

## Meriden Public Schools: Bilingual Success with *Wonders* and *Maravillas*

Of her 21 years as an educator, Alicia Lorenzo has spent the last 20 in the bilingual program at Meriden Public Schools. She currently teaches fifth-grade bilingual at Hanover Elementary, which began implementing *Wonders* and *Maravillas* in 2020. Alicia's class includes students from Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Mexico, Colombia, and Paraguay. In a recent set of interviews, Alicia discussed how *Wonders* and *Maravillas* have bolstered her bilingual instruction and led to student success.

### Simplifying Planning and Preparation

"Many years ago, when we were teaching, we didn't have a program like this," Alicia said, reflecting on the hours she used to spend translating materials and the resulting fatigue. The flexible, interconnected resources in *Wonders* and *Maravillas* help Alicia reacquaint herself with key topics, streamline classroom planning, and ensure students receive the right content at the right time. "It's not something I've had to do from scratch or second guess. *Maravillas* and *Wonders* set the learning path out for you," she continued.

With *Wonders* and *Maravillas*, Alicia has the tools to strengthen and extend her students' learning. "I now have time to build upon the core materials. I'm learning; the kids are learning; and I'm presenting topics more in depth," Alicia said. "*Wonders* and *Maravillas* give me the opportunity to give students an education that meets a higher standard," she later added.

Additionally, *Wonders* and *Maravillas* support Alicia as she prepares students for high-stakes testing. Because the components expose students to essential content and mirror

#### DISTRICT INFORMATION



**District Name:**

Meriden Public Schools

**School Name:**

Hanover Elementary School

**Location:**

Meriden, Connecticut

**Grade:**


K-5

testing formats, she no longer needs to cram or rush test preparation. According to Alicia, “You don’t have to worry about prepping materials or wondering things like, ‘Did I phrase this correctly? Did I hit that target learning?’ It’s all done for you.”

## Making Learning Accessible

Alicia also uses *Wonders* and *Maravillas* resources to adapt instruction to specific student needs. With components like the *Wonders* Reading Writing Companion and its collection of differentiated text, all students—from English language newcomers to students who are approaching, on, or beyond grade level—can effectively access classroom content. As Alicia said, with *Wonders*, “You don’t have to tailor the student to the content; you can tailor the content to the student.”

For new students in Alicia’s classroom, having high-quality Spanish materials available helps them build background knowledge, participate in classroom conversations, and dive into learning activities. Because the content is accessible, these students can concentrate their focus on learning and speaking English. Students who are more familiar with English, moreover, can access English materials to practice and grow their skills. Not only do *Wonders* and *Maravillas* drive language acquisition, but Alicia has found that they even forge cross-curricular connections to subjects like science and social studies—regardless of student language level or learning needs.



“*Wonders* and *Maravillas* give me the opportunity to give students an education that meets a higher standard.”

## Honoring and Connecting to Students’ Lives

*Maravillas* content also resonates with Alicia’s students, she noted, as they can connect to its cultural components. Relatable content, as well as the social and emotional learning aspects of *Wonders* and *Maravillas*, allow students in her bilingual classroom to feel both seen and heard. “These kids have stories,” Alicia said, “and sometimes they can’t learn if they don’t share them.” Having opportunities to express themselves, and to see their lives reflected in classroom content, offers students a sense of safety and security.

When Alicia’s students see their experiences represented in the classroom, they feel empowered and excited to learn and share. With *Wonders* and *Maravillas*, Alicia said, “Students are learning, but they’re also bringing in what they know.” Ultimately, the familiar topics within the programs help her students better connect and contribute to what they’re learning.

For more information on *Wonders* and *Maravillas*, visit [mheonline.com/wonders](https://mheonline.com/wonders)