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School News

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Covering the Tustin Unified School District



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Celebrating Excellence: 2019 Teachers of the Year



Top photo, Helen Estock Elementary School teacher Megan Venezia is celebrated by several of her third-grade students for being named 2019 TUSD Elementary Teacher of the Year. Bottom photo, Beckman High School physical education teacher Stacy Colón is congratulated by some of her P.E. students for being recognized as TUSD's 2019 Secondary Teacher of the Year. Both teachers will represent the Tustin Unified School District in the Orange County Teachers of the Year Program. (Please see the full story on pages 4 and 5.)



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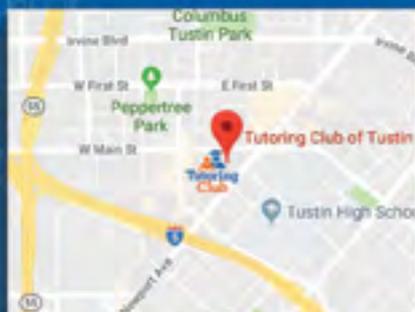


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Long-Range Facilities Planning



Gregory A. Franklin, Ed.D.
Superintendent

In Touch with TUSD

This year, the Tustin Unified School District has been engaged in developing a long-range facilities master plan to address critical construction and modernization issues facing the District. Over 600 employees, parents, students and community members have participated in the process facilitated by a local architectural firm. This spring, the architectural firm will present the TUSD Board of Education with the

completed plan that will sustain District facilities to serve TUSD families for years into the future.

I am proud of the work by the master planning committee that established several guiding principles for the plan:

- Ensure equity and parity in facilities and opportunities for all students of the District.
- Create welcoming and safe campuses that facilitate cooperation.
- Be forward-thinking and student-centered.
- Reflect the long-term vision of District stakeholders, and create a clear plan that is useful and sustainable.
- Be mindful of resources and respect the community's investment.

As this work is being done by so many throughout the District, I reflect on those individuals who did similar work over 20 years ago that resulted in new science centers, new and updated classrooms, engineering and career technical education rooms, activity centers, athletic facilities, and infrastructure improvements. We currently benefit from their work done so many years ago. It is an honor to pay their work forward to the next generation of students who will be served by TUSD for years to come.

Go TUSD!



Mark Eliot

Director of Communications & Public Information
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Tustin Unified Announces 2019 Teachers of the Year

By Mark Eliot

*Director of Communications and Public Information
Tustin Unified School District*

Megan Venezia, third-grade teacher at Helen Estock Elementary School, and Stacy Colón, physical education teacher at Arnold O. Beckman High School, have been selected as the 2019 Teachers of the Year by the Tustin Unified School District. They will represent the District in the 2019-20 Orange County Teachers of the Year program.

The Orange County Department of Education will interview the selected candidates and announce winners in May. The county finalists will then go on to the California and National Teacher of the Year programs.

Megan Venezia has been a teacher in Tustin Unified for nine years. She has taught third and fifth grades, Response to Intervention with a focus on reading and STEAM education at the Tustin Public Schools Foundation (TPSF) Summer Academy Program. Venezia is a fellow in the Cotsen Foundation with an emphasis on reading instruction. She was also selected to serve as a language mentor for TUSD where she is strengthening instruction for English language learners across the District. This year she became a Google Certified Teacher and has dedicated herself to learning innovative ways to use technology to enhance her instruction. Megan has also been a TUSD Connect fellow emphasizing technology integration and Cognitively Guided Instruction in mathematics.

Venezia utilizes new technologies to strengthen her daily instruction with her students and integrates the knowledge she has gained through fellowships and professional development opportunities. She demonstrates outstanding leadership as the PBIS Coach at her school, a position she has held for the past eight years. She has developed resources and tools that other schools in the District utilize to model best practices to promote a positive school culture. She also coordinates STEAM family nights

Tustin Unified's annual awards program recognizes outstanding teachers who have displayed extraordinary teaching, creativity and excellence at their school and community.

Venezia and Colón were chosen from a field of 28 candidates. Additionally, Venezia was named Elementary (grades K-5) Teacher of the Year and Colón was selected as Secondary (grades 6-12) Teacher of the Year.



Helen Estock Elementary School third-grade teacher Megan Venezia is surprised in her classroom by, from left, TUSD Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin, TUSD Board Member Jonathan Abelow and TUSD Board President James Laird, for being named TUSD 2019 Elementary Teacher of the Year.

at Estock School and serves as the lead representative at her site for the TPSF Dinosaur Dash fundraising event.

"I am extremely honored to be recognized as the District's Elementary Teacher of the Year alongside so many exceptional educators in TUSD," Venezia said. "I strive each day to promote students' academic, emotional and social growth. I believe it is essential to find what is truly unique about each child and help them to pursue their own passions. My goal is to foster a sense of curiosity and wonder in the classroom and help students develop the skills they need to be successful in today's world."

Stacy Colón has taught in public education for 14 years – all at Beckman High. She teaches general physical education, ninth-grade life fitness, individual activities and racquet sports in grades 10 through 12, and Reverse Inclusion (RI) in all grades. She serves as Physical Education Department chair, Beckman Leadership Team member and site coordinator for the State Physical Fitness Testing. She is also District lead for physical-education-specific professional development, member of the Orange County Physical Education Leadership Team, master teacher of teaching candidates at California State University, Fullerton, and served as head coach of the Girls Varsity Lacrosse and Soccer teams. The soccer team was a CIF finalist and State regional finalist in 2010, and the lacrosse team won the league championship from 2006 through 2009.

Over the years, Colón has developed a model high school physical education program that promotes health, fitness and wellness through a variety of experiences, including strength and conditioning, aerobics and nutrition. She piloted the first RI course in supporting the social development of students with special needs through peer friendships, acts of kindness and fun group activities. Her students participate in Hillview High School's annual "Hawk Games," "Beckman All-Stars" Camp and in May will hold the inaugural "Patriot Games" – all for special education students.

Colón also volunteers at Orchard Hills School where she leads kindergarten P.E. activities and is collaborating



Beckman High School physical education teacher Stacy Colón is presented with balloons and flowers in the school gym by Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin as she was named Tustin Unified's 2019 Secondary Teacher of the Year.

with middle school P.E. teachers to create a workshop that promotes exercise and enjoying the great outdoors for students. If it's a success, she plans to offer this workshop to other elementary schools in the District.

"As the shock and awe subside, I am overcome with feelings of gratitude to be named TUSD's Secondary Teacher of the Year," Colón said. "I am so thankful to teach at a school and in a District where physical education is recognized as having a significant impact on the overall health and well-being of our students. I am honored to represent Beckman High, Tustin Unified and all physical educators in our District."

TUSD 2019 School Site Teachers of the Year

The following teachers were selected as Teachers of the Year at their respective school sites:

Elementary School: Donna Anderson, fourth-grade teacher at Arroyo School; Junka Ezaki, kindergarten teacher at Barbara Benson School; Jon Carroll, third-grade teacher at Benjamin Beswick School; Elizabeth Cometa, kindergarten teacher at Guin Foss School; Becky Roumimper, second-grade teacher at Robert Heideman School; Tara Pauley, Transitional Kindergarten teacher at Heritage School; Cathy Gumz, fifth-grade teacher at Hicks Canyon School; Sara Blair, second-grade teacher at Ladera School; Jillian Rose, third-grade teacher at Loma Vista School; Kristan Bruce, kindergarten teacher at Myford School; Wendi Hurley, special day class teacher at Nelson School; Christy Platt, first/second-grade teacher at Orchard Hills School; Robyn Strong, special day class teacher at Peters Canyon School; Tracy Edmisten, fourth/fifth-grade teacher at Red Hill School; Janet Hertogh, fifth-grade teacher at Jeane Thorman School; Carrie Pedersen, kindergarten teacher at Tustin Memorial Academy; Joanna Blaney, fourth-grade teacher at Tustin Ranch School; and Sara Giorgi Smith, special day class teacher at Marjorie Veeh School.

