

Tulare County
Office of Education
Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

news galleryweek

November 2, 2022

28th annual Excellence in Education Awards held this morning



This morning at the Visalia Convention Center, 31 extraordinary Tulare County educators and school employees were honored at the 28th annual Excellence in Education Awards – an event co-hosted by EECU. The nominees were submitted by Tulare County school districts in three categories – Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and School Employee of the Year. A committee of Tulare County business and education leaders individually reviewed and scored each nominee to determine the winners, who were announced in April.

At the conclusion of the event, the category winners posed with Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire (far left). The winners were (left to right) School

Employee of the Year Blanca Esparza (Earlimart School District), Teacher of the Year Nancy E. Warkentin (retired, Dinuba Unified School District), and Administrator/Manager of the Year Leanne Cerda (Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District).

“The nominees, finalists, and winners represent the very best of education in Tulare County,” said Hire. “While their roles differ – from teachers and administrators to nurses and bus drivers – each is committed to igniting students’ dreams and removing any obstacles that stand in their way.”

To read more about the nominees, finalists, and winners, and to see the video created about the winners, visit <https://tcoe.org/Awards>.

Tickets on sale now for Theatre Company’s fall production of *Moana JR.*



In two weeks, the Theatre Company will transform TCOE’s Redwood Conference Center into a 400-seat theater to perform *Disney’s Moana JR.* – the musical adaptation of the heartwarming animated film. *Moana JR.* is the coming-of-age story of a strong-willed young woman and her adventures across the Pacific to save her village and discover the truth about her heritage.

The Theatre Company has developed a creative set utilizing innovative staging and beautiful digital projections to recreate Moana’s South Pacific island home. Seventy Tulare County students make up the cast, dancing and singing all the beloved songs from the film.

“With *Moana JR.*, audiences will enjoy a very unique, immersive theatre experience with the passionate performances they’ve come to expect from our fantastic students,” said Charlotte Garcia Da Rosa, the production’s director.

Evening shows will be offered November 17, 18, and 19 at 7:00 p.m.. A 2:00 p.m. matinee show will be held Saturday, November 19. Tickets are \$13.85 for general admission and \$17.85 for early admission seating. To purchase tickets, visit tcoe.org/TheatreCo/CurrentProductions.

Around the County

State Superintendent Tony Thurmond announces recipients of \$10 million Dual Language Immersion Grant

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond announced that 27 schools and school districts were selected through a competitive grant process to receive up to \$400,000 each to expand a current dual language immersion program or establish a new one.



From Tulare County, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District received \$380,000, Visalia Unified School District received \$400,000, and West Putnam Elementary School in Porterville received \$380,000.

“I applaud these schools for taking the initiative to invest in their dual language immersion programs,” Thurmond said. “Schools with strong dual language immersion programs are proven to promote strong academic performance among students from all backgrounds and, in the end, prepare our students for college and careers in a highly competitive global marketplace where speaking more than one language is a critical skill.”

For more information regarding the grant, visit <https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr22/yr22rel51.asp>.

Around the County is a regular feature of TCOE's News Gallery Week. To be considered for this section, Tulare County districts are encouraged to share major student, school, and district achievements and high-resolution photography with Rob Herman, communications director, at <mailto:robh@tcoe.org>

Editor: [Robert Herman](#), Communications Director

Contributors: Nayirah Dosu, Marlene Moreno, Jennifer Fisher, Bethany Rader, Charlotte Garcia Da Rosa, McKenna Friend-Hoffman

To receive the News Gallery Week, sign up [here](#), or contact Jennifer Fisher at jenniferf@tcoe.org or (559) 733-6172.