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School News

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Covering the Tustin Unified School District



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TUSD Celebrates 2021 Employees of the Year



The Tustin Unified School District has announced its employees of the year for 2021. They are, top photos, Elementary Teacher of the Year Adriana Zamora at Sycamore Magnet Academy and Secondary Teacher of the Year Michael Fisk at Tustin High School; and, bottom photo, Classified Employee of the Year Evan Jacobs at C.E. Utt Middle School. (Please see stories inside.)

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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in TUSD



Gregory A. Franklin, Ed.D.
Superintendent

In Touch with TUSD

Great progress is being made throughout the Tustin Unified School District since the school board prioritized diversity and equity in the District's goals and priorities last summer. Highlights from the Educational Services Department include:

A team of TUSD teachers and administrators have been trained in the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful (FAIR) Act and are using that lens to screen new social studies curriculum materials for all schools in the District. Piloting these materials are happening throughout the spring and next fall.

Another team of District teachers who have also been trained in the FAIR Act are creating a high school elective course in ethnic studies that should be ready for the next school year.

The Educational Services staff created and distributed excellent materials for use throughout the District to learn about Black history and celebrate February as Black History Month. I have received many positive comments from parents about these activities being used in their children's classrooms.

The Foothill High School Student Equity Club has designed and produced beautiful posters celebrating famous Asian Americans, Black Americans and Pacific Islanders that have been distributed to schools throughout the District.

Educational Services is providing teachers opportunities to participate in a Culturally Responsive Learning Series throughout the year.

In addition to the great progress above, the District's Equity and Justice Task Force continues its work. Most recently, the group reviewed the District's equity survey that was taken by students, staff, and parents before the winter break. A couple of the positive key findings include:

- 86% of students agree that adults at school treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures fairly.
- 88% of teachers report feeling comfortable interacting with people of different races, ethnicities, and cultures.
- 86% of staff would recommend TUSD to friends and colleagues who are looking for a job.
- 91% of parents value diverse friendships for their children.
- While these responses are good news, there are clear areas for improvement. For example:
- In the area of diversity and inclusion, Hispanic and Black students consistently responded less positively (about 10 points lower) than other students.
- Only 35% of students are encouraged to learn about people from other cultures.
- Only 36% of students are encouraged to discuss issues of race and equity in their classrooms.
- Only 59% of teachers report being comfortable leading conversations about race and equity in their classrooms.

Based on these findings, the Task Force has identified several next steps that include:

- Further conversations with Black and Hispanic students and their families to better understand their challenges.
- Provide training and materials for staff to gain confidence in leading conversations with students about race and equity.
- Create a resource list of books, podcasts, documentaries, or other materials that can be accessed by staff to learn more about diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Provide safe spaces and times on campuses for students and staff to engage in these important conversations.

The Tustin Unified School District is committed to providing an outstanding, safe, inclusive, and equitable learning experience for all students. I appreciate the work by so many in the District who continue to make us better.

Go TUSD!



Mark Eliot

Director of Communications & Public Information

300 South C St., Tustin, CA 92780

(714) 730-7339

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TUSD Honors 2021 Teachers of the Year



Sycamore Magnet Academy teacher Adriana Zamora, center, celebrates with her family when it was announced she had been named TUSD 2021 Elementary Teacher of the Year.



Tustin High School teacher Michael Fisk, center, is joined by his family during the announcement of his selection as TUSD 2021 Secondary Teacher of the Year.

Adriana Zamora, first-grade Spanish dual language immersion teacher at Sycamore Magnet Academy, and Michael Fisk, instrumental music teacher at Tustin High School, have been selected as the 2021 Teachers of the Year by the Tustin Unified School District. They will represent the District in the 2021-22 Orange County Teachers of the Year program, sponsored by the Orange County Department of Education. Tustin Unified's annual awards program recognizes outstanding teachers who have displayed extraordinary teaching, creativity and excellence at their school and community.

Zamora and Fisk were chosen from a field of 30 candidates. Additionally, Zamora was named Elementary (grades PreK-5) Teacher of the Year and Fisk was selected as Secondary (grades 6-12) Teacher of the Year.

Adriana Zamora has been a teacher for 21 years – the past 13 years teaching kindergarten and first-grade Spanish dual immersion for a science and arts elementary school in Santa Ana and the Tustin school district. She is a leader and coach to dual immersion teachers, has developed and refined the dual immersion curriculum, believes in engaging her students in a safe and valued environment, and creating a culture of lifelong learners. She also serves as a Cal State Teach mentor teacher and supports nonprofit groups such as the American Red Cross.

"I'm honored and humbled to have the opportunity to represent all the amazing elementary school teachers in TUSD," Zamora said. "I am very grateful for the support I have received from my fellow colleagues, administrators and Tustin community. I would not be able to do what I do without their support."

Michael Fisk has taught instrumental music for 14 years – all at Tustin High. He teaches advanced and intermediate band, jazz band, marching band, orchestra, colorguard, drumline and winterguard. Fisk organizes concerts on

campus, supports school spirit assemblies, has his band students play at athletic events and promotes the Tustin High music program to feeder schools, which has increased student participation. His students have won several championships at various competitions and tournaments, and participated in many community events, including the City of Tustin's 90th Anniversary Celebration, Disneyland's Community Arts Showcase Parade and Tustin Tiller Days. Fisk is also a member of the Tustin High Century Task Force, which is organizing the school's 100th anniversary celebration in the 2021-22 school year.

"It's such an honor to be named TUSD Teacher of the Year," Fisk said. "I love being a teacher and getting to work with students every day. It is amazing to be able to work for such a great school district with hard-working teachers, administration, staff and especially students."

Tustin Unified's 2021 School Site Teachers of the Year:

Elementary School: Nichole Siller, specialized academic instructor at Arroyo School; Katy Stahovich, fourth/fifth-grade teacher at Barbara Benson School; Cathy Lien, second-grade teacher at Benjamin Beswick School; Kristin Morel, third/fourth-grade teacher at Helen Estock School; Kirsten Watson, second/third-grade teacher at Guin Foss School; Renee Sandoval, fourth-grade teacher at Robert Heideman School; Katie Fitch, specialized academic instructor at Heritage School; Rachele John, fifth-grade teacher at Hicks Canyon School; Lisa O'Connell, second/third-grade teacher at Ladera School; Liz Hoglebe, third-grade teacher at Loma Vista School; Jennifer Bruckler, third/fourth-grade teacher at Myford School; Michelle Zuelzke, second-grade teacher at Nelson School; Amy Jones, kindergarten/first-grade teacher at Orchard Hills School; Becky Salazar, fifth-grade teacher at Peters Canyon School; Kristen Montgomery, fifth-grade teacher at Red

See **TUSD 2021 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR** • Page 5

Hill School; Emily McCourtney, third/fourth grade teacher at Tustin Connect; Debbie Mulligan, fourth/fifth-grade teacher at Tustin Memorial Academy; and Jessica Guns, fourth/fifth-grade teacher at Tustin Ranch School.

Middle School: John Isaacson, sixth-grade science Magnet Program teacher at Columbus Tustin School; Susan Moffat, seventh-grade Core teacher at Hewes School; Matt Ireland, eighth/ninth-grade science teacher at Legacy Magnet Academy; Marisa Parker, sixth/eighth-grade math teacher at Orchard Hills School; Theresa Payne, sixth-grade math teacher at Pioneer School; Zachariah Samarin, ASB and seventh-grade Core teacher at Sycamore Magnet

Academy; and Sandra Martinez, sixth-grade Core teacher at C.E. Utt School.

High School: Brad Bohn, AP psychology teacher at Beckman; Becky Duesler, ninth-grade AVID and AP statistics teacher at Foothill; and Leslie Hastings, English, film analysis and U.S. history teacher at Hillview.

The two winners and all nominees were honored by the Tustin Public Schools Foundation and Tustin Unified School District in May.

In addition, Michael Fisk was recently named a semifinalist in the Orange County Teachers of the Year program.

Chief Personnel Officer Dr. Chuck Lewis Announces Retirement



Dr. Chuck Lewis

Dr. Chuck Lewis, Chief Personnel Officer for the Tustin Unified School District, has announced he will retire at the end of the school year. His last day will be June 30.

Lewis has worked in public education for 31 years – the past eight years in Tustin Unified. He was hired in 2013 as Director of Personnel Services and, a year later, was promoted to Chief Personnel Officer. Prior to coming to Tustin, he was Director of

Human Resources in the Anaheim City School District.