Middle School: Mario Cortes, sixth-grade math teacher at Columbus Tustin School; Hannah Byun, seventh- and eighth-grade math and math accelerated teacher at Currie School; Eryn O'Day, sixth-grade Project Code, seventh/eighth-grade STEM and eighth-grade math teacher at Hewes School; Jazmin Memon, Spanish teacher at Orchard Hills School; Heather Tolliver, seventh-grade math and math accelerated teacher at Pioneer School; and Aaron Boyce, specialized academic instruction teacher at C.E. Utt School.

High School: Joanne McDermott, English and journalism teacher at Foothill; Ivan Ramirez, Resource Specialist Program teacher at Hillview; and Sheila Moeller, math teacher at Tustin High.

The two winners and all the District's nominees will be honored at the 25th annual Teachers of the Year Dinner at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, May 17, at the Irvine Marriott Hotel. The event is co-sponsored by the Tustin Public Schools Foundation and Tustin Unified School District.

TUSD News and Announcements

*By Mark Eliot
Director of Communications and Public Information
Tustin Unified School District*

TUSD Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony for Legacy Magnet Academy



Tustin Unified School District and City of Tustin leaders participated in an historical groundbreaking ceremony on March 13 for the new Legacy Magnet Academy. Participants included, from left, retired Tustin City Manager Jeff Parker; TUSD Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin; TUSD Board President James Laird; TUSD Board Members Tammie Bullard, Lynn Davis, Francine Scinto and Jonathan Ablove; Tustin Mayor Chuck Puckett, Tustin Council Members Al Murray, Dr. Allan Bernstein (Mayor Pro Tem), Barry Cooper, Austin Lombard and Letitia Clark; and Tustin City Manager Matt West.

The Tustin Unified School District held a groundbreaking ceremony for Legacy Magnet Academy on March 13. The new state-of-the-art middle/high school will be located near Tustin Ranch Road and Valencia Ave. in Tustin Legacy.

The school was designed by PJHM Architects and will be built by Balfour Beatty Construction. School construction will take about 18 months with a completion date set for summer 2020. TUSD and the City of Tustin have formed an agreement that will eventually generate \$85 million to

construct the school based upon the build-out of the Tustin Legacy development.

Legacy Magnet Academy is scheduled to open in fall 2020 and will serve grades six and nine in its first year and, depending on enrollment interest, grades 7 and 8 as well. Eventually, the school will accommodate approximately 1,400 students in grades 6-12. The 33-acre campus is bordered by Valencia Ave., Legacy Road, Moffett Ave. and Tustin Ranch Road.



Rendering of the new Legacy Magnet Academy.

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TUSD News and Announcements

*By Mark Eliot
Director of Communications and Public Information
Tustin Unified School District*

Dr. Grant Litfin Named 2019 California CTE Administrator of the Year

Tustin Unified School District Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services, Dr. Grant Litfin has been named 2019 California Career Technical Education Administrator of the Year by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). He was previously selected as Orange County CTE Administrator of the Year by ACSA, Region 17, and represented the Tustin School Management Association in the ACSA Administrators of the Year program.

“Grant is an outstanding educational leader, and he is making a tremendous difference in Tustin

Unified schools by expanding STEM and CTE opportunities for all students,” Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin said.

Litfin has worked in public education for 18 years – the past seven in Tustin Unified. He oversees the Informational Technology Department, Career Technical Education (CTE) and Enrollment/Transfers. During his time in the District, Litfin has established business partnerships, such as the “Drive for Perfect Attendance Program” for high school seniors, and coordinated CTE pathway courses and TUSD’s annual College Night and Career Fair. He also serves on the Coastline Regional Occupational Program (ROP) Steering Committee, Orange County Career Pathways Partnership Executive Committee for Orange County and Tustin Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

Since Litfin has come to TUSD, the District has added a CTE program (including Project Lead the Way courses) to all six middle schools, started a K-12 robotics league with teams from all 29 schools, expanded computer science programs and high school engineering programs, and implemented a high school career pathway program culminating in a capstone class and recognition at graduation for 14 different pathways.

Through his efforts in grant writing, Litfin has secured millions in funding that has helped TUSD build and sustain programs in area such as media/film, visual imagery,



TUSD Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services Dr. Grant Litfin, center, was recognized for being named 2019 Orange County CTE Administrator of the Year at the TUSD Board of Education meeting on March 11. Joining Litfin at the recognition ceremony are, from left, TUSD Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin; Litfin’s aunt, Nancy Goltry; wife, Heather; and children, Gwen and Gavin; and TUSD Board President James Laird. Along with the Board’s Certificate of Recognition, Litfin received the coveted “Red Stapler Award” from TUSD Administrative Services for helping the department achieve one or more of its goals.

graphic design and engineering. Due to Litfin’s support and coordination, Tustin Unified has a thriving CTE program in throughout the District, especially at the high school level. Beckman, Foothill and Tustin have a broad offering of CTE pathways and programs that are unique and award-winning. Litfin’s influence is imprinted on each of the programs. Beckman participates in the Irvine CubeSAT program as the

lead programmers for the group’s three satellites. The Foothill VEX Robotics Team has competed in the world championships and last year placed first in the United States and second place in the world. The Tustin High T-Tech engineering program continues to innovate and win events such as the UCI Energy Invitational, participate in the Lemelson IvenTeams program at MIT in Boston and send students to Boeing in Huntington Beach for summer internships.

“This represents an incredible amount of work and coordination with teachers, counselors, principals, IT staff, Coastline ROP, the Orange County Career Pathway Partnership, Vital Link, Irvine Valley College and Tustin Public Schools Foundation. Throughout this work, there has been an ‘esprit de corps’ within the work groups that reflects Grant’s passion and can-do attitude,” Franklin said.

Litfin will be recognized at the 46th annual ACSA Orange County Administrators of the Year and Friends of Education Awards Dinner at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 13, at the Irvine Marriott. He will also be honored at the ACSA State Leadership Summit Awards in November in San Francisco. ACSA annually recognizes outstanding administrators for their leadership skills, professionalism, creativity, innovation and commitment to a quality education.

Beckman High School Named 2019 California Distinguished School



Beckman High School's distinguished Robotics Team was recently named a winner at the VEX California State Robotics Championships and will participate in the World Championships in Louisville, Kentucky.

Arnold O. Beckman High School has been named a 2019 California Distinguished School by the California Department of Education. This is the fourth time Beckman has received state distinguished honors; the school was also chosen in 2007, 2011 and 2015.

Beckman is among 25 Orange County middle and high schools and 162 secondary schools statewide to earn the state's highest level of recognition as state distinguished school, according to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, who announced the winners.

"I would like to commend these schools for fighting for a better future for our students, closing achievement gaps and improving academic performance," Thurmond said. "Thanks to teachers, administrators, classified employees and parents working together, these schools meet the needs of all of their students, provide high-quality educational experiences and put kids on a pathway to great careers."

Sponsored by the state Department of Education and California Casualty, the California Distinguished Schools program returned in 2018 following a three-year hiatus, during which time the state overhauled its accountability system.

Schools earn the prestigious distinction for demonstrating exceptional student performance for two consecutive school years — test scores, suspensions and graduation rates are used as metrics — or for closing the achievement gap between two school years. This is the first year the new California Dashboard was used to determine recognition for secondary schools. The Dashboard uses multiple measures to assist in identifying strengths, challenges and areas needing improvement.

The Distinguished Schools award rotates each year between elementary schools and secondary schools. Schools earning the Distinguished School title agree to share their "signature practices" with other schools and serve as mentors to other educators who want to replicate their work.

Beckman High School, along with the other Orange County schools, will be honored on Friday, April 5, at the California Distinguished School awards ceremony at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim. The school will also be recognized at a TUSD Board of Education meeting.

"This recognition is truly based on an all-school effort," Beckman Principal Dr. Donnie Rafter said. "Beckman's hard-working teachers and staff continue to help our students achieve their goals and reach their full potential."



Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Netragrednik

Superintendent Dr. Franklin begins this issue with information about the District's long range facilities master plan. As he points out students today are benefiting from the planning of many years ago.

In this issue you will read about teachers being honored. I'd like

to take this opportunity to thank all teachers for their dedication to education. I think each of us have at least one teacher who inspired or motivated us and we never took the time to thank them.

