

WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY

Department of Teaching and Learning

Dear Mentor Teacher,

Thank you for agreeing to work with a WSU student in your classroom. As part of our Practicum 317 course, we require students to volunteer three weeks in K-12 classrooms learning directly from teachers and students.

Because these students are just beginning their professional preparation, we rely on your judgment to determine the extent of their involvement in instructional activities. We also ask that students not be asked to substitute for the teacher or be left on their own. It is most beneficial to students if they can participate in a variety of activities including:

- Doing introductory tasks such as taking role, collecting papers, assisting individual students
- Assisting with small group instruction and whole class lessons
- Assisting in the preparation of instructional materials
- Working in a variety of subject areas
- Grading, record keeping, or organizational tasks
- Working with students from diverse backgrounds with varied learning needs
- Participating in extra-curricular activities, parent-teacher meetings, school-community events
- Participating in professional opportunities such as in-services and faculty meetings

We have found that successful volunteer experiences also depend on:

- Daily communication between the teacher and pre-service teacher to clarify roles and responsibilities, discuss student needs, and provide positive feedback and suggestions.
- Discussion that blends teaching theory and practice. While you know what you are doing and why, the pre-service teacher does not. It is helpful if you discuss your teaching philosophy, explain your classroom management system, describe how you develop teaching materials and lessons, and show how you adjust instruction to meet individual student needs.

Your pre-service teacher has been provided with professional guidelines and a list of suggested activities for working in the classroom. S/he can provide you with the following:

- Professional Guidelines for the student
- Suggested list of Classroom Activities the student may perform
- Student Evaluation Form—this asks you to evaluate the student's potential as a future teacher

We recognize that teacher time is limited and precious. We also know that without your assistance, our students would not be able to bring the perspective of real classroom experiences into their coursework at WSU. We much appreciate your willingness to share your experience and expertise.

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori White".

Lori White
Field Experience Coordinator
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