



## **Laurie Burrell**

5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher

Wilson K-8 School, Tucson

Amphitheater Unified School District

- ❖ *“(My goal is to) make my classroom a place full of nurturing curiosity, inquisitive students and problem solvers who not only ask the difficult questions but go looking for the answers. Each year I point out a poster: Milestones of Science, with pictures of famous scientists. I tell students there’s room on the poster for their picture! I remind them each day it is possible. I tell my students to make sure they invite me to their Nobel Peace Prize ceremony and I want to see their picture on my famous scientists’ poster. This belief inspires students to do things they never thought possible, to reach for their dreams. This is my greatest achievement in education, inspiring and creating future scientists, believing in my students, offering opportunities to work with science using innovative instructional skills and nurturing their inquisitive nature. I am able to see in them a future of discovery that will change their lives and our world.”*
- ❖ *“Students’ days are busy with vast opportunities for activities and possibilities. They seem to have less desire to focus on a single activity but more of a compulsion to multitask. This simple fact has molded my philosophy of teaching: to be as innovative and sophisticated as my students and their environment. To do this, I must know how my students interact within their world and evolve right along with them. To be an outstanding teacher, I use this knowledge to engage and pull students into a learning event that will utilize their innate curiosity and ability to multitask. To be successful educators, we must be able to compete with all of the extraordinary imagery and mesmerizing gadgets our students experience each day. We must provide learning experiences that are dynamic and complex to tap into their drive to question the world around them.”*
- ❖ *“Our inability to prepare students for careers in science, math and technology has become a serious education issue. Our nation needs a workforce that is scientifically and technologically literate and change must occur to increase student interest in these fields of study. To produce a scientifically literate student population we must make certain math, science and technology education is a priority. We must support teachers with effective, innovative, hands-on curriculum and instruction. We must ensure our basic foundations of reading, writing and math skills are in place and not weakened due to pressure to follow the latest education fad. Most importantly, we must ensure equitable access to supplies and materials to create a scientifically literate workforce.”*
- ❖ *Jon Lansa, Assistant Principal at Wilson K-8 School writes, “Laurie’s most exciting and dynamic endeavor has probably been the development of a K-2 and a 3-5 science club that meets weekly throughout the year. It’s in this afternoon program that Laurie truly is able to teach science in all her element. No longer is she bound by state standards or set schedules, but in the science club she has free reign to teach and present science in a way that can only be described as an event. On the day of science club, students don their science club t-shirts and after the last bell run to Mrs. Burrell’s room to get front seats to the show that is about to start. Science club students are instantly engaged into the role and mind of a scientist as Laurie guides them in experiencing the world of science. Over the hour of science club, Laurie is a whirlwind of energy, questions, information and more than anything else, excitement. Observing and taking part in her science club reminds me of those childhood experiences of curiosity and discovery that helped all of us see the world in a whole different light and that keeps all of us lifelong learners.”*

Mrs. Burrell began her career in a Medical Microbiology Laboratory for the US Air Force. After earning a Bachelors degree in Science at New Mexico State University, she began teaching; she earned a Master of Education degree from Wayland Baptist University. Laurie has been a teacher for eight years.