Our next issue is May 15 just in time to congratulate the graduates!

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Arroyo Elementary School

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Katy Sheyka
Principal

Thriving

Arroyo Elementary School is proud to announce Donna Anderson as our 2019 Teacher of the Year. She has been teaching for 24 years.

This fourth-grade teacher fully embraces social-emotional learning by implementing the Zones of Regulation. This model allows students to check in with their emotional well-being regularly to identify, clarify, and adjust their feelings throughout the day. Using these zones teaches the students many different ways to move from anger, fear, or lack of self-control to feelings of calm, and peace and allowing them to regroup when needed.

According to Ms. Anderson, watching the expression of self-confidence when students understand the “big idea” in reading or master a new skill in math is one of the greatest rewards of being a teacher. She believes it is important to allow every student to have the opportunity to share and be heard in a safe environment.

Ms. Anderson and her students exemplify what it means to #tusdThrives.



Teacher Donna Anderson is surprised by her son as she is announced as the school's Teacher of the Year.

Arnold O. Beckman High School

3588 Bryan Ave., Irvine, CA 92602 • 714/734-2900



Dr. Donnie Rafter
Principal

Teacher of the Year!

Beckman High School's Teacher of the Year for 2019 is Stacy Colón. Mrs. Colón is an unbelievable physical education teacher and colleague here at Beckman. As one staff member recently noted, “Stacy is amazing! She is dedicated and truly takes the time to better all students.”

Stacy has taken it upon herself to create and implement a model physical education class that over the past three years has helped to mold inclusive perceptions and relationships between all of our students on campus. As one of Beckman's original staff members, Stacy takes the time to build a positive school community among her colleagues, students, and staff. She is also constantly working to implement new ideas into her physical education curriculum.

Congratulations to Stacy Colón, Beckman High School's 2019 Teacher of the Year.



Stacy Colón celebrates being named Teacher of the Year with fellow staff members, students and her husband Julio (left of her with blue hat).

Barbara Benson *Elementary School*

12712 Elizabeth Way, Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7531



Jackie Christy
Principal

Congratulations, Miss Ezaki!

Benson's Teacher of the Year, kindergarten teacher Junka Ezaki, has been teaching at the school for 24 years. Miss Ezaki provides a structured and engaging environment for each of her students. She has a strong understanding of the developmental progressions of kindergartners and makes sure that her lessons enable students to grow academically while still having the

well-being of each of her students in mind at all times.

Additionally, Miss Ezaki strives to ensure that parents feel welcome and have opportunities to engage in activities at school by way of our Muffins with Moms and Donuts with Dads morning events. She is also an asset to teachers and staff as she works so diligently to provide strong programs for Benson, such as our Class Act program sponsored by a symphony orchestra and our ever important Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program. Miss Ezaki is truly an asset to all students and families at Benson!



Teacher of the Year Junka Ezaki joins her excited kindergarten students.

Benjamin Beswick *Elementary School*

1362 Mitchell Ave., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7385



Stephanie Yang
Principal

The 'Aha!' Moment

Beswick Elementary School would like to celebrate our 2019 Teacher of the Year, Jon Carroll. Mr. Carroll has been in education for 21 years—it is clear that his passion, drive and commitment to being a lifelong learner have never faded away.

As a third-grade teacher, Mr. Carroll isn't afraid to refine, reflect, and take a risk to improve practice for the benefit of his students. He continually sets himself apart by engaging in powerful shifts and practices like becoming a COTSEN fellow, being one of the first teachers who implemented Workshop and CGI, and taking on the challenges of being a master teacher. He isn't afraid to ask for support or to lend a helping hand to his team, as he will always do what it

takes for all students.

Mr. Carroll believes that every student has his or her own learning style and needs. He feels that it is not only his responsibility but also a great reward to provide them with the necessary tools needed to be as successful as possible. One of Mr. Carroll's greatest strengths is offering a safe learning environment where all students are not only encouraged to take risks but to also feel comfortable enough to take these risks. He truly believes that students who are given the right tools can often build their confidence to unlimited heights.

Meeting students' different learning styles and seeing their confidence and communication skills soar are the greatest rewards to Mr. Carroll, and those "aha" moments are what drive his work as an educator. Congratulations, Mr. Carroll!



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Columbus Tustin *Middle School*

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Maggie Burdette
Principal

Well-Deserved Recognition

Mario Cortes is an outstanding educational leader at Columbus Tustin Middle School. The staff and students were thrilled to recognize him this year as the 2019 Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Cortes teaches seventh-grade math, sixth-grade Magnet math, design, and modeling. He serves as a secondary math leadership team representative, our Junior Varsity InventTeam advisor, our Where Everyone Belongs (WEB) leader, and our Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) site leader.

Mr. Cortes works tirelessly to create rigorous and innovative learning experiences for all of his students. He spends extra time during break, lunch and after school reaching out to struggling students to help them build their math skills and grasp challenging concepts, regardless of whether they are his students or not. He can be found at lunchtime eating with students to build relationships and to help them feel connected to the school.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!



Mario Cortes was surprised by staff and students with balloons and loud cheers when he was announced as the 2019 Teacher of the Year

A.G. Currie *Middle School*

1402 Sycamore Ave., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7360



Erick Fineberg
Principal

Making a Difference

Currie Middle School is proud to announce that math teacher Hannah Byun has been recognized as our 2019 Teacher of the Year.

Over the course of the past 11 years, four of which have been spent in the TUSD, Mrs. Byun has brought excitement and joy to each of her classes.

Mrs. Byun is the epitome of “balance” with her students. She knows just the right amount of personal story vs. professional space to apply in her classroom. As a result, she is able to make deep connections with her students. This can be seen every day at dismissal time when her classroom becomes a revolving door for her current and former students!

After school, you can find her tutoring small groups of students, signing off on AVID grade checks, or simply providing a caring ear to a child in need.

Congratulations to Mrs. Byun for all that you do and who you are.



Hannah Byun with her son, Connor and husband, Dennis after the announcement that she would be the 2019 Teacher of the Year.

Helen Estock *Elementary School*

14741 North B St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7390



Dr. Amanda Heineman
Principal

Enriching Lives

Helen Estock Elementary School is proud to recognize third-grade teacher Megan Venezia as its 2019 Teacher of the Year! A passionate, kind and dedicated individual, Ms. Venezia believes one of her biggest accomplishments

in teaching has been making each student feel loved and important. She

is constantly evolving her craft as an educator and is currently a fellow in the Cotsen Foundation for the Art of Teaching, a TUSD language mentor, and a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) coach.

Ms. Venezia sets high expectations and invites students into learning, giving them a voice and a choice in their academic journey. She believes that building relationships is

an integral part of teaching and ultimately the student-teacher relationship is the biggest reward. Ms. Venezia excels at creating a safe and welcoming environment for all students to learn, explore and take risks.

Estock is so grateful for Ms. Venezia and all that she contributes inside her classroom and across the campus.



Teacher Megan Venezia is surprised as TUSD's 2019 Elementary Teacher of the Year during the announcement by TUSD Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin, TUSD Board of Education Member Jonathan Abelow and TUSD Board President James Laird in her classroom.

Teachers See the Possibilities

During her first year teaching in her own classroom, Rene Engle discovered that reaching high-school learners means setting clear expectations while getting to know students' hearts and strengths. Growth happens together every day, she says—for both student and teacher.



Gladstone High School, 9th Grade English Class, Teacher: Rene Engle '16, Single Subject Teaching Credential '17

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Foothill *High School*

19251 Dodge Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/ 730-7464



Michelle England
Principal

First-Class Teacher

Joanne McDermott, Foothill High School's 2019 Teacher of the Year, epitomizes everything educators should embody. Her exemplary leadership as English Department co-chair ensured a seamless transition from her predecessor, and she has fostered a collegiality among department members that has bettered all as people and teachers. She also continues to administer a first-class journalism program that routinely wins awards in county competitions.