“I so appreciate Dr. Franklin and the school board for trusting me to do this very important work and will truly

miss the amazing people in this organization,” Lewis said. “My time in TUSD has been incredibly rewarding both personally and professionally.”

Among his accomplishments, Lewis was named 2018 TUSD and Orange County Personnel/Human Resources Administrator of the Year by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), Region 17. ACSA annually recognizes outstanding administrators for their leadership skills, professionalism, creativity, innovation, and commitment to a quality education. Additionally, in 2009, he was named MIND Research Institute Outstanding Principal.

Lewis has been instrumental in fostering positive employee/employer relationships through using an interest-based approach, providing professional development to the classified personnel and supporting the goals and priorities of the TUSD Board of Education.

Dr. Maurita De La Torre and Rafael Plascencia Appointments

Dr. Maurita De La Torre has been appointed Chief Personnel Officer for the Tustin Unified School District. She will take over for Dr. Chuck Lewis and will begin her new position on July 1.

De La Torre has 26 years of experience in public education, including 19 years as a school administrator. She joined TUSD in 2017 as Director of Personnel Services. She began her career as an elementary teacher and taught in the Inglewood and Lennox school districts. She also served as a school counselor for students in kindergarten through fifth grades.

Among her honors, De La Torre was named TUSD 2020 Personnel/Human Resources Administrator of the Year and represented the District in the Orange County Administrators of the Year Awards Program, sponsored by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), Region 17.

Rafael Plascencia has been named Director of Personnel Services for TUSD. He will take over for Dr. Maurita De La Torre and will begin his new position on July 1.

Plascencia has worked in education for 27 years and, most recently, served as principal of Sycamore Magnet Academy. He joined Tustin Unified in 2016 as principal of Marjorie Veeh Elementary School and helped start the District’s Spanish Dual Language Immersion Program. He also was principal of Currie Middle School prior to opening Sycamore Magnet Academy.

Among his achievements, Plascencia received TUSD’s 2019 Valuing Diversity Award and represented the District in the Orange County Administrators of the Year Awards Program, sponsored by ACSA, Region 17. In 2014, Plascencia was named Orange County Elementary Principal of the Year by ACSA, Region 17.

“Both administrators have strong team leadership skills and will do a great job in their new assignments,” TUSD Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin said. “Tustin Unified is committed to excellence in education and these two dedicated educators will work collaboratively with our teachers, administrators and staff to continue moving the District forward.”

TUSD Salutes 2021 Classified Employees of the Year

Evan Jacobs, paraeducator behavior interventionist at C.E. Utt Middle School, has been selected as the 2021 Classified Employee of the Year by the Tustin Unified School District. Jacobs was chosen based on his significant contributions to the District and community.

The 24th annual awards program recognizes classified or support services employees whose contributions to TUSD have proven to be outstanding. The award is given to a classified employee who provides valuable services to their school and contributes to a positive instructional environment.

Jacobs is being recognized for going “above and beyond” for the students and staff at Utt School.

“It’s a great honor to represent all the outstanding classified employees in TUSD,” Jacobs said. “During my years in the District, I have learned that working in education is truly a team effort. I cherish the amazing staff and students at Utt, and love coming to work every day.”

Jacobs has worked in TUSD for 13 years. Besides his



C.E. Utt Middle School behavior interventionist Evan Jacobs.

dedicated work supporting students with special needs, Jacobs volunteers his time with the school’s Wednesday intervention tutorial for general education students and hosts a short screen-writing elective to inspire students that writing is fun. He is a published author who writes novels for the middle school aged reader and has donated his books to the Utt library. Jacobs also wrote and created a short film about the pandemic for students with special needs to help them understand the changes and

normalize their emotions. The film was so well-received that the school administration shared it with the entire Utt community.

“Evan has a magnetic personality that is positive and inspires others to stay positive,” Utt Principal Heather Bojorquez said. “He does a great job helping students be successful academically, socio-emotionally and behaviorally. We are proud that Evan is a member of the Falcon Team.”

Jacobs will represent the District in the Orange County Classified School Employees of the Year Program, sponsored by the Orange County Department of Education.

2021 School/Work Site Classified Employees of the Year

The Tustin Unified School District’s other 2021 School and Work Site Classified Employees of the Year include the following:

District Administration Center: Sergio Gonzalez, mail delivery person.

Maintenance and Operations: Sally Lopez, contract specialist/buyer.

Elementary Schools: Arlene Lopez, school secretary, Arroyo; Irma Cid, paraeducator, Benson; Cindy Avelar, secretary, Beswick; Rolanda Urrunaga, head custodian, Estock; Susie Alexander, library media technician, Guin Foss; Hillary Yerkish, library media technician, Heideman; Maria Aguilar, paraeducator, Heritage; Aimee Kelly, office assistant, Hicks Canyon; Raina Deeb, paraeducator, Ladera; Paulette Brizzolara, paraeducator, Loma Vista; Yantie Amid, nutrition services assistant, Myford;

Brittany Bochesa, paraeducator, Nelson; Linda Shepherd, paraeducator, Peters Canyon; Vinnie Young, library media technician, Red Hill; Mary Beth Beames, paraeducator, Tustin Memorial Academy; and Chris Ramirez, night custodian, Tustin Ranch.

Orchard Hills School: Robin Perkins, campus supervisor.
Sycamore Magnet Academy: Angela Castillo, campus supervisor.

Middle Schools: Patty Enriquez, Columbus Tustin; Ana Alcala, data clerk, Hewes; and Raul Rodriguez, custodian, Pioneer.

Legacy Magnet Academy: Jesus Ramirez, technologist

High Schools: Yesenia Coria, office assistant; Beckman; Karen Marsh, attendance clerk, Foothill; Lisa Gallick, head custodian, Hillview; and Art Rodriguez, plant supervisor, Tustin.

TUSD Communications Director Mark Eliot Announces Retirement

Mark Eliot, Director of Communications and Public Information for the Tustin Unified School District, has announced he will retire at the end of the school year. His last day will be June 30.

Eliot has worked in public education for 36 years – all in Tustin Unified. He was hired in August 1985 as the District's first communications specialist and was promoted to director of communications and public information in 2001.

"It has been a privilege and an honor of a lifetime to serve the Tustin Unified community," Eliot said. "I am proud to have known and work with so many hard-working and dedicated employees, involved and caring parents, talented students and supportive community members focused on helping TUSD continue its legacy of excellence in education."

During his career in Tustin Unified, Eliot has handled communications, media relations, community relations, marketing, District publications and materials, social media and printing services. For 17 years, he has collaborated with School News Roll Call magazine (over 80 issues) to promote excellence in TUSD. Eliot has started and coordinated several programs, including Classified Employee of the Year, Teacher of the Year and Principal for a Day in which community members serve as "principals" at the schools. He has also helped organize the Tustin School Management's Association (TSMA) "Friends of Tustin Schools" Community Recognition Dinner for the past 34 years and TSMA's Secretaries Day Breakfast for over 20 years.

Eliot has been involved in many milestone events for TUSD, such as organizing dedication ceremonies for the Barry Turner Athletic Field behind Foothill High School and Gerry Aust Activity Center at Hewes Middle School, and planning groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings for every new school built in the District since 1995 – Heritage, Hicks Canyon, Ladera, Myford, Peters Canyon, Red Hill and Tustin Ranch elementary schools; Orchard Hills School; Pioneer Middle School; Beckman High School; and Legacy Magnet Academy, which opened last fall. He has also worked on three successful bond measure campaigns – Measures G and L (improve older school facilities) and Measure S (upgrade instructional technology), and has helped organize California Distinguished School



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

and National Blue Ribbon School celebrations at many schools.

Over the years, Eliot has assisted the TUSD Board of Education in recognizing thousands of students, staff, parents and community members at more than 500 school board meetings. He also works with the District's high school student board members, who present news about their schools and districtwide reports each month at the Board meetings.

Eliot has maintained strong relationships with many community organizations, including the Assistance League of Tustin, Tustin Area Council for Fine Arts (TACFA), Tustin Area Historical Society and Museum, Tustin Chamber of Commerce, Tustin Community Foundation, Tustin

Public Schools Foundation (TPSF) and Tustin-Santa Ana Rotary Club. He serves on the Rotary Club Board as Youth Service Director and oversees the Arbor Day program for third-grade students, Gerry Aust High School Scholarships Program, High School Students of the Quarter and Teacher Good Idea Awards program. He has also volunteered at TACFA's Broadway in the Park program, TPSF's Dinosaur Dash, Tustin Chili Cook-off and Street Fair, and Tustin Tiller Days.

