The Gateway Journal

#1 | Nov 2025

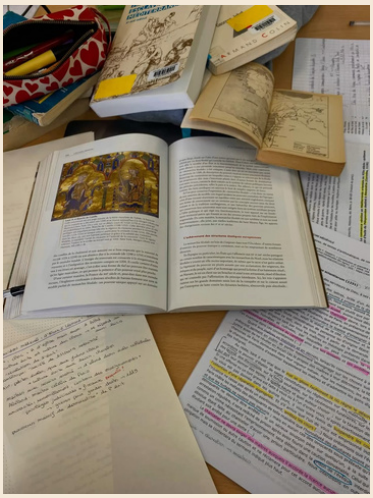
Teacher of the Month Interviews

Get to know your *TEACHERS* Beyond the *CLASSROOM*



PRESERVE THE PAST





The Teachers of the Month Interviews spotlight two amazing Queens Gateway educators each month who go above and beyond to make learning exciting and meaningful! These interviews give students a behind-the-scenes look at the teachers and their lives, mentality, and other fun things about them. From funny classroom moments to heartfelt reflections on why they love teaching, each month's feature appreciates the passion, dedication, and personality of our school's incredible staff.

Q: What made you choose to work at Gateway specifically?

Ms. Pinto: Wow, so now we're going really way back. I was right out of college, I was 21, and I was looking for a job. The year was 1996, and history teaching jobs were very slim. I was super excited to teach. I found out about Gateway from a friend, and Gateway was super, super small. The population of the school was super small, and I heard they needed a history teacher.

When I went in, I'll never forget, I felt the warmth in the building, and I was excited. I was excited, you know, I'm a five-borough kid, a Queens kid, so to work in a Queens school just felt like it was the right step, and I think it was the best decision of my life. I have been here my whole career, so that's kind of the crazy thing about Gateway: I literally consider it my second family. It's a huge part of my life, and anybody that's in my life or my family knows Gateway.

I hope that other people get to experience that sense where you just know you belong there. That's how I felt when I was first interviewed, and I was lucky that they called me back and said, "Hey, you want the job?" And I said, "Yes, I'll be there tomorrow," and I've been here ever since.

Q: Did you start your career path knowing you wanted to work with kids? If not, what led you to pursue education?

Ms. Pinto: I was a mentor to the younger students in my school, so I naturally felt like this was something I could do. I enjoyed working with other students. And so I knew I would teach either English or History because my love was there, in the humanities. I would rather spend my life pursuing a career where I'm interacting with young people because there's just something really fascinating about meeting new people every year. Young people who literally, and I'll say this to this day, are always teaching me new things.

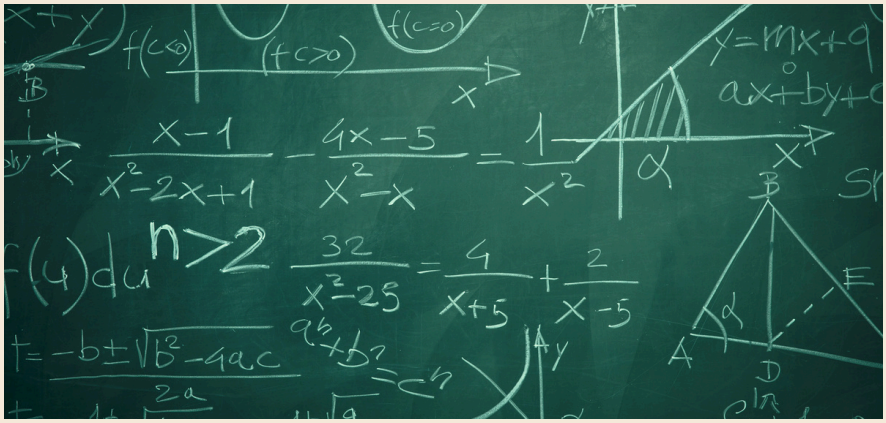


MS. PINTO (AP U.S. HISTORY)

"One of the things I live by is that I believe in being honest and real because my integrity allows me to go to sleep at night, always comfortable, and I live my life that way. You respect people, you're honest with people, whether it's family, friends, whoever you meet. And it comes back to you. So live your life, be a thinker, be positive, and be honest with yourself, and God willing, everything else falls into place."







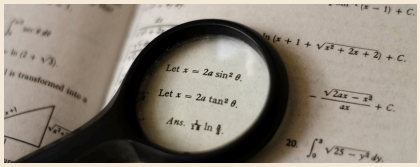
Q: How do you spend your summer vacation?

Mr. Ilyasuddin: Okay, so we went on a trip for a short period of time, like four days. We went to Canada with my family, and a little here and there. Then I spent most of my time gardening in my backyard.

Q: What do you usually garden?

Mr. Ilyasuddin: Mainly vegetables and sunflowers.

MR. ILYASUDDIN (AP COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MATH)





Q: What's your first experience with teaching? What made you pursue this career?

Mr. Ilyasuddin: Um, okay, so it just kind of happened, in a sense. Right after I graduated from high school, since my father was also a teacher, I started teaching and actually spent some days serving in his school. That was in Bangladesh. Since this happened, I continued teaching and now I really like it. Right after I graduated with my bachelor's degree, they offered me a chance to teach, so I started teaching two classes. And I thought, "Okay, let's go and teach." So I became a teacher and I've been teaching ever since.

Q: What about your teaching experience in America?

Mr. Ilyasuddin: Well, my first experience again was in college. I started teaching third-year students, and I did that for two years before I got a job in a high school. Teaching in college was much easier than teaching in the high school system.

Q: What is one of your hidden talents?

Mr. Ilyasuddin: One of my hidden talents? I don't know... no, wait, okay, there's something. If I have a hidden talent, you could say it's that I don't give up.

Q: You don't give up?

Mr. Ilyasuddin: No. So like, if I start something, I don't give up. I'm determined.

Q: Determination is a great quality! Is there like a particular experience where you faced that? Like, where that mentality applied or helped you through something?

Mr. Ilyasuddin: Okay, so focus is a big part of it for me. Whatever I do, I put my full attention into it. For instance, when I'm watching a movie, I want to hear each and every word of it. So whatever I do, I do it with complete immersion. When I'm watching something, for example, I want to finish it that same day.



More Interviews

COMING SOON

Stay Tuned