



Turnaround Specialist

Margarita Garcia grew up in El Paso, Texas and attended the University of Texas at El Paso where she earned her Bachelors degree in Education and the University of Texas at Arlington where she earned her Masters degree in Administration.

In 2003, Margarita became the principal of Washington Heights Elementary in Fort Worth, TX, a campus serving a majority of second language learners and over 90% economically disadvantaged kids. Under her leadership, the school has been hailed as high achieving based on rapid and dramatic increases in student performance on multiple indicators. Margarita continues to sustain a turnaround that has lifted her school from dismal with less than 50% passing rates to passing rates that have earned her school "Recognized Status" for academic excellence from the Texas Education Agency, the second highest rating in the state of Texas. Margarita's efforts and the success of the school have been highlighted in the media and a case study that was recently presented at the 2007 American Educational Research Association (AERA).

In the summer of 2004, Margarita joined School Turnaround as a participating principal determined to turn around student achievement and move her school onto a new path of success. At the end of her first year in School Turnaround, Washington Heights was demonstrating significant gains in all academic areas, in some areas more than 40 percentage points. The student outcomes continue to improve each year and the students meeting commended performance continues to increase. In June 2006, Margarita was the recipient of the annual Turnaround Principal award.

Margarita joined the School Turnaround staff in 2006, as a specialist, and works directly with principals to ensure that all leadership decisions are based on what is right for kids' achievement.