Among his accomplishments, Eliot has won Excellence in Communications awards from the California School Public Relations Association, received the PTA/PTO Coordinating Council's Special Recognition Award, was nominated as Tustin Area Man of the Year four times – 2007, 2008, 2013 and 2014, and was named one of the Tustin Community Foundation's 2019 Superheroes of Tustin for recognition of outstanding community work.

Prior to joining Tustin Unified, Eliot worked in newspaper, magazine, radio and television. He started his career as Promotion and Public Relations Director for KWIZ AM/FM Radio in Orange County. Eliot is also an award-winning cartoonist and graphic designer. He graduated in journalism and public relations from California State University, Long Beach. Most importantly, he is the proud father of his daughter, Ashley, a graduate in communications from California State University, Fullerton, and communications specialist in the music and hospitality industries.

"Thank you, Tustin Unified, for all the great years and memories," Eliot said

TUSD News and Announcements

By Mark Eliot

Director of Communications and Public Information
Tustin Unified School District

Erick Fineberg and Kathie Nielsen Recognized by State ACSA Group

Tustin Connect School Principal Erick Fineberg has been named the 2021 California Continuation/Educational Options Administrator of the Year by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA).

“Erick is an outstanding educational leader who is making a tremendous difference in Tustin Unified by expanding learning opportunities for all students,” TUSD Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin.

Prior to the state award, Fineberg was named 2021 Orange County Administrator of the Year by ACSA, Region 17, in the continuation/educational options category. Fineberg represented the Tustin School Management Association (TSMA) in the ACSA Administrators of the Year program.

Fineberg has worked in education for 24 years – the past 12 years in Tustin Unified. He oversees Tustin Connect, which is an online independent study program that provides K-12 students with a highly personalized and flexible learning environment. Fineberg was recognized as state Administrator of the Year for promoting the use of technology to accommodate every student’s needs and his commitment to student learning.

Over the past two years, Fineberg’s leadership at Tustin Connect has brought a community of online learners together. His tagline – “Change the Setting. Change the Story. Thrive.” – is the driving force and identity of the school. Over the course of his short tenure, the school has doubled in size, while achievement, college admissions and student learning continue to grow.

Retired TUSD Deputy Superintendent Kathie Nielsen has received the prestigious “Professor of Education” Award from the state ACSA organization. Previously, she was recognized in the same category as part of ACSA’s Orange County Administrators of the Year, Region 17, program.

Nielsen worked in public education for 34 years. During her 21-year career in the Tustin Unified School District, Mrs. Nielsen served as deputy superintendent, chief academic officer, director of elementary education, elementary school principal, coordinator of literacy training for grades K-3 and teacher on special assignment in reading. She retired in 2018.



Erick Fineberg



Kathie Nielsen

Nielsen has been known for her dedicated leadership, guidance, mentoring and personal code of ethics over the many years in education. In retirement, she brings this same commitment to everything she does, including working with administrative candidates through Hope International University. She models honesty and integrity in every decision and in every situation as she advises

students through their fieldwork. Through 1:1 discussion, challenging questions and real-life examples, she has modeled how incredibly important it is for educational leaders to maintain this standard. Nielsen is highly regarded in the District and throughout Orange County, and she brings clarity and relevance into the university classroom, willing to share her expertise with her students.

“Kathie is an amazing educational leader who has played an integral role in inspiring administrative candidates to shine and creating strong leaders for the next generation,” Franklin said.

Four TUSD Administrators Named 2021 Orange County Administrators of the Year

Four administrators in the Tustin Unified School District have been named 2021 Orange County Administrators of the Year by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), Region 17. They are:

Secondary Co-Administrator of the Year – Tustin High School Assistant Principal Ryon Tanara; Career Technical Education Administrator of the Year – C.E. Utt Middle School Principal Heather Bojorquez; Continuation/Educational Options Administrator of the Year – Tustin Connect K-12 Online Blended Learning School Principal Erick Fineberg; and Professor of Education – Retired TUSD Deputy Superintendent Kathie Nielsen.

ACSA annually recognizes outstanding administrators for their leadership skills, professionalism, creativity, innovation and commitment to a quality education. All four individuals were nominated by the Tustin School Management Association for this year’s awards program. They represented ACSA, Region 17, in the California Administrators of the Year Program. Region 17 represents 28 school districts in Orange County.



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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



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Covering the
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FOUNDER/PUBLISHER: Kay Coop
562/493-3193 • kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com

ADVERTISING SALES:
562/493-3193

CONTENT COORDINATOR: Barbra Longiny

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COPY EDITORS:
Kate Karp, Anna Zappia

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Netragrednik by Neta Madison



SCHOOL NEWS ROLL CALL, LLC
P.O. Box 728, Seal Beach, CA 90740
562/493-3193

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As this school year comes to an end in many ways it feels like the beginning. It is wonderful to see a bit of normalcy returning to our lives.

This is the time of year teachers and classified employees of the year are honored, which you will read about in this issue. Personally, I would like to thank everyone in the district for their dedication to education and maintaining a clean, safe environment.

This is also the time of year that retirees are congratulated for their years of service. Mark Eliot, the Director of Communications and Public Information, has announced his retirement and is highlighted

on page 7. I've had the pleasure of working with Mark for the 17 years we have been publishing TUSD *School News*. His attention to detail is unmatched as is his loyalty to TUSD. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to collaborate with him and wish him the very best in his retirement.

Have a fun summer!



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Class of 2021!**



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Carol Burby Garrett
Executive Director

Teachers of the Year Inspire their Students

The Tustin Public Schools Foundation is grateful for the teachers and staff that have re-worked school during the last year.

Although current safety protocols prevented the Foundation from holding the annual Teacher of the Year dinner, board members still worked to recognize the Teachers of the Year at each school by delivering yard signs to each honoree. During May, the parents, friends, and community members can further recognize teachers and staff with a donation in their honor to the Tustin Public Schools Foundation.

Some of Tustin Unified's Teachers of the Year will continue to make an impact at the Tustin Public Schools Foundation's

Summer Academy. Students will have the opportunity to take a deep dive into favorite subjects or learn something new.

From the Tustin Public Schools Foundation to all those who reach, teach, and inspire students, THANK YOU!



Tustin High Teacher of the Year Michael Fisk was congratulated by the Tustin Public Schools Foundation



Nelson Elementary Teacher of the Year Michelle Zuelzke was congratulated by the Tustin Public Schools Foundation

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Katy Sheyka
Principal

Making a Difference as Mustang Strong!

Arroyo proudly recognizes Arlene Lopez as our 2021 Classified Employee of the Year. Mrs. Lopez has worked at Arroyo Elementary School for several years, the last four serving as our school secretary. No job is too big or too small for Mrs. Lopez, which is what makes her so special. Whether she is answering phones, supporting a substitute teacher, helping staff with broken copiers or staplers, creating schedules, submitting payroll, or stepping up to do car duty, Arlene is always smiling and representing Arroyo as a welcoming, inclusive school environment. Mrs. Lopez is known for making every person she comes in contact with feel important and valued. She is a consummate team player who routinely puts others before herself; happy to stop everything she is doing to help in any way possible. Arlene's love for the Arroyo community, students, staff, and parents alike has made all the difference during this uniquely challenging year. Congratulations, Mrs. Lopez! You are #MustangSTRONG!



The Arroyo staff congratulates Arlene Lopez in being named the school's Classified Employee of the Year.

Arnold O. Beckman High School

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



Dr. Donnie Rafter
Principal

Honoring Our Seniors

Beckman High School is rounding out the year and working on ways to recognize and honor our seniors. Our senior class has missed out on a number of activities this year and we are looking at ways to make their last few weeks here special. One of the unique ways we are recognizing our seniors is by changing the top of our marquee. Going forward the top of our marquee will contain art created by Beckman senior Arianna Choi that gives a subtle "nod" to the classes of 2020 and 2021. In the artist's words: "The new look of the Beckman Marquee has been created in honor of the class of 2020 and 2021. The symbol has been designed to form the letter "B" for Beckman as well as utilizing negative space to reveal the numbers 20 and 21 (representing the years). Through this, we wish to show that Beckman High School will always be thinking about the classes of 2020 and 2021."



