



# Support Staff Spotlight

NAME: Kathy Gifford

POSITION: Sub Coordinator

Department: Personnel

YEARS IN DISTRICT: 17 years

Q. What does the substitute coordinator do for the district?

A. I start my day at 5:45 a.m. My major function is to make sure the district has appropriate certificated and classified substitutes in the buildings every morning.

Q. What other support functions do you provide for the personnel department?

A. All substitutes who work in our district go through a hiring process. They meet with someone in personnel, fingerprints are taken, a Washington State Patrol background check is conducted, and they are issued an official WWSD badge so the students and staff know this person is safe to be in their building.

Q. How has technology advancements changed your job?

A. We use an online substitute reservation system. This system is designed to secure the bulk of the certificated substitutes. This program is a helpful tool, but I still make phone calls every morning because some jobs remain unfilled. I also coordinate all classified substitutes without the use of an online system.

Q. Do you notice the need for more subs during the winter months?

A. It has been a rough winter for illness. We are also short certificated subs to begin with and this creates even more challenges when the district has high absentee rates due to illness.

My hat goes off to all the building secretaries because when substitutes are not available they must shuffle the building staff to cover for teachers who are gone. The head secretaries are like rock stars as they make sure there is coverage in their buildings with the least amount of disruption.

Over

**NOTES:**  
When someone comes in the district office, it may be the only time they meet a WWPS employee. I take that as my personal mission to make it a good experience so they have a positive image of the people who work for us.



# Highlights Kathy Gifford

I grew up in College Place and attended private schools. I have three grown sons who attended Walla Walla Public Schools.



I work part-time for the Walla Walla Foundry. I love both jobs.

When I started with the district in 1997, I was a para-professional at Pioneer Middle School. I transferred to the district office in 2008.