



Issaquah High Teacher Profile

Rachel Heilman

Issaquah High Social Studies Teacher (World History and AP Psychology)



What is your education background?

My BA is in History and Psychology from the University of Kentucky; Teaching Certification from Austin Peay State University; MA from the University of Washington from Jackson School of International Studies (South Asia area focus)

Did you grow up around Issaquah? If not, where did you grow up and did that help shape the person you are today?

I didn't grow up in Issaquah – in fact, in my lifetime I've lived in 15 or so different places. My parents are both in the health care field and can't sit still, then I married an Army helicopter pilot. I've taught for 4 or more years in 4 different districts, so I've been lucky to experience education in quite a few different contexts. When we retired out of the Army and got to choose where to live we picked here, so now you're stuck with me 😊

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?

I always wanted to be a teacher, but my favorite high school teacher advised me against it because he felt the pay wasn't fair and working conditions weren't always pleasant. I'm glad I initially listened to him because it pushed me to double major – History for fun and Psychology for a career. But when it came time to think about post-BA work, I realized what I liked about psychology was essentially teaching. I think seeking out higher education in the subjects I teach has made me a better teacher, so I'm glad things worked out as they have.



How many years have you been teaching at Issaquah?

Four years.

What classes at Issaquah do you teach, and why do you love teaching that subject?

I love all of the subjects in Social Studies because they are so unequivocally and obviously relevant. They are also inherently interesting to me and usually to my students. I can't think of a better way to spend my career than exploring these subjects with these young people, who push me to think more deeply and in different ways. They are a delight. Lately I've been teaching AP Psychology and World History, but I've also spent a lot of time teaching Civics and AP Human Geography in the past.



Any favorite teaching memories?

I don't see how I could possibly name one – it's the small, daily interactions that are my favorites. Graduation is always a highlight. Maybe the more interesting memories to report on were fire drills in Alaska at 20 or more below zero and taking my psychology students to the Secret Garden in Las Vegas to learn about operant conditioning in action with dolphins and big cats.

**Are you a club mentor or sport coach and if so, what are the best parts of being a mentor/coach for that club/sport?
Any memorable experiences you would like to share?**

I am currently the Debate Team advisor, but since I'm new at that they are mostly advising me.

Is (was) volunteering part of your life? If so, tell us about your volunteering experiences and what you love about them?

As a military spouse, volunteering was often just part of life and as a younger teacher I did a lot with the school community. Right now I'm doing my best to be a good mom and a good teacher, which is a season of life with less volunteering for me.

What do you like to do outside of school?

I like to read and have nerdy discussions with friends. I enjoy hiking and cuddling my kids and cats. I like adventures and travel with The Husband. For myself, I've enjoyed studying dance and now finally we are in one place long enough to truly focus on studying Kathak. I love the process and community of dance.

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

No, I think I've exhausted anything interesting about myself. Thank you for this opportunity!