Current marquee with replacement art honoring the classes of 2020 and 2021.

Barbara Benson *Elementary School*

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



Jackie Christy
Principal

Irma Cid is Always there to Help Students

Benson Elementary School has a hard-working and dedicated staff. This can make choosing our Classified Employee of the Year a challenge—but not this year. We are excited to recognize Irma Cid as Benson's 2021 Classified Employee of the Year. Ms. Cid has been working in TUSD for 26 years. She is a paraeducator

in special day class teacher Jenny Onstott's classroom assisting with classroom activities and supporting students academically, physically, and behaviorally.

Ms. Cid has been loyally consistent in her role here at Benson Elementary. She engages children in outside play time, teaches small group lessons, takes students out to lunch and recess, helps with materials preparation, rides the bus, and more! She is patient, a team player, and a self-starter. Ms. Cid is compassionate, considerate, and is always there to help above and beyond her designated duties.

Congratulations Ms. Cid on being Benson's Classified of the Year!



Benson Classified Employee of the Year
Irma Cid goes above and beyond for the students and school.



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www.drmeeksortho.com

Benjamin Beswick *Elementary School*

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



Ashly McNamara
Principal

Children's Author Visits Campus and Meets with Students

Students and staff at Beswick School were thrilled to welcome Norwegian novelist and children's author Roda Ahmed on campus. She is the author of children's books, *Mae Among the Stars*, *Good Night Wiggly Toes*, and *ABC and Me*. She gave every student the book, *Good Night Wiggly Toes* or *ABC and Me* to take home and keep. The students were very excited to meet a real author. Roda met with the students through ZOOM to introduce herself and share her background, read *Good Night Wiggly Toes*, and discuss our worries and what we do to calm our bodies down when we worry. The students had some amazing thoughts to share and were thrilled to be able to ask their own questions. It was an amazing experience that the students will remember forever. Thank you Roda!



Children's author Roda Ahmed presents the book entitled *Good Night Wiggly Toes* to Beswick second-grade student Joseph Tejada.

Columbus Tustin *Middle School*

17952 Beneta Way, Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7352



Maggie Burdette
Principal

Saluting Employees of the Year

Columbus Tustin Middle School was excited to recognize John Isaacson as the 2021 Teacher of the Year and Patty Enriquez as the 2021 Classified Employee of the Year. Mr. Isaacson is a dedicated teacher who has served the students of CTMS for 15 years as a six-through eighth-grade science teacher. He has helped build a successful Magnet Program and is currently assisting with the implementation of International Baccalaureate Middle Years units of study. In addition to science, he has taught Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Design and Modeling, PLTW Innovators and Makers and PLTW Automation and Robotics. He has also coached successful Robotics teams who have qualified for state level competition. Mr. Isaacson also serves on our Leadership Team and is the Science Department PLC lead teacher.

Patty works tirelessly in the front office to ensure every day runs smoothly. She is one of the first smiling faces you see when you walk in the door to the school. She supports the Assistant Principal with discipline and attendance monitoring and manages our Associated Student Body bank account. She answers the phone with such positive



Columbus Tustin's Classified Employee of the Year Patty Enriquez and Teacher of the Year John Isaacson show their Bulldog Pride.

energy, that it makes everyone who calls feel special and heard. She has built strong relationships with the students, so they often turn to her for help with school work and advice for their home life. She genuinely cares about everyone at Columbus Tustin and makes each person feel like they are at home here. Congratulations to both John and Patty on a well-deserved recognition.

Helen Estock *Elementary School*

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



Dr. Amanda Heineman
Principal

Celebrating Our Soaring Eagle Staff!

Helen Estock Elementary School is proud to recognize two Soaring Eagle staff members – Kristin Morel, 2021 Teacher of the Year, and Rolando Urrunaga, 2021 Classified Employee of the Year.

A passionate educator, Mrs. Morel values student learning, and relationships are foundational in her classroom. She takes genuine interest in students and families both academically and emotionally. Making content relevant and engaging, Kristin's mission is to cultivate curious, resilient, and compassionate learners. Promoting curiosity, leads Kristin's students toward a hunger for learning and strengthens their intrinsic motivation.

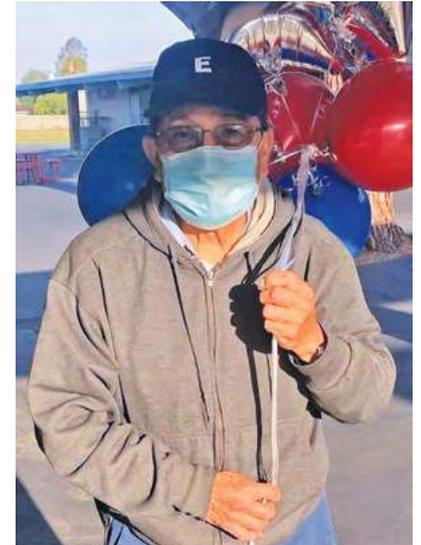
Mr. Rolando, head custodian at Estock, takes great pride in keeping the campus pristine. Always on task, Rolando can be found moving across campus blowing, sweeping, disinfecting, and painting. Always smiling and never complaining, Rolando is a joy and Estock's

entire community and staff adore him and appreciate his dedication to our beautiful campus.

Estock is grateful for Mrs. Morel and Mr. Urrunaga and all that they contribute to our students, staff, families, and community. #EstockEaglesSoar



Estock School salutes its Teacher of the Year, Kristin Morel



Estock School salutes its Classified Employee of the Year, Rolando Urrunaga.

Guin Foss *Elementary School*

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



Ray Hernandez
Principal

Connecting with Students through Literature

Congratulations to library media technician Susie Alexander, Guin Foss Elementary School's 2021 Classified Employee of the Year! Mrs. Alexander was selected for her continued positive impact and contributions to the students and school community of Guin Foss.

Mrs. Alexander has virtually scaled the six-foot distancing guideline to remain connected with students through literature. Her live streaming storytimes have been a constant during the pandemic. When live streaming live was not enough exposure to literature, Mrs. Alexander began recording storytimes for teachers to share with students. Whichever the method, Mrs. Alexander can be found inspiring students through literature on a regular basis. Not to be confined to inspiring students through literature, she branched out to teaching through literature through a reading intervention program she began teaching online. For these reasons, and among many others, we proudly recognize Mrs. Alexander as Guin Foss Elementary's Classified Employee of the Year.



Library media technician Susie Alexander sets minds and imaginations ablaze through literature at Guin Foss School.

Foothill High School

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



Michelle England
Principal

Foothill Recognizes a Wonderful Math Teacher and Attendance Clerk

This year, Foothill is excited to recognize two outstanding staff members, one as our Teacher of the Year and the other as our Classified Employee of the Year. Both have made Foothill a great place for students and staff for many years and over the past year, with the introduction of Hybrid learning, have risen to unique challenges.

Becky Duesler has been recognized as our 2021 Teacher of the Year and is known around campus as a positive, energetic, mathematics teacher who cares deeply for her students. Students love her class because she is able to make a difficult subject for some, fun and enjoyable. She has taken on new challenges as a senior advisor during a

year when we were uncertain what activities could look like and handled that uncertainty with an optimism and willingness to do whatever was necessary to make the year a special one for our students.

Similarly, Karen Marsh, our 2021 Classified Employee of the Year has always been a positive, supportive staff member in our Attendance Office. During the pandemic, her job became increasingly complex with the new guidelines surrounding attendance and Karen took everything in stride. Teachers and families understood the changes that needed to happen because of her guidance and were able to make adjustments easily because of her patience and kind-hearted help.

Foothill is so appreciative of the work of wonderful people like Becky Duesler and Karen Marsh. We are proud to call them Knights and so fortunate to benefit from their dedication and talents!

Robert Heideman Elementary School

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



Deanna Parks
Principal

It's All About the Kids!

Renee Sandoval and Hillary Yerkish have about 570 things in common - our students!