Beyond all that, she is the consummate Foothill supporter, ever-present at her students' extracurricular activities, whether it be sports, drama, choir, band or other events. She is always the first to volunteer for any extra opportunity, serving on nearly every school committee and bringing a voice of compassion and reason to school leadership.



Principal Michelle England recognizes Teacher of the Year Joanne McDermott.

Guin Foss *Elementary School*

18492 Vanderlip Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/730-7552



Ray Hernandez
Principal

Teacher of the Year

Guin Foss Elementary School is proud to recognize Elizabeth Cometa as our Teacher of the Year.

A former Teacher of the Year in 2002 and 2008, Elizabeth continues to be looked upon as a pillar of our campus community. In the classroom, she is known for student success and parental involvement.

Outside of the classroom, Elizabeth is known for being dedicated to professional growth and remaining up to date on best teaching practices.

Elizabeth is not only a consummate professional, she is also someone who models the example of being a life-long learner. This summer she became an Apple Certified Educator, took

Google educational courses, and completed a course in digital storytelling! She actively embraces new ideas and integrates them into her own instructional program.

This past summer, Elizabeth and a group of her colleagues were responsible for bringing our Innovation Lab to life. Her commitment to the success of Guin Foss was further appreciated by her securing an \$8,000 school grant for the Lab.



Elizabeth Cometa's kindergarten students took a moment to celebrate her recent recognition as Teacher of the Year.

Robert Heideman *Elementary School*

15571 Williams St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7521



Sean Lindsay
Principal

Teaching is a Calling

Heideman School is proud to present Becky Roumimper as its 2019 Teacher of the Year! Becky distinguishes herself as a “teacher’s” teacher in that she is a highly skilled instructor who is always striving to learn new things, build strong relationships, and work hard to meet the needs

of every student in her second-grade classroom.

When asked about her favorite part of teaching, she says, “The kids! I love being around them. Getting to know them as more than just students but as little people.”

But as any teacher knows, teaching is more than just a job. It is a calling. Becky notes, “Teaching is a job that is with you 24 hours a day. You think about the student struggling in class or having a tough time at home. You think about the student playing their first soccer game on Saturday.”

Congratulations, Becky. We are so proud of you!



Teacher of the Year Becky Roumimper leads her students in a discussion of the current interactive read aloud book.



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Heritage *Elementary STEAM Magnet School*

15400 Lansdowne Rd, Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7339



**Beth
Rabel Blackman**
Principal

Teacher Honored

Heritage Elementary School is proud to announce Tara Pauley as our Teacher of the Year. Tara Pauley's Transitional Kindergarten students get a world-class education each and every day. Thanks to Tara's artful teaching and passion for excellence, her students are always excited and ready to learn.

Tara is a team player who is always willing listen to and support her colleagues. She serves as a mentor and coach and offers thoughtful suggestions.

Tara always puts the needs of her students first. She takes great care to support her young students through both academic and social emotional learning. A believer in play and social engagement, Tara creates a classroom environment that promotes the growth and development of her young students.

We are proud to have Mrs. Pauley on the Heritage team!



Tara Pauley, Teacher of the Year, was surprised by her husband and colleagues during a recent flag ceremony.

Hewes *Middle School*

13232 Hewes Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/730-7348



Eric Kilian
Principal

Giving Her All

Hewes Middle School proudly recognizes Eryn O'Day as our 2019 Teacher of the Year. Ms. O'Day joined the Hewes team four years ago. Since her addition to our team, she has helped to positively contribute excellence in the Hewes math department with dynamic instruction and unfailing dedication.

took on the role of Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) coordinator as Hewes prepared for its accreditation renewal. Hewes is one of two middle schools in Orange County that have completed this intensive process.

Ms. O'Day's passion for teaching and leadership is evident in all she does, and therefore, Hewes is proud to have her represent us with this award!

Also, through her innovative teaching in STEM 1, her students have applied engineering skills and technology to create award-winning projects through the OC Maker Challenge. Her sixth-grade STEM students explore the concepts of app design and also code drones to fly.

Ms. O'Day's leadership was further demonstrated campuswide when she



Teacher Eryn O'Day is given balloons by her students in celebration of being named the school's Teacher of the Year.

Hicks Canyon *Elementary School*

3817 Viewpark Ave., Irvine, CA 92602 • 714/734-1878



Deena Vela
Principal

Teacher of the Year

Hicks Canyon Elementary School is excited to be recognizing Cathy Gumz as our 2019 Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Gumz has been an educator for over 30 years. She also helped to open Hicks Canyon 14 years ago.

This school year Hicks

Canyon added a fifth grade, and Mrs. Gumz was the first to volunteer to change her grade level. She is a passionate leader on campus who stepped up to lead the new fifth-grade team this year, and also accepted the challenge of overseeing the robotics program.

Mrs. Gumz loves to learn, and is actively involved in the community. When she has the free time, you might find her

on the baseball field, basketball court, or any special event to help cheer on our students.

Her kind heart, and passion to do what is “best” for student learning, is what makes her an extraordinary member of our Hicks Canyon family!



Teacher of the Year Cathy Gumz surprised by her family.



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Hillview High School

1151 San Juan St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7356



Tim O'Donoghue
Principal

Joy in Service

As a school principal, I want to make sure my graduating students are well rounded. To really thrive in the future, they need to learn the importance of giving of themselves to help their community. Serving others makes them happier, and the community benefits as a whole.

Throughout the year, Hillview High School students are encouraged to help out with various community service projects. Recently, our students and staff hosted the Hawk Special Games, where 250 special needs students enjoyed a day of sports, art, dancing, and other activities. The Hillview students did an amazing job serving as buddies to our very important visitors.

It was day full of compassion and service that brought out the best in everyone, and a good time was had by all!



Students serve as buddies to special "VIP" visitors at annual "Hawk Special Games."

Ladera Elementary School

2515 Rawlings Way, Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7505



Dr. Jennifer Harrison
Principal

Our 'Leading Lady'

Ladera Elementary School could not be prouder to announce our 2019 Teacher of the Year, Sara Blair. Ms. Blair is a dedicated second-grade teacher at Ladera, but don't let that fool you because she's that and so much more! Ms. Blair goes above and beyond to create a loving and supportive classroom environment. She

works well beyond her workday to create unique learning opportunities that help each child learn and grow in his or her own special way. Ms. Blair has the uncommon ability to spark joy and magic in her classroom and on our campus.

Ms. Blair has also singlehandedly started the Performing Arts Club on our campus, giving up her lunches and after-school time to teach our PAC students. The performances they put on could rival those of high-school-age performing-arts students. Ms. Blair is truly a gem, and we are so lucky to have her represent Ladera School!



Sara Blair (holding flowers) was surprised with the Ladera Teacher of the Year announcement in her classroom by her parents, husband, principal and colleagues.



Dr. Lauren Steinmann
Principal

Allowing Students to Bloom

Loma Vista School is so proud to be honoring Jillian Rose as our 2019 Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Rose is third-grade teacher who has taught for over 30 years, and has served at Loma Vista since 1997. During this time she has participated in a multitude of programs and professional development activities. She has also served as a Cotsen fellow.

Mrs. Rose always lights up the campus with her positivity, teaching expertise, and love for her students. She also loves to travel, and tries to visit classrooms and schools in different parts of the world from Tanzania to Morocco.

Her colleagues describe her as willing to help out others in any situation, and note that she is extremely hard working. In her own words, Mrs. Rose says, "I strongly believe that all students and people want to learn and be challenged. I want my students to have great futures and live life to the fullest." Congratulations, Mrs. Rose!



Loma Vista School honored its Teacher of the Year, Jillian Rose, with flowers and much appreciation.

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Myford *Elementary School*

3181 Trevino Dr., Irvine, CA 92602 • 714/734-1875



Rena Fairchild
Principal

Above and Beyond

Myford Elementary School is excited to be celebrating Kristan Bruce as our 2019 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Bruce is an incredibly positive person, and the students and staff at Myford know how much she is dedicated to them. She goes above and beyond in all that she does, and she does it with a huge

smile on her face. Her classroom is purposeful, she has high standards for all students, and she always knows how to infuse fun into learning. Parents love and appreciate how she makes every child feel like her top priority.

