Shawnee Rivera was named the Homestead High School Certificated Employee of the Year by the Fremont Union High School District at its meeting on March 7, 2017. Shawnee began her teaching career at Homestead High School in the Fall of 2004. During her tenure with the district, she has taught World and Contemporary Literature & Writing and AVID. Prior to joining the Homestead High School teaching staff, Shawnee spent two years at Gilroy High School in the Gilroy Unified School District, teaching American Literature, 9th grade English and AVID.

During the summer before she began her teaching career at Homestead, Shawnee had the opportunity to collaborate with the World Literature team, creating Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings for each teaching unit. This experience solidified in her mind that she was joining a dynamic and passionate group of teachers. Shawnee loves her colleagues and students, who inspire her daily to be more compassionate, loving and fierce. Her favorite part of teaching is connecting with students and helping them realize their strengths and work on their overcoming their areas of weakness. “I love pushing students to critically think about themselves, their world and the impact that they have on everything around them,” said Shawnee.

Principal Greg Giglio shared that, “Shawnee is truly dedicated to her students and Homestead, and has personally influenced the overall culture of our school positively. She works tirelessly for academically disadvantaged students and is the longest running AVID teacher. Shawnee's commitment to diversity is evident in her continuous motivation and support for all students in our community.”

Shawnee has held several leadership roles on campus, currently serving as the Senior English Lead, Challenge Day Coordinator and as a representative to the Fremont Education Association (FEA). She also coached Junior Varsity soccer for two years and is advisor to the Class of 2017 and the Poetry Slam and Be the Change clubs on campus.

Shawnee was born and raised in San Jose and Sonoma, CA. She graduated from Willow Glen High School in San Jose where she was involved in the dance team, cross country, soccer, track, student government, Amnesty International and various clubs. Shawnee went on to receive her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Sonoma State University in 1998. Prior to teaching, she worked as a recruiter in the tech field. Shawnee has been married to her husband Joel since 2010, and together they have a beautiful daughter, Stelina (5). Shawnee comes from a family of educators; her mother has taught middle school Special Education science and high school science for three decades, her grandmother was a high school English teacher, her father coached football and soccer, her grandfather was a high school science teacher and both of her siblings are also teachers. Shawnee
loves to be active, whether that means running and training for marathons or practicing muay thai kickboxing or Brazilian jiu jitsu. She also loves spending time with family and friends, and working with her husband in their financial education business.