



Student teacher Krysten Saldaña grew up and went to school in Warm Springs and is now earning a teaching degree from George Fox University while gaining paid hands-on experience within the district.

Warm Springs Model participants share their thoughts...

Scott Waite

Scott Waite, educational assistant at Madras High School, has been co-teaching with WSK8 teacher Lucas Jackson.

Waite explained that without this model, he would not have been able to pursue his life-long dream of becoming a teacher because traditionally, teacher candidates must take an unpaid leave of absence from their current job for at least 15 weeks to fulfill their student teaching requirement.

“For my family, with our current salary, taking four months off work wasn’t possible. The opportunity to be paid my current salary was overwhelming to me at first. I was sure it was too good to be true! Did I hear them right? I can finish my degree here, in Madras and still work while doing my student teaching? That was the open door I had been waiting for,” said Waite.

Waite says the Grow Your Own Model has been a game-changer in his career.

“My hope and self-esteem are as bright as my future now,” said Waite. My dream is now well within my grasp. This program pulled out the skills and passions I had allowed to lay dormant. Now, I can stay right here, in our town and grow as a professional, realizing my full potential.”



Student teacher Scott Waite leads a lesson in teacher Lucas Jackson’s class at Warm Spring K-8 Academy.

JCSO co-teaching model allows student teachers to gain on-the-job training

Four educational assistants from the Jefferson County School District are on track to become teachers, thanks to a new partnership between JCSO 509J and George Fox University. The partnership, called Grow Your Own, allows district employees interested in earning teaching degrees to work, get paid and receive hands-on training at the same time.

“We wanted to make it possible for our own employees to earn teaching degrees without having to quite their jobs to meet state student teaching requirements,” said Melinda Boyle, curriculum director for JCSO 509J. “Most of us can’t afford to quit work and go back to school as adults. We have families and expenses. This program makes it possible for us to provide a steady income and train our own teachers at the same time.”

According to Boyle, there is another important benefit to “growing your own teachers” within a school district.

“We want to employ teachers from our own communities. People who know and understand our culture. Teachers who are diverse like our students and reflect the student population,” said Boyle.

With the new model, student teachers are placed on teams with experienced, cooperating teachers for a full school year. The state of Oregon requires only 15 weeks of classroom training. Currently, all of the district’s student teachers are working in classrooms at Warm Springs K8 Academy.

Student teacher Krysten Saldaña, who was born and raised in Warm Springs, explained that she has always wanted a job that would allow her to touch the future. She works as an educational assistant at WSK8 and is now also student teaching with WSK8 teacher Sara Clark.

“It’s pretty wonderful. I love working with kids from my own Warm Springs community because we share the same values and I can be a role model,” said Saldaña. “I’m working with the students who are the future of Warm Springs.”

The four students graduated from the program this month and will be teaching their own classes in September of 2017.

For more information about Grow Your Own contact Lizzy Riese, admissions counselor at lriese@georgefox.edu.



(Left) Student teacher Julie Mitchell works with a small group of students outside of the classroom while (right) teacher Sara Kollen engages a small group inside the classroom.



Madras dad say JCSO tops Chicago schools experience

Two years ago, mechanical engineer Chris Toman moved to Jefferson County with his wife Jinnell Lewis after she accepted a family physician position at St. Charles Family Care in Madras. Toman, who has half-time custody of his daughters Aspen (grade 4) and Cypress (grade 2), wanted to find the best possible education for his girls, who live in Chicago when they are not with him.

“I was surprised to hear that parents here were taking their kids outside of the community to go to school in other school districts so I started doing a ridiculous amount of research,” said Toman. “It is the responsibility of the parents to help make our schools better, and if they see areas to improve, they should reach out and help, so we all benefit.”

According to Toman, when he started digging into state test scores for individual schools, there were not big differences throughout Jefferson County. But in talking with teachers and principals from JCSO, he did find a big difference from the girls’ school in Chicago.

“I’ve seen so many schools where principals sit behind a desk and almost avoid talking to parents. The teachers and staff here are more than fantastic,” said Toman.

Toman explained that the teams at Madras and Buff are more than accommodating and that is especially important to his girls who have had many transitions.

“Their other schools seemed so hectic and haphazard with very little communication from the teachers. My experience with Madras and JCSO has been nothing but helpful. Everything is so organized and everyone communicates,” added Toman.

In terms of academics, Toman said he doesn’t see huge differences from the school his daughters attend in Chicago. He also believes the staff does a good job of working with individual students to help them move at their own pace.

“It seems like there are many opportunities for kids to advance here when they excel,” said Toman.

When asked about the Jefferson County community, he had more to say.

“I think it’s fantastic. The focus seems to be on kids and this community doing things better for the community, not just making money. I also think our diversity is more of a triumph than a detriment. It’s better for our kids to learn and respect each other’s differences,” Toman said.



Chris Toman and Jinnell Lewis with their three children.

Julie Mitchell

Julie Mitchell, educational assistant at Madras High School, has been co-teaching with WSK8 teachers David Colburn and Sara Kollen while earning her teaching degree.

“This program has made my career path much more achievable. I have six children ranging from ages 5 to 21. Working full time, being a wife and mother and going to school full time was a juggling act.”

Mitchell said the program has made it possible for her to keep working and earn an income while getting the credits she needs for a teaching career.

“I have had the most amazing experience co-teaching at WSK8. From day one the staff welcomed me with open arms. I have always felt valued as a team member. I had a wonderful mentor who guided me during my co-teaching,” said Mitchell.

Colburn said he wanted to be part of the co-teaching program to support others.

“I know three of the four candidates in the program from my previous experience at Madras High School and wanted to encourage them and help them by being a support and an example. I can remember when I was getting my teaching credentials and the support I received from the experienced teachers around me that gave me the confidence I needed to be successful. I wanted to be helpful in the same way,” said Colburn.



WSK8 Teacher Sarah Bennett teaches a lesson to her third grade class while student teacher Kim Sumner works one-on-one with a student.

“Without this program finding a way to help us keep our jobs, I would not have been able to reach this goal.”
— Kim Sumner, student teacher

PAC Calendar

April
28-29 MHS presents Oliver Twist - 7 pm

May
4 JCMS Band Concert - 7:30 pm
8 WSK Band & Choir Concert - 7 pm
11 Grow Your Own information meeting - 6 pm
16 MHS Spring Choir Concert - 7 pm
19 MHS Spring Band Concert - 7 pm
22 Madras Elementary Lessons Recital - 6 pm
25 Buff Elementary Lessons Recital - 6 pm

Calendar

May
8 School Board Meeting District Office - 7 pm
22 School Board Meeting District Office - 7 pm
29 NoSchool — Memorial Day

June
3 Madras High School & Bridges Career and Technical High School Graduation - 9 am