

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

June 5, 2017

For Immediate Release

Contact: Robert Herman
Public Information Officer
(559) 733-6606 – office
(559) 303-8568 – cell

Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

Countywide Excellence in Education Winners Announced

Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year and School Employee of the Year selected in annual awards program

A selection committee of Tulare County business and educational leaders met recently to review the Tulare County Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year and School Employee of the Year nominations for 2017. The Excellence in Education Awards program, now celebrating its 23rd year, honors “the best of the best” in the three educational categories. A total of 27 nominations were received this year from Tulare County school districts. Each nomination was reviewed and scored individually by every member of the selection committee.

“The winners are dedicated to student engagement and success – supporting them with community resources and giving them a vision of their futures in college and career,” said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “Each of these creative individuals use the widest range of resources to see that students meet their greatest potential.”

Once the selection committee reviewed each nomination and the scores were tallied, County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak visited each of the winners to inform them of their award. The winners in the 2017 Excellence in Education program are:

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

WINNERS

Administrator/Manager of the Year: John Pendleton, Principal, Wilson Elementary School, Tulare City School District

John Pendleton is currently the principal of Wilson Elementary School in Tulare. He has been employed by the Tulare City School District for 28 years, serving as principal at Mulcahy Middle School from 1998 to 2010 and Wilson Elementary since 2010. The hallmark of his administration has been to build a school that is connected and supported by the community while transforming the learning environment to develop students' character and academic skills for the 21st century.

He has forged strong relationships with local agencies such as Reaching Higher, Tulare Union High School ASB, Lowe's, Target, Big Brothers Big Sisters, FoodLink Tulare County, the Fresno State Bonner Center for Character Education, the Tulare County Office of Education CHOICES and CHARACTER COUNTS! Programs and many more. His ambitious efforts to seek out local resources have provided the Wilson community with new shoes for all students, beautiful school gardens to support hands-on learning, high school mentors and classroom helpers, after school tutoring, a farmer's market that provides free produce for Wilson families, a 21st century library, numerous family events and a new Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) program to encourage positive parent/school partnerships in furthering students' academic achievement.

A strong supporter of character education, Mr. Pendleton and his staff at Mulcahy Middle School and Wilson Elementary School have received seven of the prestigious Virtues and Character Recognition Awards from the Bonner Center at Fresno State University. Perhaps the highlight of his academic innovation has been the introduction of the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program in second through fifth

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

grades. Through the use of the AVID program's rigorous curriculum and support system, teachers and administrators are working to close the school's achievement gap and transform student expectations regarding college and career preparation. Under Mr. Pendleton's leadership, Wilson Elementary was selected as a 2017 AVID Showcase School during its third year of program implementation. His support for the teaching staff has resulted in greatly increased classroom rigor and student engagement.

Mr. Pendleton said, "Nothing is more powerful or transformational than a public institution that has captured the hearts and minds of its students (and community members) who believe that their school is truly an extension of their family." Mr. Pendleton holds a master's degree in education from California State University, Bakersfield.

Teacher of the Year: Kathleen Jarvis, First-Grade Teacher, Alpine Vista School, Tulare City School District

Described by her nominators as "a teacher extraordinaire," "creative," and "tireless," Kathleen "Kathy" Jarvis leads a first-grade classroom at Alpine Vista School in Tulare. She has been a teacher with the Tulare City School District for 14 years.

Whatever a child can dream is what they become in Mrs. Jarvis' class. Students become entomologists, award-winning writers, botanists, veterinarians and weathercasters. Mrs. Jarvis takes student engagement and project based learning to a completely different level as she bases it on their interests and supports them as they develop their work. She says, "I believe for real learning to take place, the following conditions need to be present: learning must be relevant, learning must be personal, and learning must be enjoyable."

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

Kathy Jarvis supports students by spending countless hours creating exciting and engaging curriculum. To facilitate their learning, she said, “I provide hands-on projects that allow students to manifest their creativity.” One example of this is her creation of Leadership Clubs. Each student has an opportunity to lead and create a club, such as a gardening club or a cooking club. Students design and create the club and present what they have learned to their peers. In the process, they develop their own leadership skills. Mrs. Jarvis is also famous for her “Red Carpet Days” – a showcase of student work complete with a backdrop, a red carpet, photographers and admiring fans. Students dress up and “release their work to the public,” while building their self-confidence and self-esteem.