Ms. Bruce sets herself apart daily just by being *her*. She is unique in every way and the kind of teacher every school should have. She is passionate about teaching and cares about students, parents and staff with all of her contagious energy.

You also cannot mention Ms. Bruce without acknowledging her love of all things Canadian and Billy Joel!



Kristan Bruce is surprised as Myford Teacher of the Year during a schoolwide special event.

W.R. Nelson *Elementary School*

14392 Browning Ave., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7536



Melinda Smith
Principal

Pride of the Tigers

Wendi Hurley, Nelson Elementary School's 2019 Teacher of the Year, is a dedicated Special Education teacher. As an advocate for students with special needs, Wendi Hurley builds rapport with her students and their families. Six students' families have nominated her for an I Make a Difference Award. As the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) lead, she

eagerly shares the strategies she has developed with our staff. She has never turned away a student, parent, or staff member who needed her time or expertise.

Wendi is a mother to two very important young men, both of whom she adopted when they were three years old. Both have the distinction of having unique and difficult histories with their biological parents. Because of her background in Special Education, she and her husband did not hesitate to take on children with challenging behaviors.

It is with great pride that Nelson School recognizes Wendi Hurley as our Teacher of the Year.



Wendi Hurley receives flowers from her husband, Jerry, at a pride assembly where she is recognized as the Nelson Teacher of the Year.

Orchard Hills School

11555 Culver Dr., Irvine, CA 92602 • 714/730-2078



Cindy Agopian
Principal

Student Engagement

Congratulations to our Teachers of the Year! Jazmin Memon, who teaches middle school Spanish, received this honor of representing our middle school teachers, and Christine Platt, who teaches a first/second-grade combination class, received this honor for elementary.

Jazmin Memon has been teaching for 11 years. Eight of those years have been spent teaching Spanish at Orchard Hills School. She created and implemented our Spanish program in which the focus is full language immersion. She also adopted the successful Language Pledge that involves students only speaking the target language.

Christine Platt Started her teaching career in 1988. She has taught the last eight years in TUSD. She has taught grades one through five. Mrs. Platt is known for her room transformations to increase student engagement and her live read-alouds that she coordinates twice a month with her students and families.

Both Ms. Memon and Mrs. Platt are passionate about teaching and always put their students first.



Teachers of the Year Jazmin Memon and Christine Platt, are honored to represent their school.

Peters Canyon Elementary School

26900 Peters Canyon Rd., Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7540



Brooke Carreras
Principal

Making a Difference

Peters Canyon Elementary School is proud to announce Robyn Strong as its 2019 Teacher of the Year. Robyn teaches special education to students who have a wide range of disabilities. She has served our special education community for 15 years, with the last five in the Tustin

Unified School District.

Robyn has her master's in special education, her Ed Specialist Credentials I and II, an Autism Authorization, and is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. She works tirelessly to collaborate with parents and colleagues to ensure that our students have the opportunity to learn and thrive alongside their peers in general education.

Robyn also supports our FRIENDS Club mentoring program, which pairs general education fifth-graders with

a special education buddy for weekly lunch and activities. In addition to her amazing work here at Peters Canyon, Robyn also serves as the leader of both of her daughters' Girl Scout Troops, and enjoys traveling the world. Congratulations, Robyn!



Teacher of the Year Robyn Strong enjoys working with her Super Students, Dario Gomez, Danny Nguyen, Mrs. Strong, Chloe Tribble, Ryan Ashley, and Connor Bui.

Pioneer *Middle School*

2700 Pioneer Rd., Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7534



**Tracey
Vander Hayden**
Principal

Teacher of the Year!

Heather Tolliver is the quintessential Teacher of the Year.

There is not one story or incident that defines her teaching style and personality. It is not enough from Mrs. Tolliver to teach from her head; it is her heart that is so often involved when working with students. Caring about students is something that cannot be taught, it is what inspires

others to be drawn to her.

Mrs. Tolliver's ability to know everything about her students is uncanny. This ability to understand each of her students comes from daily conversations, personal connections, and daily greetings at her classroom door. Students often share that they did not think they were good at math until they had Mrs. Tolliver as a teacher. Students recognize her math class means much more to her than just math.

Mrs. Tolliver exemplifies the growth mindset philosophy: Be better today than you were yesterday.



Heather Tolliver is proud to be named the 2019 Teacher of the Year.

Red Hill *Elementary School*

11911 Red Hill Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/730-7543



Tracy Barquer
Principal

Teacher of the Year

Tracy Edmisten is a dedicated and innovative teacher. Red Hill Elementary School is proud to have her represent our school as 2019 Teacher of the Year.

Tracy's passion and care for her students is evident inside and outside of the classroom. She boldly ventured into the world of Math

Workshop, trailblazing the way for other staff members while encouraging families to take "digital dates" together. She also serves on the district curriculum committee and regularly shares new ideas with others. She serves on the school leadership team and is a trusted friend and colleague.

Tracy plans engaging and entertaining lessons for her fourth- and fifth-grade combination class. Her classroom has flexible spaces designed by the students and guest speakers bring the outside world to her scholars.

Tracy also supports Red Hill as the choreographer for our performing arts program. More than 50 students danced their way through "Aladdin" this year under her direction.

Congratulations, Mrs. Edmisten, and thank you for all you do!



Teacher of the Year Tracy Edmisten with TUSD Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin and her fourth- and fifth-grade students.

Jeane Thorman *Elementary School*

1402 Sycamore Ave., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7364



Deanna Parks
Principal

Answering the Call

Thorman Teacher of the Year Janet Hertogh got a call last summer asking her to move from teaching kindergarten to fifth grade, and she took on that role with the powerfully positive attitude that she approaches life with. Mrs. Hertogh's connection with young people through her volunteer work made it clear that she would connect with Thorman's fifth graders, giving them the nurturing and role model they need before transitioning to middle school, and that she has—and more!

Mrs. Hertogh goes above and beyond in her role as teacher. When one of her students joined our debate team, Mrs. Hertogh attended weekend competitions to cheer her on. When there was an opportunity to do some extra professional development to go deeper into our math curriculum, Mrs. Hertogh was the first to sign up. The learning going on in Mrs. Hertogh's class is clear in her data, but the smiles and hugs tell the biggest story of all!



Janet Hertogh, center, holds a bouquet of flowers and is surrounded by her mother, Kiko Kawamoto; friend, Ernie Agowili; daughter Kiana; son Luke, brother, Gregg Kawamoto; and husband, John, in celebration of being named Thorman's 2019 Teacher of the Year.

Tustin Adult School

1151 San Juan St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7395



Will Neddersen
Coordinator

Teachers as Encouragers

Tustin Adult School has 30 different teachers who work very hard to support our adult students in Tustin and neighboring communities. One group of teachers works to help students build the basic educational skills that lead towards

receiving a high school diploma. We also have teachers who help build computer skills to assist in getting a job or moving on to the next level of employment. Another group works with adults who need to develop their English language skills, or achieve citizenship in the United States.

But there is one thing that brings all of these different teachers together, and that is their desire to see our adult

students reach their goals. Our teachers work hard to build strong relationships with students in order to understand their ultimate goals, and then help develop a specific plan for each. Our students share repeatedly that, if not for our dedicated and caring teachers, they would not be able to achieve their goals.



Teacher Lisa Wilke works with a group of ESL adult students.

