

2006 HONOREE

Zarina Ahmad

Chabot Elementary School, Oakland, CA
Early Childhood Elementary Education • Kindergarten



Years Teaching: 20

Average Class Size: 20

Classes Taught Per Day: 1

School's % of ESL Students: 5%

School Type: Public, Inner City

Type of Class: Self-contained

“A part of what makes my classroom practice and environment innovative and unique is that I give my students confidence and comfort by establishing a daily routine that keeps them fully engaged and excited. Within our daily routine, I provide new activities and opportunities for them to share their accomplishments as they achieve their academic and personal goals. When my Kindergarten students arrive to school and line up each morning with their parents or guardians, I walk down the line and greet each one of them. I give them the opportunity to chat with me as I give them personal attention and hear about their loose teeth, restless nights, play dates, or marvel at their completed homework or latest accomplishment. I deeply feel that getting to know my students and their families personally shows them that I care and sets the tone for mutual respect and comfort that Kindergarten students and their families need. I witness that once my students are comfortable, they are willing to take academic risks, to try new curriculum, make predictions, and ask clarifying questions. They learn with confidence and feel supported.”

“Remaining a creative teacher is a must. Some people have told me that I am a gifted teacher, but I see teaching as a gift itself. When I see students make accomplishments and feel proud, I am filled with joy. When former students and their parents come and visit me year after year, and I hear about their progress and success, I rejoice for the world is renewed.”



“While touring schools for our prospective Kindergartner, I knew within a few minutes of observing Ms. Ahmad’s classroom that she was a special teacher who would provide an excellent experience for our son. The atmosphere – from the warm and creative decor, to the tone of her voice when she interacted with the children – provided a telling glimpse of what we could expect of her as a teacher. This prediction proved more than true. Within days, our son was so awed by Ms. Ahmad that he could not wait to go to school each morning.”

— Sandra J. Gross, parent of former and current student

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

New Teacher of the Year in Language Arts (1993) • Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers, 2005, 2006 • Urban Service Award - YMCA, 2005