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Monroe's Teacher of the Year Rachel Sullivan Brings Relentless Positivity to Her Kindergarten Class

Monroe, WA – Rachel Sullivan, kindergarten teacher at Frank Wagner Elementary, was selected as the Monroe Teacher of the Year for the amazing rate of improvement her students have made in her care. She will be honored this month by the Monroe-Sultan Masonic Lodge that sponsors the annual award.

Many of Sullivan's students started school not knowing any letter sounds or being able to count past ten. With her help, they ended the year at grade level, reading words and simple sentences, and adding and subtracting simple math problems.

"She sets very high expectations for her students and works tirelessly so each child meets those expectations," said Principal Vikki Berard. "She has no fear of dreaming big in what her students can achieve."

Frank Wagner's kindergarten classes are scheduled all-day, every day. "We spend a lot of time building a community of learners that support and encourage one another," Sullivan said. She has taught kindergarten for five years, using a workshop model which has each student working at their own pace, "with many, many check-ins with me."

"Kindergartners are insightful and eager to learn. I'm tired at the end of every day but I am amused and in awe of their rapid rate of growth," said Sullivan. "You can witness them learning something new right before your eyes; what's not to love about that?"

"Her students are working on reading and writing well beyond the kindergarten level, writing books and sharing stories," said Berard.

In addition to her fulltime daily kindergarten class, Sullivan also helped at the district level to align the report card with the new state learning standards, as well as helping to create some professional development materials for kindergarten teachers in conjunction with the rollout of the new standards.

"One of Rachel's greatest strengths is that she address all 'road blocks' that get in the way of learning for her students," explained Berard. "She seeks support from district resources and works closely with families. Communication is key for our kids to realize we are a team with their families. When they feel supported, they are willing to try new learning with gusto."