

Jennifer Larsen

Region IV Teacher of the Year

I love teaching! It is packed with rewards from the social and academic leaps of each child to the pride on their faces when they accomplish something new.

As teachers, we hold an impressive amount of power over our students. How we make a child feel has a more lasting impact than what they learn in our classroom.

My first focus is my students' happiness. I believe all children want to learn, but they can't if they don't feel comfortable and safe. This is the basis for the community of learners in my classroom. My room is designed to promote learning through play, cooperation and social interaction. Each child's voice is heard and valued.

I see my job as empowering students to be learners. I guide children using their interests and abilities as my compass. All students have strengths. Sometimes these strengths are not easily seen in the classroom, but in extracurricular activities. Finding and highlighting those strengths help a child become more confident and willing to take risks in their learning. This confidence helps our students grow exponentially. Who wouldn't love this job!

