



## PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR: ERIC KEMP

October 8, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Heidi Konstantopoulos, and I have the honor being hired by Principal Kemp twice. Initially I was hired as a classroom teacher and department leader. The second time I was hired as teacher on assignment to serve as a teacher mentor. Mr. Eric Kemp has been my supervisor, mentor, and leadership coach for the past seven years at Linda Abril Educational Academy.

Mr. Kemp's influence extends well beyond my own experience. He has coached and mentored numerous educational leaders, several of whom have advanced to Principal and Assistant Principal positions. Mr. Kemp has inspired former students to enter the education profession regardless of where he encounters them.

Eric leads a Title I school serving a student body that is 98% Black and Brown in urban Phoenix, Arizona. He has played an instrumental role in increasing both enrollment and academic achievement for all students, including those enrolled in English Language Programs. Notably, during his leave of absence in the 2023–24 school year, Abril's enrollment and graduation rates each declined, while disciplinary incidents rose. Upon Eric Kemp's return, the school has demonstrated measurable improvement across all indicators.

He not only values a diverse student population but also actively recruits highly qualified and diverse representing our global community. Under his leadership, Linda Abril has become a model of multiculturalism, often described as "the United Nations of our district", that authentically reflects the community it serves. The cafeteria displays the flags from every continent and is inclusive of the African diaspora, symbolizing the school's commitment to inclusivity and cultural celebration.

Mr. Kemp leads with high expectations and accountability. He forges meaningful connections with all stakeholders, maintaining high standards of accountability while emphasizing the importance of wellness and family. He provides thoughtful support and intervention for staff experiencing personal or professional challenges.

Principal Kemp leads with a calm and respectful demeanor, treating every student, family, and staff member with dignity. Eric fosters an inclusive environment where all feel valued and supported. Principal Eric Kemp is an outstanding ambassador for NABSE and is worthy of the NABSE Principal of the Year Award.

Sincerely,

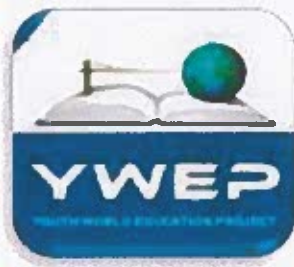
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'H.K.' followed by a flourish.

Heidi Konstantopoulos

Gwendolen Lee, Principal | Thea Andrade, Superintendent

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**Youth World Education Project**  
**"Transforming Youth, One Family at a Time"**

October 8, 2025

National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE)  
Awards Selection Committee

Dear Esteemed Committee Members,

It is both an honor and a joy to write this letter of support for Principal Eric Kemp in his nomination for NABSE Principal of the Year. Since 2017, I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Mr. Kemp, and I can say without hesitation that he embodies the heart, soul, and spirit of what it means to be a transformational school leader.

When you walk into Linda Abril Educational Academy, you can feel the culture Principal Kemp has built. You see it in the confidence of the students who know they are valued. You hear it in the voices of parents who feel they are respected partners. You witness it in the deep loyalty of staff who know their principal will always find solutions that lift everyone up.

What touches me most is his impact on lives across generations. I have seen scholars who once doubted their future walk across the graduation stage with dignity and purpose because of his steady belief in them. I have seen young adults who now choose to become teachers and principals themselves, inspired by the example he set. To know that two of his former students are now principals sitting in the audience of his national presentation speaks to the legacy of love, hope, and leadership he continues to plant.

Principal Kemp's gift is not only in running a successful school, but in building a family and a movement. He makes every stakeholder feel seen whether a student struggling to find their voice, a parent needing support, or a colleague looking for mentorship. His leadership reminds us that education at its best is not just about academics, but about shaping lives and communities.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly and with great pride support Principal Eric Kemp as NABSE Principal of the Year. He leads with excellence, but even more importantly, he leads with heart.

Respectfully,

*Tara S. Laurie-Manson*

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PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR  
ERIC KEMP

October 8, 2025

To NABSE Leadership:

I am writing to wholeheartedly to recommend Eric Kemp for the PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR award. Having had the privilege of working closely with Eric as a fellow administrator since 2009, I can attest to his outstanding leadership abilities, incomparable commitment to academic achievement, and unparalleled dedication to the advancement of students and staff alike.

