



Issaquah High Teacher Profile

Kelly Henry

Issaquah High Chemistry Teacher

What is your education background?

BS in Chemistry and Masters in Teaching from Washington State University...go Cougs!

Did you grow up around Issaquah?

I actually did grow up in Issaquah. I am a class of '04 Skyline grad 😊



What was your job/career before coming to teach at Issaquah? If you had a prior job/career, how did that job/career make you become a better teacher?

Before I became a teacher I was a Senior Nuclear Reactor Operator at WSU's 1 MW TRIGA Reactor. I chose to delay my start to teaching to take this opportunity to become an SRO because I knew it would make me a better teacher. Not only would I be educating myself (and therefore my future students) in a very important subject like nuclear chemistry/radiochemistry, but in my job as SRO part of my responsibilities was in the training of new Reactor Operators. In this unique situation I would be able to practice and hone my teaching skills on a more individual basis.

How many years have you been teaching at Issaquah and what classes do you teach?

This is my 8th year teaching, and my 8th year at IHS. I teach Chemistry. I love teaching chemistry because it's a hard subject and not everyone loves it. It was a hard subject for me too, both in high school and in college. I stuck with it though because I thought it was really interesting. My favorite thing is when students who are really struggling with a concept finally get it and I can see that switch flick from confusion to understanding. I love that.



Any favorite teaching memories?

My first few years at IHS, there were this group of kids who would come into my room after school and hang out. They were not my students, but they had questions about chemistry (at first) and then my room just became their hangout zone. They would spend about 20 minutes there doing homework, playing Pictionary, asking about labs I was doing in class, or just chatting about their lives. They came in to avoid just sitting in traffic, but it was ultimately the highlight of my day as I got to know these students on a different level. They would even sometimes help me out by reading over instructions or lab procedures and telling me where things didn't make sense or I wasn't being clear enough. They hung out in my room for 3 years and it was honestly the best three years of my teaching. I miss that in this distance learning situation, the more casual interactions with students just popping by to say hello or ask a question. I have managed to experience it a couple of times now with either

students just sticking around on Zoom after class or students showing up to my NEST office hours. I really love it when students do this, because it is these types of interactions that are the reason I got into teaching.

What do you like to do outside of school?

I have a 3 year old daughter who takes up most of my outside of school time. She is so funny and loves to read stories, play pretend, draw, paint, and sing and dance. We also like to bake together. My favorite thing to do though is just spend time with her and my husband. Things that I do for myself though are that I like to paint pictures from children's books on rocks and hide them around the neighborhood. I've also been quilting since I was 10 years old, so I like to make quilts for family and friends.



Is there anything else special about you that you would like to share?

Two years ago I was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer at the age of 32. This is about 8-18 years before doctors start recommending routine screening. I had no family history of breast cancer either. I felt something strange one morning and decided to call my doctor. The next day I had an appointment that quickly escalated into multiple different scans and biopsies. The next week I was diagnosed. I spend all of 2019 going through treatment for breast cancer (chemotherapy, bilateral mastectomy, and radiation) and am happy to say I have spent 2020 on the mend. I like to be very open about this with my students not because I want pity or to be told I am brave, but because as a teacher it is important to me to educate those around me of the risks. I have spoken to several other young adults with breast cancer and many of them were dismissed or misdiagnosed at first due to their age and people thinking it couldn't possibly be breast cancer. I don't want this to happen to

any of my students and so I want them to advocate for themselves and be aware of their own bodies. As a teacher I also like to serve as a sounding board for students who are experiencing cancer in their own lives or in the lives of a loved one. I want to be there for my students to answer any questions or just to listen to their struggles.