Renee, Heideman's 2021 Teacher of the Year, started

the school year by visiting each of her students at home pulling a wagon filled with books for them to choose from. She leads our Student Council with service projects such as having the school create Valentines for quarantined seniors, and a food drive to support Tustin citizens in need. If you are looking for her after school, you might find her in the library providing extra support to her students after school. There you will also meet our librarian Hillary Yerkish who is our 2021 Classified Employee of the Year. When all libraries were closed due to the pandemic, she figured out a safe way our students could check out



The dynamic duo of Renee Sandoval and Hillary Yerkish always put students first at Heideman School.

books. She wanted all of our students to know the joy of going to a bookstore and getting a new book so she wrote a grant to create one in our library for our students who were over-joyed. Heideman is lucky to have this dynamic duo!

Heritage *Elementary STEAM Magnet School*

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



Cindy Agopian
Interim Principal

Helping Students Meet their Full Potential

Heritage Elementary School is proud to announce our 2021 Teacher of the Year, Katie Fitch, and 2021 Classified Employee of the Year, Maria Aguilar.

As a Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) teacher, Mrs. Fitch can be seen all over campus helping students both academically and socially.

She is a respected

member of the leadership team, the lead Elementary Teaching Assistant Principal (ETAP) and the “go-to” for teachers when they need a thoughtful partner to support a struggling learner. Mrs. Fitch is passionate about teaching and follows her heart as she develops connections with her students so that they can meet their fullest potential.

Mrs. Aguilar is our transitional kindergarten classroom paraeducator and English Language Development (ELD) support provider. Working at Heritage for the past five years, she has become an integral part of our school community. She takes initiative and is eager to learn and take on new challenges.

We thank these amazing educators for all they do on a daily basis.



Heritage Classified Employee of the Year Maria Aguilar, left, and Teacher of the Year Katie Fitch were recognized for their contributions to the school.

Hewes *Middle School*

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



Eric Kilian
Principal

Employees of the Year

A huge congratulations go out to Core 7 teacher Susan Moffat, who was selected as our 2021 Teacher of the Year, and data clerk Ana Alcalá, who was named our 2021 Classified Employee of the Year.

Ms. Moffat serves on our Site Leadership Team, the Superintendent’s Council, and our “Challenge Success” Team (Stanford University). She works synergistically with

the administration, colleagues on site, District instructional coaches, parents and students to reflectively enhance not only her own classroom, but our entire school functionality. Students love learning in her class, for the connected culture and innovative learning.

Ms. Alcalá has become the front office device expert and support technician for students and parents during Hybrid Learning. She always has a warm, calm demeanor and is incredibly helpful. She attends home visits to our at-risk students’ homes and has developed many relationships with students, family members and care takers. Ana is also going to college in order to become a nurse. Congratulations to you both and keep up the good work!



Classified Employee of the Year Ana Alcalá, left and Teacher of the Year Susan Moffat make Hewes a great place for students to learn and grow.

Hicks Canyon *Elementary School*

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



Deena Vela
Principal

Husky Staff Honorees for 2021

Hicks Canyon has above and beyond staff who support our Huskies.

Fifth-grade teacher Rachelle John is our 2021 Teacher of the Year. She is the biggest cheerleader for her students both present and past. She is always checking in with her students' social/emotional needs and goes above and beyond to make sure

every student succeeds in her class. Her passion and commitment to make a difference in her students' lives is what makes her so special!

Office assistant Aimee Kelly is our 2021 Classified Employee of the Year. Aimee is always has the answers to almost any question in the front office. If by chance she does not know the answer, she will seek them out for staff, parents or students. She can do almost any job in the front office from subbing for the secretary or health clerk to completing daily attendance records. She works way beyond her work hours. Hicks Canyon is lucky to have Aimee support our staff, community and students every day!



Hicks Canyon Teacher of the Year Rachelle John with Sona Shaw from the Tustin Public Schools Foundation



Classified Employee of the Year Aimee Kelly is celebrated at her school.

Hillview *High School*

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



Tim O'Donoghue
Principal

Retiring Class of 2021

Congratulations to the Hillview "Retiring Class of 2021" ---Lisa Gallick, Irene Garcia, and Judy Watts. I appreciate their hard work, professionalism, and compassion helping our students out.

Mrs. Gallick joined TUSD in 1998 working as a custodian at the District Office. For the past 13 years, she has served as Hillview's head custodian. Lisa was named Classified Employee of the Year in 2011 and 2021.

Mrs. Garcia has worked as a campus supervisor for the past 15 years at Hillview. Prior to that, she worked at Los Amigos High School for 15 years in the same position. Mrs. Garcia was named Classified Employee of the Year in 2008 and 2015.

Ms. Watts has worked as a teacher here at Hillview since 1998. She has taught English, music appreciation, chorus, theatre and speech. Ms. Watts was Teacher of the Year in 2003 and 2018.

Best wishes to them in their retirement!



Hillview staff members Judy Watts, Irene Garcia and Lisa Gallick, get ready to enjoy retirement after supporting the students and serving the school for many years.

Ladera Elementary School

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



Dr. Dustin O'Malley
Principal

Creating an Amazing Learning Environment

Ladera Elementary School is so proud of the excellent work from our outstanding staff. Every staff member, both classified and certificated, has an important role in creating a learning environment where every student can thrive and reach their full potential. Two of these outstanding staff members are second/third-grade teacher

Lisa O'Connell, who was selected as our 2021 Teacher of the Year, and kindergarten paraeducator Raina Deeb, who was chosen as our 2021 Classified Employee of the Year.

Mrs. O'Connell has incredible enthusiasm for life and learning, and she makes every day a magical learning experience for her students. Apart from being one of the world's best teachers, Mrs. O'Connell does so much for all students and staff.

Mrs. Deeb always goes above and beyond in everything she does. She puts in extra effort and gives her best self every day so that our kindergarten students have an amazing experience.

Congratulations and thank you to these two remarkable educators!



Kindergarten paraeducator Raina Deeb, left, and second/third-grade teacher Lisa O'Connell pose for a photo as the school's employees of the year.

Legacy Magnet Academy

15500 Legacy Road, Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7339



Dr. Jennifer Harrison
Principal

Legacy Legends

Legacy Magnet Academy is thrilled to honor the school's 2021 Employees of the Year, Matt Ireland and Jesus Ramirez!

Mr. Ireland teaches eighth-and ninth-grade science at LMA. Additionally, he leads robotics, yearbook, GLO Club, and assists with Golf Club. He

is great at building relationships with students and staff, and that can easily be confirmed by talking with students that mention that he was an influence on the success of their education, or by speaking with his colleagues that will attest to his willingness to encourage and support at all times. He is a coding, robotics and science wizard, and is always willing to help anyone with anything.

Mr. Ramirez is our IT Specialist and resident graphic design genius. He has gone above and beyond his position by willingly taking on projects and responsibilities with student clubs, PBIS, ASB, and helping build the student body culture here at LMA.



Matt Ireland, Teacher of the Year, left, and Jesus Ramirez, Classified Employee of the Year, make student success a top priority at Legacy Magnet Academy.

Loma Vista *Elementary School*

13822 Prospect Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/730-7528



Dr. Lauren Steinmann
Principal

Superstars on Campus!

Loma Vista is so proud to honor two incredible women who make our school a better place! Elizabeth Hogrebe is our 2021 Loma Vista Teacher of the Year and Paulette Brizzolara (aka “Mrs. B”) is our 2021 Classified Employee of the Year! Mrs. Hogrebe is a third-grade teacher with a true passion for

teaching. She pours herself into her classroom, both virtually and in-person, to ensure that all students are learning. In addition, she serves on many District committees and dedicates herself to helping colleagues. Mrs. B works as a paraeducator in one of our Special Day Classes and she has a heart for all students. Mrs. B helps students each day with schoolwork, peer interaction and more. Wherever you find her, Mrs. B is caring and energetic. Loma Vista is so lucky to have such a dedicated and compassionate staff and these ladies reflect the true heart of our community. Congratulations!



Loma Vista Teacher of the Year Elizabeth Hogrebe



Loma Vista Classified Employee of the Year Paulette Brizzolara

Myford *Elementary School*

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



Rena Fairchild
Principal

Top Employees Inspire Their Students

Myford is so excited to celebrate two remarkable members of our staff!

Jennifer Bruckler is an outstanding third/fourth-grade teacher who was selected as our 2021 Teacher of the Year. Jennifer has a unique passion for teaching and she views her students as those who will be responsible for shaping the world. She is committed to ensuring they have the tools, strategies, compassion, thoughtfulness, and leadership to be as successful as possible. Jennifer inspires her students to do great things now and in their future.

