

2019 Arizona EL Teacher of the Year

Eileen Nguyen



“If you want peace, work for justice” was a slogan on the walls of the classrooms that Eileen Nguyen attended in Detroit, Michigan. Eileen was born in the year of the famous Detroit race riots, and Father William T. Cunningham was her oldest brother’s teacher. Father Cunningham was a founder of Focus: HOPE, which gave job training to racial minorities. Eileen knew how education makes a huge impact on society and decided to become a teacher at a young age.

Eileen is fluent in Spanish and taught bilingual education in her earliest years of teaching. Eileen has a Master’s Degree in Education from Arizona State University and holds several endorsements, including the Bilingual and Gifted Endorsements. She is a member of the Arizona Association for the Gifted and Talented and the National Association for Bilingual Education. Eileen has taught English learners from kindergarten through sixth grade for over 25 years and holds high expectation for all her students.

When she is not at school, Eileen relishes her privacy, and maintains her focus on her students, whom she considers her children, when she is at work. Eileen is the youngest of 10 children, who all graduated from high school, and 9 of whom have college degrees. Eileen’s favorite teacher was Margaret Seacord, who talked to her students with respect and held high expectations for all of them.

By collaborating with other educators through Professional Learning Communities, Eileen keeps herself current on effective teaching strategies and formative assessments. Eileen teaches at Esperanza Elementary School in the Deer Valley Unified School District and believes that educators teach the whole child, and that they mentor students to becoming lifelong learners who set goals and manage them.

As a leader on her campus and collaborating on many teams, following a presentation from Dr. Luis Cruz, Eileen suggested that her campus begin a Cultural Celebration. Eileen is active on her campus, translating for parents, so that they can be better informed about how to be actively involved in their children’s education.