

## Spartan Spotlight: Ms. Janette Marrero, Bilingual Secretary



If you've ever visited the SMS front office, it's likely you were greeted by Ms. Marrero. She joined SMS in the spring of 2018 and previously was a before school/after school program assistant at Berewick Elementary. In her current role, Ms. Marrero manages everything from the always-ringing phones and greeting parents and students, to assisting teachers and translating for our Spanish-speaking scholars.

Ms. Marrero was born in Manhattan, New York City and raised in New Jersey. Both of her parents are from Puerto Rico and immigrated to the United

States in the 1960s. After marrying her high school sweetheart, Ms. Marrero lived in Puerto Rico for 25 years, raising all three of her children there. She moved to Charlotte four years ago.

To experience Puerto Rico's traditional foods, clothing and music locally, Ms. Marrero attends the annual Puerto Rican festival in Charlotte. But, a big part of her celebrations of her Puerto Rican heritage here in Charlotte involve food! When she lived in Puerto Rico, Ms. Marrero learned to make native dishes like alcapurrias and pasteles (fried or boiled mashed plantains stuffed with meat). When her adult children come to visit, it's a must to make arroz con gandules (rice with green pigeon peas) and her personal speciality, chicken stew - a dish she learned to make from her mother and older sisters.

When asked what it's like to be Hispanic American, Ms. Marrero said, "Confusing! In the United States, I'm known as Puerto Rican. But, in Puerto Rico, I'm known as American...even after living in Puerto Rico for 25 years, my accent and the differences in language identify me as American. I find myself asking, 'Where do I fit in?' I always explain I'm a Puerto Rican born and raised in the States."