Yantie Amid is our amazing Nutrition Service assistant and 2021 Classified Employee of the Year. Yantie takes pride in her work and always has a positive, sunny attitude! She checks in on students to be sure they have what they need; she makes each child feel important and loved. Yantie has



Myford's best-of-the-best employees Yantie Amid and Jennifer Bruckler share a celebratory elbow bump.

been incredibly flexible with supporting families during these challenging times.

We are so proud of Jennifer and Yantie!

W.R. Nelson *Elementary School*

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



Shannon James
Principal

Instructional Leader Advocates for Students

W.R. Nelson Elementary School is proud to announce Michelle Zuelzke as our 2021 Teacher of the Year. Michelle Zuelzke is currently a second-grade teacher and has been teaching in Tustin Unified at Nelson School for

15 years. Through the years, she has always been a contributing member to her team, an instructional leader on campus, and an advocate for students and teachers. Michelle exemplifies what George Couros believes to be the difference between a Classroom Teacher and a School Teacher.



Michelle Zuelzke is honored to be named Nelson's 2021 Teacher of the Year.

“School teachers” ... can do all of those things that classroom teachers do within their own classrooms and subject matter, but when they walk out of their room, every child in the school is their child.”
– George Couros

Nelson Elementary School is lucky to have Michelle Zuelzke as part of our Tiger family!

Orchard Hills *School*

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



Melinda Smith
Principal

Celebrating Our Employees!

Orchard Hills School is proud to announce its 2021 Employees of the Year! Kindergarten teacher Amy Jones and math teacher Marisa Parker were selected as Elementary and Middle School Teachers of the Year, respectively. Campus supervisor Robin Perkins was named Classified Employee of the Year.

Mrs. Jones started working in TUSD in 2001. Throughout her time in TUSD, she has

taught elementary school, became an elementary principal, and is now back in her element as a kindergarten teacher.

Mrs. Parker has spent the last five years in TUSD. She credits her hardworking and kind students, inspiring and collaborative Math Department, wonderful teaching/support staff, and administration in having this amazing honor.

Mrs. Perkins has been in TUSD for 21 years. When entering our campus, you can find Mrs. Perkins greeting students and keeping our campus safe.

Congratulations to these three outstanding employees!



Orchard Hills School honors Amy Jones, Elementary Teacher of the Year



Orchard Hills School honors Robin Perkins, Classified Employee of the Year



Orchard Hills School honors Marisa Parker, Middle School Teacher of the Year.

Peters Canyon *Elementary School*

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



Dr. Kristy Andre
Principal

Celebrate Trailblazers, Come on!

Peters Canyon celebrates Becky Salazar as our 2021 Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Salazar was a Cotsen math fellow, district curriculum team member for science and social studies, ran student council, and is currently on the PBIS team. Mrs. Salazar challenges her

students to think critically and take risks in their learning. Mrs. Salazar's love for learning is contagious, and you can see that through the students' excitement and work habits. We are so lucky to have Mrs. Salazar at Peters Canyon.

Peters Canyon also celebrates Linda Shepherd as our 2021 Classified Employee of the Year. Mrs. Shepherd supports students by running small group rotations in reading, math, writing, and social studies. Mrs. Shepherd helps students in regulating

their emotions and knows how to differentiate instruction for students as needed. Mrs. Shepherd has gone above and beyond the call of duty. She is always positive and an asset to Peters Canyon.



Becky Salazar celebrated as Peters Canyon Teacher of the Year with her son, David Salazar, and husband, Jesse Salazar.



Linda Shepherd is celebrated for being Peters Canyon Classified Employee of the Year.

Pioneer *Middle School*

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



Tracey Vander Hayden
Principal

Man of Action Gets the Job Done

Raul Rodriguez is Pioneer Middle School's 2021 Classified Employee of the Year! His qualifications exhibit outstanding attributes and remind all of us the extraordinary characteristics of an exceptional custodian. Agility, flexibility, speed, and adaptability are all key character traits that Raul exhibits. When faced with the challenges of restructuring

classrooms, walkways, and eating spaces, Raul embraced a plan of action that resulted in Pioneer safely opening school for teachers and students. His willingness to embrace last-minute changes in direction and unexpected changes in plans are consistently welcomed with a friendly and positive attitude. Change is the new normal at Pioneer. It is having an employee like Raul who can influence others to embrace change and take the action to improve current practices that are appreciated. Mr. Rodriguez has a vested interest in all our Wildcat's lives and his reaction to the pandemic has shown us that he is an invaluable team player!



Pioneer day custodian Raul Rodriguez receives a special poster honoring him as the school's Classified Employee of the Year.

Red Hill *Elementary School*

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



Sean Lindsay
Principal

A Wealth of Talent

Red Hill is honoring the commitment and contributions of two very talented educators.

Fifth-grade teacher Kristen Montgomery is our wonderful 2021 Teacher of the Year.

She is dedicated to her every student. She learns their interests, listens to them, and

understands how they learn best. She joins committees that work towards school improvement. She spends a great deal of extra time learning new knowledge and skills. She is a critical member of Red Hill Performing Arts team.

As our 2021 Classified Teacher of the Year, Vinnie Yeung shines as our library media technician. She excels at giving students access to books through our great library collection. She generates excitement about

reading through her Super Happy Fun Reading Time website she created as a resource for students, families and teachers. Her costumed read-aloud videos are legendary.

Their complete contributions are too numerous to list. Red Hill is grateful for their generosity and talent!



Kristen Montgomery, left, and Vinnie Leung are joined by their families during the special announcements.

Sycamore Magnet Academy

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



Rafael Plascencia
Principal

Raise a Flag to Sycamore

On March 24, Sycamore Magnet Academy raised its very own flag as a symbol of family unity. Student participants shared about our character traits of Respect, Empathy, and Perseverance.

Two students in each of the following grade spans K-2, 3-5, and 6-8 were

selected by leadership teachers and administration to present their work.

During the ceremony, the students shared their thoughts through poems, short statements, artwork, and videos. PTA President Diana Fisher-Godinez also talked about her experience as a parent of a Dual Immersion student and her service as president, and did so in English and in Spanish.

We are grateful to the technology that enabled the ability to broadcast the ceremony to our students, teachers, and community. We proudly look up to our new flag with respect and to the future as we grow as a school and a family. We are the Sycamore Magnet Academy Wolves!



Isaac Zamora and Kira Lieberman display the Sycamore Magnet Academy flag while Ashley Lopez, Andrea Guerrero, and Emery Diaz prepare the halyard to raise it. Diana Fisher-Godinez, Yaneli Rivera, Garrett Kerr, April Arroyo, and Bertha Picasso all look on in support.

Tustin Adult School

1701 San Juan St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7395



Will Neddersen
Coordinator

Adult School Teachers Dedicated to Learn New Skills

Adult students had to adjust their way of learning this year as classes were moved online. Tustin Adult School teachers also had to adjust their way of teaching. The majority of our teachers had never used Zoom or

Google Meet before COVID-19. Our teachers were dedicated to learning how to use these online video communication platforms to deliver instruction to their students. They had to be ready to support students who also had never been on Zoom or Google Meet. Tustin Adult School added new online curriculum for our English as a Second Language classes that our teachers have incorporated into their instruction. Besides attending professional development opportunities, our

teachers have come to Office Hours with our instructional coach to ask a question or learn other digital tools to support online learning.

Our teachers want the best for our students and are dedicated to learning new skills for our students!



Tustin Adult School teachers participate in a Think Tank meeting.

Tustin Connect *Online School*

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



Erick Fineberg
Principal

Honoring Teacher of the Year Emily McCourtney

Tustin Connect is honored to celebrate Emily McCourtney as our 2021 Teacher of the Year. Mrs. McCourtney was the first teacher hired for Tustin Connect in 2015 and continues to be a leader and guiding force in building our K-12

Blended Learning Program. In addition to serving as the third- and fifth-grade teacher, she is also the lead elementary teacher guiding and coaching the elementary teachers that joined the TC family this year. Emily's creative and innovative approach to teaching and learning reflects her expertise in her application and knowledge of technology and varied instructional practices. She wrote and spearheaded the entire curriculum in grades K-5 and has previously taught all elementary grade levels. In addition to her work at Tustin Connect, she works closely with the UC Irvine School

of Education Writing Project including publication of a book on the topic. She is amazingly talented and always willing to help others to succeed.