Tustin Connect *Online School*

14741 North B St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/430-2052



Dr. Dustin O'Malley
Principal

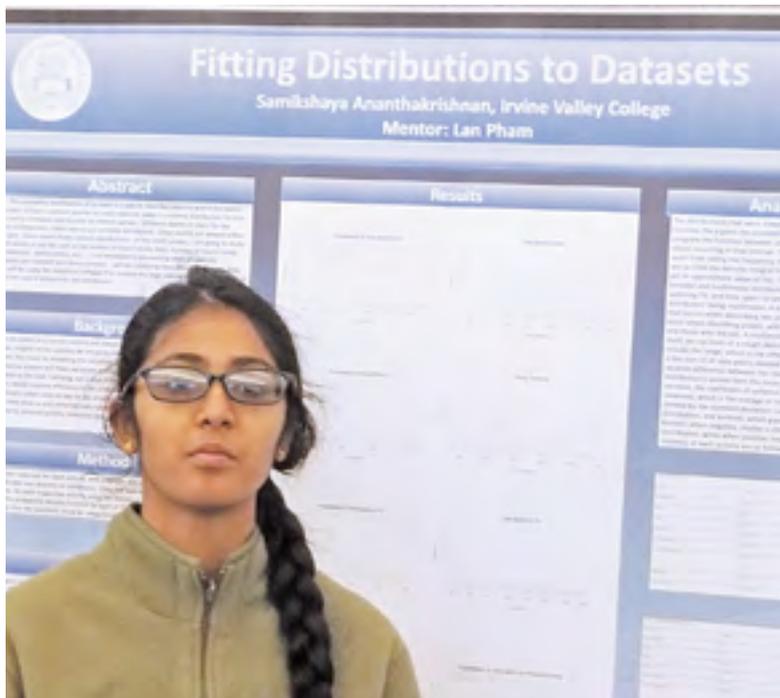
Student Spotlight

Many students choose to enroll at Tustin Connect to have more flexibility and time to pursue their passion. For Tustin Connect sophomore Sami Ananthakrishnan, her passion is mathematics.

Sami enrolled with Tustin Connect as a freshman with a plan to dual-enroll and take advanced college classes. Now as a sophomore in high school, Sami has already completed nearly a full year of college coursework through dual enrollment at Irvine Valley College, and she has maintained a perfect 4.0 in all of her college classes.

As one of the top students in her honors calculus class, Sami was recently selected to present her research on fitting distributions to data sets at the Southern California Conference for Undergraduate Research (SCCUR).

Sami is on track to complete two years of college coursework before she graduates high school at Tustin Connect, and then she plans to transfer to UCLA and major in mathematics.



Sophomore Sami Ananthakrishnan presenting her research at the Southern California Conference for Undergraduate Research

Tustin *High School*

1171 El Camino Real, Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7414



Dr. Jon Tuin
Principal

Congratulations, Ms. Moeller!

There is a lot of excitement in the air at Tustin High School as we announce Sheila Moeller as our 2019 Teacher of the Year! All of her 21 years in education have taken place in Tustin. She began her career as a middle school teacher and made her way to Tustin High, where she is currently teaching algebra enrichment and geometry at the college-placement and honors levels. She also serves as one of our Math Department instructional coaches and at the district level is part of the Secondary Math Leadership Team.

Ms. Moeller has been at the forefront when it comes to incorporating technology in the classroom, utilizing Google applications, Desmos and other online activities. She believes that the key to students' success in her math classes is creating opportunities of success and building on that. Her joy of teaching and care for students truly has a lasting impact on them.



Principal Dr. Jon Tuin congratulates math teacher Sheila Moeller for being named the school's Teacher of the Year.

Tustin Memorial Academy

12712 Browning Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/730-7546



Sharon Maeda
Principal

Embracing All Students

Tustin Memorial Academy is proud to celebrate Teacher of the Year Carrie Pedersen. If you visit Ms. Pedersen's kindergarten classroom, it is guaranteed that you will not want to leave. She has an inviting and warm demeanor, and has established a dynamic, rigorous and engaging environment for all learners.

Ms. Pedersen cares deeply for her students and is constantly thinking about ways to guide and meet their needs. She has high expectations for her students, yet she knows that they are all different and they require different things. Ms. Pedersen believes in every student, and they know it!

As a member of the Cotsen Writers Workshop Cohort, she continues to support other TUSD teachers by allowing them to observe in her classroom. As a member of the Positive Behavioral Interventions Support team, she supports staff in providing a positive environment for everyone in the school.

Ms. Pedersen truly touches the lives of others at TMA every single day!



Tustin Memorial Academy honored Teacher of the Year Carrie Pedersen with flowers and accolades.

Contest!

This students are in a picture in this publication. When you find them, email the **page number** to:

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Tustin Ranch *Elementary School*

12950 Robinson Dr., Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7580



Kathi Denny
Principal

Our Teacher of the Year

Tustin Ranch Elementary School is thrilled to be honoring Joanna Blaney as our 2019 Teacher of the Year! Mrs. Blaney has taught in the TUSD for 14 years. She is an accomplished educator who does everything with great enthusiasm and effort. She is also a positive force on our

campus who is always ready to embrace new strategies and techniques.

Mrs. Blaney not only does a wonderful job leading our Cool Coyotes in the Robotics Team, and our teachers in Digital Storytelling, she is also very active in our community as a member of the National Charity League. She is a gifted teacher with a heart of gold, and also a life-long learner who encourages her students to recognize the wonder in learning.

Tustin Ranch Elementary is proud to recognize Mrs. Blaney for all that she contributes to our students and our school community. Congratulations!



Teacher of the Year Joanna Blaney celebrates the special honor with her husband, Rob, and children, Elijah and Faith.

C.E. Utt *Middle School*

13601 Browning ave., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7573



Heather Bojorquez
Principal

Teaching from the Heart

The Utt Middle School Falcon Family is proud to announce its 2019 Teacher of the Year, Aaron Boyce. Mr. Boyce received his degree from the University of California at Riverside, majoring in Spanish. He then went on to receive both his credential and master's degree in special education from Chapman University.

Aaron has been working for Utt Middle School for 15 years as an RSP/Mild Moderate teacher. One of Aaron's colleagues describes him as a "mentor, a problem solver, and an advocate for his students." They then go on to comment that Mr. Boyce "deserves recognition for the 'heart' that he puts into teaching."

When asked about his philosophy of teaching and why

he is passionate about his job, Aaron focused solely on his students, saying, "They are the reason why I get up every morning and drive to work. Seeing my students achieve, grasp a concept, or gain self-esteem makes my job all the worthwhile."



Teacher of the Year Aaron Boyce puts all his energy and focus on his students.

Marjorie Veeh *Elementary School*

1701 San Juan St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7544



Rafael Plascencia
Principal

Seeking Their Best Interests

Marjorie Veeh Elementary School's 2019 Teacher of the Year, Sara Giorgi Smith, is an exceptional Special Day Class (SDC) teacher who seeks the best interests of her students at all times.

Sara has taught our second-through fifth-grade moderate-to-severe autism-specific students at TUSD since 2014, but she has been teaching for the past 18 years. She cares deeply for her students, and is eager for them to enjoy learning as much as she enjoys teaching.

Sara perseveres by teaching each child at their own ability level, and finds new strategies for them to grow and succeed. Her biggest reward is spending time with her students and really understanding who they are as individuals.

Although her students don't always come in happy or ready to learn, she makes sure that they have a safe, fun, and rich learning experience. Mrs. Smith loves her students and her students love her!



Teacher of the Year Sara Giorgi Smith is all smiles as Principal Rafael Plascencia presents her with balloons and flowers.

Tustin Public Schools Foundation

150 El Camino Real, Suite 140, Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/832-6299 • www.tpsf.net



Carol Burby Garrett
Executive Director

Teachers Share Innovation

The Tustin Public Schools Foundation recently awarded grants to 37 innovative teachers. Teachers proposed projects that were designed to engage students in new and creative ways. Projects funded included digital storytelling, graphic novels to

encourage reading, supporting

the Science Olympiad, programmable drones, coding and robotics, performing arts, graphic whiteboards for math, and a pilot middle-school yoga activity. The TPSF Innovative Grants Committee, which reviewed proposals without knowing the teacher or school requesting funds, also funded pens—both digital

pens to work with iPads and wooden pens created by middle school students.

With support from community members that financially support TPSF's work, the Foundation has funded close to \$150,000 in grants this year. This is one way TPSF supports the work of the Tustin Unified School District. For more information, visit our website.



TPSF Board Members Margie Sepulveda, Sona Shah, and Kristin Simpkins surprise teacher Debra Bessen and Principal Sean Lindsay with a TPSF Innovative Grant to support Heideman Elementary School's musical production.

