



***Manuel Chavez
6th Grade
Avenue B Elementary School, San Manuel
Mammoth-San Manuel Unified School District
2009 Teacher of the Year "Ambassador for Excellence"***

Manuel Chavez teaches 6th grade at Avenue B Elementary School in San Manuel, Arizona, where he worked in the Arizona mining field for 20 years prior to becoming a teacher. He has been teaching for 6 years after studying at Central Arizona College and Northern Arizona University where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Education. He was named the Mammoth-San Manuel Unified School District Teacher of the Year in 2008, and an Arizona Teacher of the Year Ambassador for Excellence in 2009 by the Arizona Educational Foundation.

"My greatest contribution to education is being able to relate to students my experiences as a copper miner and intertwining my classroom lessons with my life lessons. Many times students will ask, 'When am I going to use the standard that you are teaching?' My response is 'Let me tell you a story.' I relate the story to the students and then give an example of how the standard being taught is used in the real world."

"At the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year, I was faced with the challenge of turning reluctant readers into life-long readers. Most of the students in my reading class were reluctant readers and I needed to find a way to present lessons that would engage the students, but at the same time format the lessons to resemble a game show. I was fortunate to have a SmartBoard that I would present on in my classroom. It was a challenging experience, but I mastered the software and began creating lessons similar to what students were playing on PlayStations and X-Box. By the end of the school year, with the help of the SmartBoard and the confidence my students developed, my students surpassed the goal of reading 125 words per minute by averaging 165 words per minute."

"My belief is that students need to be exposed at an early age to the benefits of attaining higher education. It is my intent to use my productive teaching abilities to provide the right learning environment for children inside and outside of the classroom. It is also my intent to spark the curiosity of children and help them believe that their abilities are valued. I believe that my teachings make a difference in my students' lives by preparing them for their future by encouraging them to become critical thinkers and problem solvers."

"Mr. Manuel Chavez's positive attitude and high expectations allow students to dream big and believe that those dreams can become reality when coupled with a good attitude and hard work. Manuel shows them how dreams become reality by sharing his magic with them. Students learn by example. Manuel's magical example is one that makes us proud to call him friend and colleague." Ron Rickel, Ed.D, Superintendent of Mammoth-San Manuel School District.