Emily McCourtney, second on the left, receives a surprise visit from her parents, husband, and her son Leo when she is recognized as the 2021 Tustin Connect Teacher of the Year.

Tustin High School

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



Music Teacher Hits All the Right Notes

It's official! Tustin High School selected instrumental music teacher Michael Fisk as our 2021 Teacher of the Year. In addition, he was named the 2021 Tustin Unified School District's Secondary Teacher of the Year in which he will represent the District in the Orange

County Teacher of the Year Program. Mr. Fisk is a true Tiller, who has been with the school for 14 years teaching band (all levels), marching band, jazz band, colorguard, winterguard, drumline and orchestra. Some of his many accomplishments include his drumline winning the 2011 championships and all the groups making championships most years. Marching band is also a well-recognized program and they have made it to the championships six times. Winterguard has also medaled at championships five times. Not only has Mr. Fisk produced outstanding programs but anyone who sees his students perform is truly impressed.



Tustin High instrumental music teacher Michael Fisk is celebrated as 2021 Teacher of the Year for the school and TUSD.

Tustin Memorial Academy

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



Special Education Paraeducator is All Heart

Tustin Memorial Academy is proud to honor Mary Beth Beames as our 2021 Classified Employee of the Year. Mary Beth Beames is the "heart" of Tustin Memorial Academy. She began as a noon supervisor 19 years ago. She always made lunch time fun by organizing the kids

to sing, "Happy Birthday," or engage in a "Crazy Walk Contest." Currently, Mary Beth is a special education paraeducator, supporting students in general education. Students love the fun holiday adornments Mrs. Beames wears, along with her festive outfits. She supports the teachers by making trips to the Instructional Resource Center to laminate materials, dropping off "forgotten" items at students' homes on her way home, and covering phones in the office. Mary Beth is also known for leaving notes of encouragement to various staff members "just because." Mary Beth is retiring at the end of this school year and Tustin Memorial Academy will miss her.



Mary Beth Beames celebrates being named TMA Classified Employee of the Year with her husband Art.

Tustin Ranch *Elementary School*

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



Kathi Denny
Principal

Cool Coyote Goes Above and Beyond

Tustin Ranch School is thrilled to celebrate Chris Ramirez as its 2021 Classified Employee of the Year. Mr. Ramirez goes above and beyond to make sure our school gets the attention it needs. He

is always willing to lend a hand and help out. You can find him fixing items in the classroom that have broken, moving heavy furniture, and disinfecting the surfaces. He even helps out with technology issues! He goes about his job in a professional manner, and whenever, anyone needs help, he is always willing to drop what he's doing to support our team. We all appreciate him very much. He doesn't like

attention, but he definitely deserves this recognition. He is a humble, kind person. Mr. Ramirez is one Cool Coyote. We could not be more proud of him. Congratulations to our amazing night custodian, Mr. Ramirez!



Tustin Ranch teachers and staff celebrate the school's Classified Employee of the Year, Chris Ramirez.

C.E. Utt *Middle School*

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



Heather Bojorquez
Principal

Kindness & Compassion = Mr. Evan

Utt Middle School is proud to announce our 2021 Classified Employee of the Year: Evan Jacobs. Mr. Evan, as our Falcons call him, is a paraeducator working in our special day class (SDC) classroom.

According to a colleague, "Evan's positivism is contagious. He makes me and the people around him better educators by being a role model for students and staff." Mr. Evan is a patient, empathetic, and sincere educator that comes to work each day full of optimism and enthusiasm. A colleague who works with Mr. Evan in a general education classroom shares, "During the COVID pandemic, Evan has continued

his support in a greatly needed and appreciated manner. Even when the process is time-consuming and requires extra patience, Evan is always willing to go the extra mile for students and staff." We are proud to have Mr. Jacobs as a fellow Falcon staff member!



Falcon staff members and students celebrate Utt's Classified Employee of the Year Evan Jacobs: First row, Jaden Ramirez, Jonavon Pineda, Megan Cooper, Eduardo Miranda, Vincenzo Amato, Nathan Chapple, Savannah Cedillo, and Jack Decker; Second row, Joshua Blackmon, Corrine Gerome, Evan Jacobs, Danielle Ramirez, April Vu and Kristin McLaughlin.

Business Services

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



Anthony Soria
Chief Financial
Officer

Building for the Future

Over the past several months, the Tustin Unified School District Facilities Planning Department has been hard at work preparing for two new and exciting construction projects that will benefit TUSD students, staff, and community in a variety of ways. The construction planning process requires various steps that may take several months to complete before construction can commence, including determining the source of funding

for each project, obtaining approval from the Division of the State Architects (DSA), completing the bid selection process, selecting an architect, designing the proposed projects, and implementing a construction timeline.

The details of the two projects are summarized below:

Legacy Magnet Academy Gymnasium Project:

This project will include a 32,500 square foot gymnasium with spectator seating, middle and high school lock room facilities; two covered lunch areas; a Technology, Innovation, Design and Entrepreneurship (TIDE) classroom; two physical education classrooms; equipment and technology storage space; and space for a potential future kitchen. This project is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2021 with a 12-month construction timeline.

Beckman High School Career Technical Education Building and Auxiliary Gymnasium Project:

This project will include a 13,500 square foot Career Technical Education (CTE) facility that will house Beckman's engineering program. An additional 13,425 square feet will be dedicated to an auxiliary gymnasium, which will house an 8,375 square foot gym, 3,000 square foot weight room and outdoor weight area, and 850 square feet for restrooms and custodial. This project is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2022 with a 12-month construction timeline.

Note: The timelines of the above-mentioned projects are subject to change based on unforeseen circumstances that may occur.



Kindergarten Readiness

1151 San Juan St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7592



Lauralee Cabibi
Principal

Preschools are "Going Green"

As part of the curriculum unit on plants and the environment, preschool students at Heritage Elementary School have been learning about being "eco friendly" by actively reducing, reusing and recycling. For weeks, the students have been collecting recyclable materials in the classroom. They demonstrated the concept of "reusing" by building robots out of the recycled materials they collected. These robots will be on

display at the End of the Year Performance. The materials that could not be reused were taken to the recycling center to be recycled. Preschool paraeducator Melissa Alvarado volunteered to take the materials to the recycling center and videotaped the process for the students. The video will be used to show the students how to bring materials to the center and how you are paid for your recycling efforts. Students will then vote on how to use the money they collected from the recycled materials.



Heritage preschooler Stella Liu learns to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Technology in TUSD Schools

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



Dr. Grant Litfin
*Assistant
Superintendent,
Administrative
Services*

TUSD CTE Measures Continue to Climb

Tustin Unified School District has one of the strongest College and Career Readiness programs in Southern California. Even facing the adversities of distance learning, TUSD continues to improve by nearly every relevant measure.

During the pandemic, Career Technical Education (CTE) students continued to earn industry standard certifications such as SolidWorks, giving students the opportunity to secure well-paying jobs without college degrees. Over 60 new internships were identified at local businesses that will provide students both in-person and virtual work-based learning opportunities this summer. Hundreds of TUSD students took part in conferences to learn about leading within their pathway. Robotics students K-12 continue to qualify for the state and world level of competition, and two competitive clubs were started to showcase student skills in the health and business arenas. Over 330 graduating seniors completed over 300 hours of coursework within the same pathway during high school.

Additionally, TUSD has added to its existing 13 CTE pathways by expanding into the realm of entrepreneurship and marketing at Legacy Magnet Academy. Utt Middle School qualified for a grant to expose more students to CTE programs before they enter high school, and TUSD has more highly qualified CTE instructors in grades 6-12 than ever before.

Finally, C.E. Utt Middle School Principal Heather Bojorquez was named the county CTE Administrator of the Year for her work in providing amazing career centered learning for all of her students.

No matter where a student attends school in TUSD, kids have an outstanding opportunity to learn skills relevant to their success in future careers.



