviorally and emotionally. We collaborate with building administration, staff, parents and community to ensure that all kids are making progress.

Q. What are some of the challenges you may address with students you serve?

A. The issue that comes up the most is students who are not academically successful. There are instruments we use to evaluate these students to see if they have a learning disability. If this is the case, we have specialized programs for those students to be successful. Often students are coming from homes where they have many challenges, including poverty, parents who might abuse drugs, and students who are living in homeless shelters.

Q. Are you seeing more students coming to school with these types of issues?

A. Yes, absolutely. Kids have fewer resources to pull from. We are seeing more generations of parents who have mental illness which can pass on to their kids. I am at the stage in my career that I can see three generations of this pattern in families. It is an area that is sometimes difficult to address at school because we have such limited time with students. At Pioneer, we put in a lot of positive supports for kids and give them reasons to feel safe and successful at school. We meet clothing needs through a closet clothing exchange program. We have vast after school opportunities.

Q. How do you work with parents on these issues?

A. We have parenting classes to learn skills and we do home visits. We have annual meetings with students who have disabilities and we discuss what the program is and what we can do for the student. We are always just a phone call away and parents come in individually to meet with me to discuss solutions.

Over 

MOMENTS & MEMORIES FROM ALICIA QUACKENBUSH:

Some kids come to school with many challenges. Special programs provide a way for them to be successful in school. Parents don't have resources to address these needs alone.



COMMENTS FROM ALICIA:

I work with teachers to observe students in classrooms and I will give suggestions or accommodations that might help students be successful in class.

Our role is important because we are looking at an individual student and how they fit into a large system. We look at their needs and find solutions.



I grew up in Pueblo, Colorado and attended Seattle Pacific University.

My husband is a physician in Walla Walla. We have three grown sons. I like to ski and ride horses.