Business Services

Tustin Unified School District, 300 South C St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7301 Ext. 302



Anthony Soria
Chief Financial
Officer

Facilities Update

Construction on phase I of the Legacy Magnet Academy is officially underway. Phase I includes the school administration building, a state-of-the-art 24-classroom two-story facility, parking, fields, and infrastructure work. This portion of the project totals approximately \$60 million.

The Tustin Unified School District will work on several maintenance projects at various

schools under its Deferred Maintenance Program this summer. The list of projects includes:

- Flooring replacement in various rooms at Benson,
- Tustin Memorial Academy, Red Hill, Currie, Utt, Foothill and Tustin High.
- Interior painting at Tustin Memorial Academy and Veeh.
- Exterior painting at Veeh and Utt
- Partial or full perimeter fence replacement at Ladera and Hewes.

- Concrete removal and replacement at Benson, Nelson, Red Hill and Hewes.
- Gutter replacements at Arroyo and Benson.
- Roof Chem-Curb replacements at Benson and Estock.
- Slurry and striping at Benson, Estock, Loma Vista,
- Tustin Memorial Academy, Veeh, Columbus Tustin, Currie, Hewes and Utt.



Grading work has begun on the Legacy Magnet Academy state-of-the-art middle and high school, which is scheduled to open in August 2020.

Educational Services

Tustin Unified School District, 300 South C St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7301 Ext. 309



Kathie Nielsen
Deputy
Superintendent

Meaningful Engagement

Full-day kindergarten will be implemented at all Tustin Unified School District elementary schools beginning the 2019–20 school year. TUSD's kindergarten program is designed for students who will be five years of age on or before Sept. 1. Full-day kindergarten is designed to give your child a

stronger start in school and is rooted in TUSD's mission to engage students in collaborative and meaningful learning experience.

TUSD also offers a high-quality transitional-kindergarten (TK) program for eligible children who do not yet meet the minimum-age criteria to enroll in kindergarten. TK will admit children whose fifth birthday falls between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2 in the 2019–20 school year. The TK program is held at selected school sites and is designed

to assist children in developing the academic, social and emotional skills they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

For more information about these programs, visit the TUSD website.



Kindergarten students spend time reading their favorite books in the classroom.

Nutrition Services

Tustin Unified School District, 300 South C St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7301 Ext. 342



Teresa Squibb
Director

Wellness in the Works

The Tustin Unified School District Wellness Committee held its sixth annual Wellness in Action Video Contest. Students were challenged to create a video that highlighted either nutrition education, school meals, or physical education/activity. The winners will receive a “Front of the Line Pass” for school meals and be recognized at a TUSD Board of Education meeting.

Tustin Unified has had an active Wellness Committee since 2005. We know that healthy students learn better. Research has shown that a strong link exists between student health and learning. Increased physical activity and healthy eating habits help students stay focused in school, and can reduce and prevent overweight and obesity. The Committee sponsors the video contest to promote student wellness.

The TUSD’s Wellness Policy applies to every school in the district. The Policy assists schools in improving the health of our students by promoting physical activity and better access to nutritious foods. Parents and family members can help support it in many ways, such as incorporating health and nutrition in home life, and encouraging fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, milk, and 100 percent juice drinks at school.

They can also volunteer in the classroom or school gardens, praise children for their healthy choices, promote physical activity in recess and P.E. classes, and be a healthy role model. You can also positively impact our young people’s eating and physical activity habits by modeling healthy behaviors.

For more information about the district’s Wellness Policy, please visit the Tustin Unified Website at Tustin.HealtheLiving.net.

Kindergarten Readiness

1701 San Juan St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7592



Lauralee Cabibi
*Coordinator
School Readiness*

Hats Off to Dr. Seuss!

March 2nd was a special day for celebrating. That’s because it was Dr. Seuss’ birthday! What better way to celebrate a man who forever changed the way children’s books were written than by reading the books that have inspired generations of young readers.

Each preschool site celebrated in different ways. Some had “pajama day” and read their favorite Dr. Seuss books in their jammies. Others had a Dr. Seuss-inspired treat by eating green eggs and ham. The preschoolers also decorated their iconic red and white striped hat and wore it throughout the day.

Some students even had an opportunity to do some simple coding by using a robot and map to find The Cat in the Hat. Our teachers even got in the spirit by dressing up as their favorite Dr. Seuss character. All in all, it was a fun-filled day as our teachers and students paid homage to Dr. Seuss in the best way they could: by reading!



Teachers Paloma Fonseca, Erica Salazar and Mireya Avila, at Heritage Elementary School celebrated Dr. Seuss’s birthday by dressing up as characters from “The Cat in the Hat.”

Technology in TUSD Schools

Tustin Unified School District, 300 South C St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7301 Ext. 306



Dr. Grant Liffin
Assistant
Superintendent,
Administrative
Services

Cracking The Code

The Tustin Unified School District is well known for having outstanding technology integration across its curriculum. So it should come as no surprise that our computer science programs are also flourishing at each level.

The TUSD elementary schools provide exposure to computer science through “Hour of Code” activities and experiences within the Makerspaces located on each site. Middle school students advance

their understanding through elective courses that use robotics, flying code-controlled drones, and video game simulation apps.

By the time our students reach high school, they can embark on computer science and software engineering pathways that teach them how to use coding languages such as Python, C++, and Java. Our high school students also apply their knowledge to pass AP Computer Science Exams, compete in robotics tournaments, defend networks in CyberPatriot and Cyber-Cup ethical hacking competitions, and code the “brains” of functioning space satellites.

With all of these opportunities, our TUSD students are well set up to compete for tomorrow’s computer science careers.



Foothill High School students Heidi Schaefer, Will Noujaim, and Dev Dedhia prepare for the start of the California Mayor’s Cyber Cup competition.

Office Terms –Word Search Contest

Rules!

One word in the list is NOT in the word search.
When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com Please put TUSD in the subject line.

Entries must be received by April 20, 2019

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift card to Barnes & Noble!

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Congratulations to **Matt Jay
Winner of our February Word Search Contest!**

Alana's Book Review



Alana F.

Helpful Writing Book

Do you ever feel the pains of writer's block? Chances are, you have, if you've ever written before. Well, here's the funny and extremely useful solution! Insightful and hilarious, *642 Things to Write About* is endlessly helpful. Containing prompts like "A houseplant is dying. Tell it why it needs to live," to "A day in the life of the person sitting next to you," this book will give you the best ideas to spark your creativity.



This book is amazing for beginning and experienced writers alike. I'd give it seven out of eight trifold shards for being inspirational and creative, seemingly never running out of things to give you. 642 is a lot of prompts, after all. And even if you're not a 'writer,' per se, this book is great for passing the time. So pull up some cushions, make yourself a cup of tea, and release your inner writer!

Alana is a student columnist and a self-proclaimed "huge nerd." When she doesn't have a book in her hands, she loves to play video games and write fiction. She rates books on a scale of 1-8 trifold shards with 8 being the highest



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Lucy's Book Review



Lucy Davis

Buzzfeed

TASTY - Latest and Greatest

The world's viral videos are made up of a lot of things: dancing cats, little kids, and absurd tricks.

But what has taken the world by storm? BuzzFeed, with their mouthwatering

food videos. Saved and liked on every platform, *TASTY* shows you how to bake the perfect late-night snack or crowd-pleasing dessert. Now, the best of the best has been compiled into a step-by-step cookbook so you can easily get the plate off your screen and on your table. Grab your ingredients, and this book

I love this book for so many reasons! It is easy to follow, fun to look at, and the layout makes sure you can find your favorite recipe in a pinch. Four out of five bookworms.



Lucy is a 7th grade student. When she isn't immersed in a book, she loves musical theater, ballet, and singing. She enjoys stretching her imagination by writing short stories of her own. Lucy will rate the books 1 to 5 bookworms with 5 being the best.

Keira's Book Nook



Keira

From Arctic Wolf to Loyal Companion

White Fang

By: Jack London

In this book, White Fang is raised by Grey Beaver and sold to a cruel and greedy man by the name of Beauty

Smith who torments him and makes him fight for money. When saved from an especially bad dog fight by Weeden Scott, White Fang has to learn to adapt to his sunny Californian surroundings. *White Fang* is a well written book full of background and details. Written from canine White Fang's view, the novel is filled with plot twists that mold White Fang into the wolf that he is! Having pets of my own, I found this book entertaining and meaningful. In addition, it is much easier to read than most classics. I was also fond of Jack London's writing style. I can't wait to read his other book, *The Call of the Wild*. I rate this book a five and recommend it to all animal lovers.



