

Highlights of my career in education:

I began working with children in 1992 in an outdoor education program. This experience with eleven and twelve year olds inspired me to pursue a career in education. In 1994, after a full-year internship with an amazing master teacher in a 6th grade classroom in Brookline, Massachusetts, I earned a Masters of Arts in Teaching Middle School with an emphasis on Social Studies.

I taught 5th grade Language Arts and Social Studies for one more year in Massachusetts and then, in 1995, I moved to Quito, Ecuador where for four years I taught Language Arts and Social Studies in 7th and 8th grade. To fulfill a dream, I came to Alaska in 1999 and found myself living in the village of Tanana on the Yukon River where I was the high school's Language Arts and Social Studies teacher. I met my husband (currently a teacher at Wasilla High School) there and we stayed on the river for nine years – the last seven downriver from Tanana in the village of Galena. While bringing three children into the world during our time in Galena, I switched from classroom teaching to administration. I directed the school district's Early Learning Program for birth to age 8 and I became a certified Parent Educator for the Parents As Teachers program. In 2008 we said goodbye to our home in the village and moved to Corvallis, Oregon so that my husband could attend graduate school. In Oregon I was the Executive Director (a.k.a. principal, superintendent, vice-principal, counselor) of a new K-5 charter school.

Upon returning to Alaska in 2009, we had the pick of the state and we choose the Mat-Su Valley as our new home. To help everyone in my family settle in to a new community, I stayed home with my youngest son (who was three years old at the time) and volunteered in my two older children's school. In January of 2010, I began substitute teaching throughout the district. Substituting was a great way for me to find my way back into the classroom.

When I was hired to teach 6th grade at WMS in August of 2010, I felt as though I had come home professionally, back to my early roots in education working with eleven and twelve year olds – a most endearing age.

I wish every family the best as you transition into this new phase of your child's education,

Ms. Renée