**Congratulations
Class of 2021!**

Nutrition Services

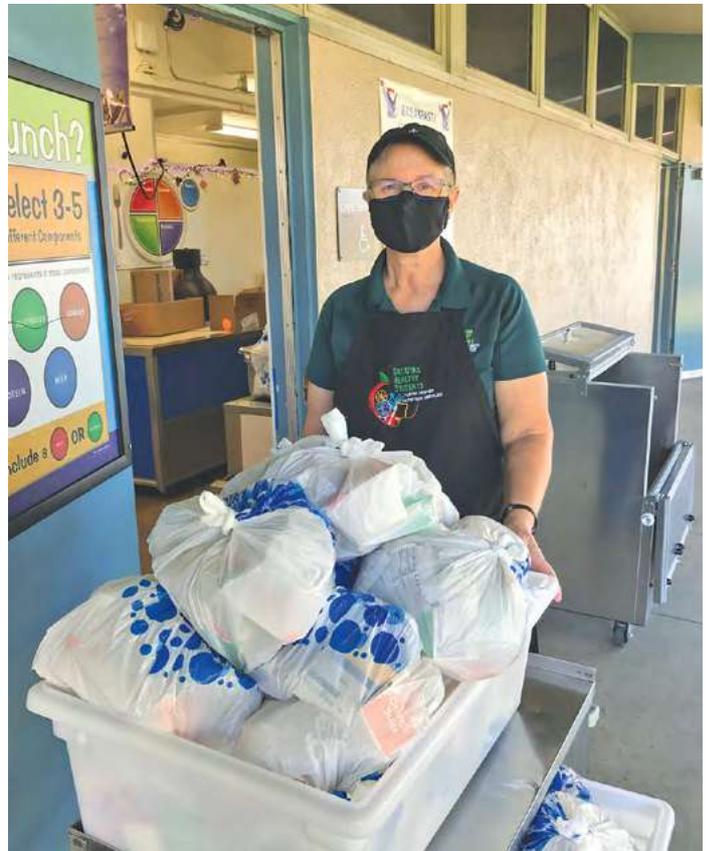
Tustin Unified School District, 300 South C St., Tustin, CA 92780
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Teresa Squibb
Director

Summer Meal Programs Provided for Students

The Tustin Unified School District Nutrition Services Department participates in a federal program called Seamless Summer. For many families in Orange County, the stability, nutrition, and education provided by the school lunch program ends when school lets out for summer. Free summer meals will be served at all summer school locations, the Boys & Girls Club of Tustin, and Tustin Public Library.



Nutrition Services Assistant Lynda Richards gets ready to provide to-go meals for students at Helen Estock Elementary School.

Nutrition Services will continue drive-through meal pick up this summer free for all children 18 years and under. Tustin Unified has partnered with the Tustin Public Library to provide meal pick up every Tuesday and Thursday from 9 to 11 a.m. this summer. The partnership with the Tustin Library allows TUSD to provide seven days of food to Tustin families in need in a central location. Seamless Summer meals help ensure all children are nourished and engaged during the summer months.



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Note-ables



Kate Karp

Little Stories of Great Composers Series

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of Mozart and little Vivaldi victuals? Even better, a cheese-and-music-loving mouse narrates the tales!

Minim is the fly on the wall—rather, the mouse in the house—who gives young listeners slices of the composers' lives as he scrounges for slices of cheddar. In "A Delicious Taste of Mozzarella!," Minim slips out of a crack in the wall to eavesdrop on "Uncle Petya" surprising his niece and nephew with a gift: a musical score. The children are at first disappointed; then, their uncle teaches them how to play the composition on the piano. They realize how music can bestow magic on the spirit. Uncle Peta is, of course, Pyotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky.

In "That's My Piano, Sir!" Minim is hoping for leftover goodies after voyagers leave a boat on a busy dock. A sudden crash shatters the briny air. An exhausted dockworker has dropped a huge crate, which turns out to be a folded piano. The customs officer is cranky and not in the mood for any tomfoolery until a nicely dressed, polite child says, "That's my piano, sir!" The lad sits down, plays, and charms away everyone's ill humor with "A Little Night Music." Minim finds his cheese, and we discover Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart!

Concert pianist Ana Gerhard authored the books, and Marie Lafrance illustrated them. Canadian stage actor Colm Feore was the cultured voice of Minim, and Canadian chamber music orchestra I Musici de Montreal played the score. A wonderful introduction to great composers and, as Minim shows, just what the spirit needs today!

Kate Karp is an editor for *School News Roll Call* and a freelance writer and editor.

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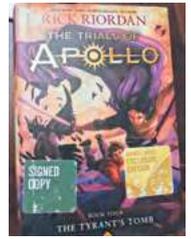
Sean's Book Review



Sean

The Tomb of a Dead Emperor

The Tyrant's Tomb is the fourth book in Rick Riordan's series, Trials of Apollo. Apollo (aka Lester Papadopoulos) was banished from Mount Olympus (home of the Greek Gods) by the



almighty Zeus. During his exile, he experienced many adventures and losses. Meg, his 12 year-old gifted assistant, travels with him to a Roman demi-god camp, where they are greeted by lots of old war friends. Apollo has a vision and tells the camp to prepare for a gruesome war caused by two evil Roman emperors, both with whom Apollo had treacherously fought recently. He then needs to go on a dangerous journey investigating a Roman ghost tomb for crucial information. The vivid details of the battle preparation and fighting scenes are riveting. Overall, this book is a solid 5/5 and I hope you eventually read this amazing series!

Sean is a 6th grader who enjoys playing basketball and volleyball. He loves to teach his dog, Chewie, tricks and taking him on walks. His favorite subjects at school are math and PE. The best thing about quarantine was spending time with his family in nature.

Daniel's Review



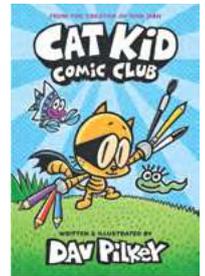
Daniel H.

Funny and Silly

Title: *Cat Kid Comic Club*

Author: Dav Pilkey

Do you like funny and silly books? If you do, you will love *Cat Kid Comic Club* because it's about Li'l Petey from the Dog Man series and this book will make you laugh!



Li'l Petey starts the Cat Kid Comic Club where he and his friend, Molly the tadpole, teach their friends how to make comics.

My favorite part of the book is the show and tell party where everyone in the club shows the comics that they created. Everyone agrees that it's okay to make mistakes because you can always improve yourself.

You should read this book because it is a funny book that has no scary parts, no violence, and teaches a good lesson. The author also uses silly words and pictures in this book. I read this book very quickly with a smile on my face and you will too!

Daniel is in first grade and he likes to spend time with his family playing board games, reading, and playing sports like tennis, soccer, and basketball.

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Taegyong's Book Review



Taegyong K.

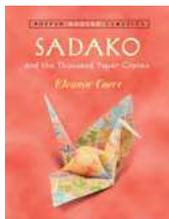
Sadako's Wish

Title: *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*

Author: Eleanor Coerr

Have you ever heard about the myth of one thousand paper cranes?

This story is based on the real story of Sadako Sasaki



and the thousand paper cranes. Sadako loved running. However, she got the atomic disease, and she couldn't run anymore. One day, her friend, Chizuko, showed her how to make a paper crane and said, "If a sick person folds one thousand paper cranes, the gods will grant her wish and make her healthy again." She gave Sadako the paper crane that she folded as the first one. Then, she decided to make one thousand paper cranes to make her well. Did she fold one thousand paper cranes? Did her wish come true? This book is not only about Sadako's story, but also about the horrors and tragedy of war. This is a touching and inspirational story. If you are interested in her story, I recommend this book.

Taegyong K. is a 5th grader. She loves reading books and writing her own stories. Also, she likes to play video games, board games, and badminton. She would like to be a person who is kind and helps others.

Tyson's Book Review



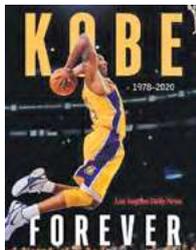
Tyson

A Legend Remembered

By: Los Angeles Daily News

Kobe Forever is a book with many articles about Kobe Bryant from the Los Angeles Daily News.

This book is more of a tribute to his sad death in January 2020. If you



want to know more about his history to appreciate what he has done, this is the book for you. You can learn cool things about him such as how he won 5 NBA championships or how he dropped 60 points on his last game against the Utah Jazz. I felt like I really knew how he became such a good player over the years and how he had to climb over big obstacles to achieve his goal as an NBA legend. *Kobe Forever* is a book I truly recommend for basketball or non-basketball players to appreciate what he has done and how much he meant to the world. I hope you find how great Kobe was.

Tyson is a 7th grader who enjoys playing basketball, skateboarding, and video games. His favorite subjects at school are math and PE. The best thing about quarantine was having extra time to play with his dog and meeting new neighborhood friends!

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