As the Principal of Linda Abril Academy, an alternative school within the Phoenix Union High School District (comprised of 98% black and brown inner-city students), Eric has demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for implementing comprehensive and strategic programming, which has led to the complete transformation of that learning community into an environment marked by school improvement and an improved graduation rate. As a result, the school's reputation, once characterized as being a *dumping ground*, has evolved into a desirable option for parents to send their children. In addition to being celebrated locally by the community's stakeholders, Mr. Kemp's efforts earned Linda Abril Academy the NABSE National Demonstration School status in 2004.

Eric Kemp's organizational skills, attention to detail, and resourcefulness have enabled him to effectively manage complex projects and initiatives. Whether seeking out innovative staff development opportunities or mentoring aspiring administrators, Eric approaches each task with a meticulous level of preparation and professionalism, ensuring that all objectives are met with the utmost efficiency and effectiveness.

Based on Mr. Kemp's exemplary character, integrity, genuine compassion for others, and unwavering dedication to service, I fully support his nomination for the PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR award. If you have further questions, I can be contacted at (602) 690-0278.

Sincerely,



Keith Brazier

Retired Administrator/Safety & Security Strategist

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### *Recommendation for Principal of the Year; Mr. Eric Kemp*

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It is with great enthusiasm that I nominate **Mr. Eric Kemp** for the Principal of the Year award. Over his many years of service, Mr. Kemp has exemplified the very qualities of transformational leadership, equity-driven focus, and unwavering commitment to students, staff, and community. His impact is especially significant given the challenging context in which he leads.

Since 2007, Mr. Kemp has served as a campus administrator in a school whose student body comprises approximately **97 % minority enrollment**. In such settings, educational leaders must do more than manage; they must deeply understand culturally responsive practices, focus relentlessly on closing opportunity gaps, and earn trust across divergent stakeholder groups. Mr. Kemp has not only done this — he has excelled. After ten years as an Assistant Principal, he stepped into principal-level leadership roles with strong credibility and a track record of service.

Under Mr. Kemp's leadership, historically underserved student populations; particularly Black and Brown students; have shown **sustained increases in graduation rates**. This is no small feat in a school facing systemic barriers and resource constraints. His data-informed strategies, targeted supports, and high expectations have shifted outcomes. In fact, the school improvement metrics generated under Mr. Kemp's leadership have been adopted by the Arizona Department of Education as exemplars, demonstrating that his practices are scalable and replicable across the state.

### **Culture, Climate & Innovation**

Mr. Kemp is a recognized leader in **school culture and climate**. He intentionally cultivates inclusive, safe, and aspirational environments where students and staff feel valued, challenged, and supported. His expertise was affirmed when he was invited to present at the **Innovative Schools Summit** in July 2025 — a platform reserved for forward-thinking, exemplary leaders in educational innovation.

His campus is known for its relational leadership: regularly, he meets with students, staff, parents, community members, and stakeholders, listening to concerns, soliciting input, and co-creating solutions. In doing so, he has built trust across culturally and linguistically diverse constituencies; an essential competency in a 97 % minority school setting.

Mr. Kemp is widely regarded as a high achiever, consummately professional, and an inspirational mentor. Across his career, many emerging school leaders, teachers, and students have looked to him for guidance, encouragement, and example. He is not content to rest on past success; he invests in continuous learning, adapts to changing needs, and models equity-focused leadership daily.

Beyond his school, he is a recognized **community leader**. He engages intentionally with local civic institutions, parent groups, faith organizations, and stakeholder networks, ensuring that the school is not isolated but integrated within the broader community. Even amid a demanding role, he makes time to listen, reach out, and advocate for his school's students and families.

#### Why He Deserves This Recognition

- **Equity and impact:** Leading in a predominantly minority school, he has shifted outcomes upward where many would accept stagnation.
- **Scalable excellence:** His school improvement metrics have become models for others through adoption by the state.
- **Relational leadership:** He balances strong standards with empathy and approachability; he forges authentic partnerships across cultural lines.
- **Innovative voice:** His contributions to national-level summits show that his vision is both local and visionary.
- **Mentor and role model:** Many in his sphere aspire to emulate his example of integrity, hard work, and unrelenting student-first focus.

In summary, Mr. Eric Kemp is more than a school leader; he is a change agent for equity, a steward of culture, and a beacon of possibility in challenging educational contexts. I wholeheartedly endorse him for Principal of the Year and believe his recognition would not only celebrate his accomplishments but also uplift the idea of what is possible in high-poverty, high-minority schools.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully

*Ann Hart*

~ Dr. Ann Hart -The Hart of Education, LLC

Drhart777@gmail.com