At Alpine Vista, Mrs. Jarvis is the grade-level representative for the school leadership team and a Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) provider. She holds a Master of Arts degree in education with an emphasis in math and science from Fresno Pacific University. She has also been responsible for spearheading the school’s “The Leader in Me” program, which teaches leadership and life skills to students and creates a culture of student empowerment based on the idea that every child can be a leader.

Alpine Vista parent Delaine Morgan said, “Kathy creates a culture in her classroom that lets every child know that they are special and have a purpose. She does this through her tireless work of identifying each and every child as an individual that counts in this big world of ours.” In doing so, her students learn how to appreciate each other’s differences, a skill that grows with them year after year.

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

School Employee of the Year: Naomi Schuler, Work-Based Learning Coordinator,

Porterville Unified School District

Naomi “Mimi” Schuler began her career with Porterville Unified School District (PUSD) in 1993. Early in her career, she served as a special education instructional aide and a Workability job developer. In 2010, she became the Work-Based Learning (WBL) Coordinator in support of the PUSD High School Pathways Program. It is largely due to her commitment to provide students with authentic WBL opportunities and to build positive relationships with hundreds of community business partners and civic leaders that the PUSD Pathways program has become recognized on a state and national level.

District educators from across the state often request to visit PUSD to learn from her. In her position, Mrs. Schuler manages multiple WBL activities for students and has served as a key advisor/liaison for up to twelve career-themed pathway advisory boards. Since the development of the Pathways Program, she has been the force behind placing over 1,000 high school students in internships. Months before students sign contracts with employers, Mimi Schuler works one-on-one with them to perfect their professional skills to be successful outside the classroom.

Mrs. Schuler is the founder of the successful Kids Career Campaign that connects over 800 elementary students annually with college and career information. She is vital to the yearly success of the district’s Mentor Conference, where over 80 industry partners facilitate a professional conference for more than 600 Pathway students. Mrs. Schuler is the mastermind behind the Pathway marketing videos that are showcased yearly to over 1,700 students. In addition, she supports the work of the PUSD Pathways Program by helping to coordinate a variety of college and career readiness events, including Freshmen Ignite, student interviews, internships, guest speakers and evaluators, and industry and college tours.

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

Not only is she committed to the success of all Pathway students, she models a strong commitment to grow in her personal life by giving back to the community of Porterville, where she was born and raised. In addition to meeting the high demands of her current position in PUSD, Mrs. Schuler is always willing to donate her time and energy for community events. She has served as a Porterville Chamber of Commerce City Ambassador, in a leadership role with her church as the JustServe coordinator and as a member of the City of Porterville Tourism Council. Mrs. Schuler holds a Bachelor's of Liberal Arts degree from Fresno Pacific University.

FINALISTS

Two finalists are selected in each of the three categories:

Administrator of the Year

Victoria Armstrong, Director of Curriculum, Dinuba Unified School District

Donna Glassman-Sommer, Administrator, New Teacher & Leadership Development, Tulare County Office of Education

Teacher of the Year

Yvonne Luiz, Science Teacher/Department Chair, Tulare Union High School

Stephen Miller, Sixth Grade Teacher, Monson-Sultana Joint Union School District

School Employee of the Year

Lupe Aguilera, Child Welfare & Attendance Officer, Tulare Joint Union High School District

Theresa Freitas, School Secretary, Alice G. Mulcahy Middle School, Tulare City School District

RECOGNITION EVENT

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

Award recipients, finalists and nominees will be honored at a recognition breakfast on November 1, 2017.

Event attendees will enjoy a video highlighting the work of the overall winners.

“We greatly appreciate the support of our partners in this event – the Educational Employees Credit Union, its President/CEO Beth Dooley, and board of directors,” says Jim Vidak. “Together, we have the privilege of recognizing the many talented men and women who devote their lives to educating children and young adults in Tulare County.”

For more information, contact Marlene Moreno, Administrative Assistant, at (559) 733-6302.

TCOE