Keira is a 7th grader who loves to read. She also enjoys crafts, traveling, soccer and playing with her cats. Her reviews are rated from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest.

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Isabella's Book Review



Amazing Message

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens is an amazing book with a very complex person as its main character. Scrooge begins the book as a very mean cold hearted man. As the book goes on, Scrooge repents and tries to change.

Isabella A. The reason for this starts when his dead business partner, known as Marley, pays him a visit. During this visit, Marley prophesizes that 3 spirits will come.

The first spirit still comes that night. The Ghost of Christmas past shows Scrooge how happy he once was. It also shows him how he changed into the greedy person he is. Scrooge is sorry for what he has done and takes the first step to change. The next night, the Ghost of Christmas present shows Scrooge how poor his clerk is and how much he is suffering. Scrooge sees that his clerk's son is very sick and that the family does not have the money for treatment. The next night, Scrooge sees what will happen if he continues the way he is going.

I would rate this book a 5 out of 5 because it is very emotionally enticing and it has an amazing message.

Isabella is a 7th grader and just published her first short story in a school anthology of young authors after winning first prize with her work. She rates books on a 5 star scale.

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Richard's Book Review



Richard J.

Timmy Grows Up and Moves On

Timmy Failure It's the End When I say It's the End by Stephan Pastis

This is 7th and last book of the Timmy Failure series. Timmy and his imaginary polar bear named Total (T. Failure + Total = Total Failure of Total Failure Inc. Detective Agency) take on a task of solving the world's problems and defeating crime. Timmy also has to do routine things like writing a script for his class project. But then a new student takes over the show and ruins Timmy's vision of Greatness. The script gets stolen and more Christmas shenanigans follow. I liked these book series because despite it's ridiculous, over-the-top narration by Timmy, you can see he's just a young kid with great imagination, producing action-packed scenarios, which help him escape the harsh reality of struggles — like getting a new step-dad, finding his real dad and trying to get him to participate in his life, and not realizing his aunt, with whom he and his mom lived during hard times, is dying. But in the end Timmy grows up and lets go of his imaginary sidekick Total by helping him find his long-lost brother and releasing Total to the Arctic.



This book is definitely 5 out of 5 stars.

Richard J. is a 4th grader. Richard likes math, playing sports, physical activities like bike-riding, swimming, diving and running. He is a hard-working student who enjoys reading, seeing and leaning new things and spending time with his family and friends.

Manhar's Book Review



Manhar M.

Walk the Line

The Man Who Walked Between the Towers

By Mordicai Gerstein

This is a true story of a French aerialist Phillippe Petit who walked between the two towers of the World Trade Center in 1974. He performed daring activities in the sky, like walking and dancing on the cable. This book has amazing pictures of the New York City from different perspectives. The book also has interesting foldouts. The book talks about how Phillippe planned his daring act and what happened after he was caught. One must read this book to find out about this unique event.



Manhar M. is in Kindergarten. Manhar likes science, math, coding, traveling, hiking, reading about world news and spending time in building robots from Legos.

Christina's Book Review



Christina J.

Journey for Victory

The School for Good and Evil: Quests for Glory by Soman Chainani

The 4th book in *The School for Good and Evil* series follows through the quests of recently graduated students (most of which are children of famous storybook characters) on a journey to create their own legends.

These kids will be either heroes or villains of their own stories. But as Tedros, the son of King Arthur of Camelot, struggles to rule his Kingdom, it is realized that a great menace is keeping Tedros from being able to pull Excalibur from the stone, which causes other students to fail in their quests. Now several former and current students are off on a journey to save everyone's story from getting ruined. I enjoyed this book, as it is like the Harry Potter series, you read from book one and on, and watch the characters grow, change and become the great heroes and villains they were trained to be at school. Now they have to use these lessons against a villain who threatens to disrupt their world. I rate this book 5 out of 5 stars.

Christina J. is an 9th grader. Christina is an avid reader, who enjoys a good book about some great adventure, mystery or action. She is a hard-working student and a young author herself. In 5th grade she wrote a book *Melody's Stories: I Am a Spy Now*, published by Studenttreasures Publishing (PIN #3582798).

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Dr. Al Mijares
Superintendent

Human Trafficking

In a perfect world, all students would walk into our classrooms free of distress and distraction, ready to absorb the knowledge and skills they'll need to succeed in college and career, and beyond.

But today's educators must be responsive to extraordinary circumstances that can inhibit teaching and learning, such as poverty, violence and homelessness.

Despite these major issues, we must also be aware of the malignancy caused by human trafficking here in Orange County. According to a 2016 report, women and children account for 90 percent of the victims.

That brings us to some of the bigger myths about human trafficking: We tend to think it happens mainly to adults, and in communities other than our own.

The real picture is vastly more complicated and difficult to combat, because human traffickers use deception, manipulation, intimidation and threats to prey on and exploit those who are vulnerable. Victims are often coerced into prostitution, illicit drugs and other forms of trafficking. According to the organization Polaris, this has grown to become a multi-billion dollar criminal industry, one that quietly strips nearly 25 million people of their freedom.

I'll be the first to acknowledge this is a subject that is difficult to discuss, but it is a scourge in our city, county, state and country, and it affects the lives of children and young adults. Believe it or not, the victimization begins early in life and it is imperative that we strengthen our schools and public institutions to recognize how to combat this problem.

To that end, the Orange County Department of Education teamed up with our partners at Vanguard University to participate in the "Ensure Justice 2019" conference. This two-day event was designed to equip teachers, parents, law enforcement personnel, students and community members with strategies to identify and protect those who are most at risk.

Prevention starts with shedding light on perpetrators and recognizing tell-tale signs in our communities. This may include evidence of malnourishment or abuse, withdrawal, drug abuse, and chronic absenteeism.

In Orange County, I believe we are well-positioned to prevent trafficking and the exploitation of children. In addition to working closely with the Orange County Sheriff's Department and other local law enforcement agencies, our educators are committed to addressing the social-emotional needs of all students through initiatives such as the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. In fact, OCDE is leading the statewide implementation of MTSS, which provides core supports for all students, additional assistance for some and targeted interventions for those with the greatest needs.



Encouraging Teens to Read for Pleasure

The amount of time that teens spend reading for pleasure has declined a lot over the past few years. Whether this is due to the rise in short-form reading, the prevalence of multitasking, time spent with screen media, or other factors is unknown.

Fortunately, we do know the way to encourage readers of any age: Keep books in the house, set aside daily reading time, and read yourself. For teens specifically, it may help to tap into whatever they're passionate about. From music and fashion to video games and the Victorian era, if you can name it, there's a book about it.

In a world filled with entertaining diversions, it can be difficult for teens to find reading material that really motivates them to read. Check our reviews (you can sort our book reviews by age, genre, and topic).

Here are some more ideas:

- **Try an ereader.** Ereaders offer your teen a bit more independence, flexibility, and privacy. And they're great for travel.
- **Consider humor.** Some teens just need the funny.
- **Draw inspiration from pop culture.** Late-night comedians, musicians, and even software developers (think Steve Jobs) are great subjects (or authors!) for teen reading because they're relevant to teens' lives.
- **Insist that they read the book before seeing the movie.** If they want to see a story on the big screen, hand them the book first.

Common Sense Media is an independent nonprofit organization offering unbiased ratings and trusted advice to help families make smart media and technology choices. Check out our ratings and recommendations at www.commonsensemedia.org

It's not hard to make the case that our county's ability to thwart human trafficking aligns with OCDE's vision that "Orange County students will lead the nation in college and career readiness and success." It's our job to educate the whole child, which means getting to know each student, understanding their unique circumstances and doing our best to remove barriers to learning, no matter how large.

To report a potential human trafficking case, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or send a text message to 233733.

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