

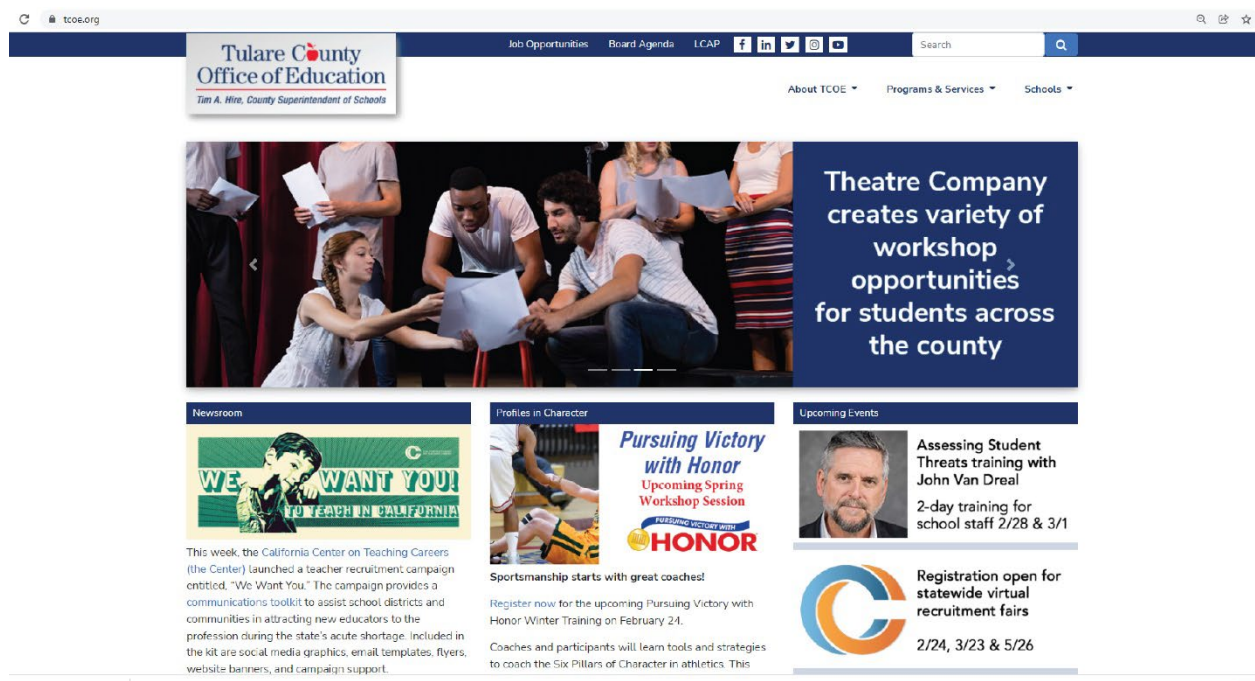
# Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

# news galleryweek

February 9, 2022

## TCOE launches new website



This week, the Communications Department, with support from Information Systems, launched TCOE's new website. The site, at [tcoe.org](https://tcoe.org), includes a new search feature and menu designed to organize TCOE's programs and services into broad, easy-to-understand topics. The front page also features a rotating carousel of stories and a section highlighting major upcoming events. Below the carousel is the new "Profiles in Character" section, which will highlight students and educators exhibiting good character.

"With the redesign, our goal was to present our organization's amazing programs in ways that are clear and accessible – not just to fellow educators, but to the public as well," said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. "We are excited to

expand on the new website with information custom delivered to Tulare County educators that interests them the most – information that relates to student events, professional learning, school improvement, communities of practice, and more.”

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## Black History Month supported with instructional resources, events



To support educators in teaching and celebrating Black History Month, the Educational Resource Services (ERS) Library curated a collection of books and digital resources, including recently-acquired picture books, novels, magazines, videos, and nonfiction works, and shared it with teachers in Tulare and Kings county schools who contract with the library for services.

The collection, shared in the ERS Library's monthly newsletter, also reminded teachers that they have a unique Black history resource available in the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, located in southwest Tulare County. Founded in 1908, Allensworth was a community established by and governed by African Americans – a courageous

group who believed they could create their own version of the "American Dream," allowing them and their children the opportunity to control their own discrimination-free destiny.

The newsletter shared that teachers could make virtual visits to the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park through the state park's PORTS Program (available at <https://www.ports-ca.us/>),

The newsletter also shared that the Friends of Allensworth organization, which supports the state park, will hold its Black History Month event on Saturday, February 12, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Visitors will have the opportunity to interact with docents dressed in period attire and receive guided and/or self-paced tours of the park's historic buildings. This year, the Friends of Allensworth has chosen to celebrate the life of African-American historian Carter G. Woodson. For more information on the event, visit [www.friendsofallensworth.org](http://www.friendsofallensworth.org).

For more information on services provided by the ERS Library, contact Debra Lockwood at [debra.lockwood@tcoe.org](mailto:debra.lockwood@tcoe.org).

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## **El Diamante High School wins Tulare County Academic Decathlon for fourth year in a row**

A team from El Diamante High School won the 2022 Tulare County Academic Decathlon on Saturday. For the fourth straight year, El Diamante will represent Tulare County at the state Academic Decathlon championship, which will be held virtually next month.

Members of the winning team included Taylor Bennett, Patrick Oliver, Samuel Garland, Ludwin Barraza Rivera, Angela Cruz, Lavina Angel, Alex Dowdy, and Evelyne Prado. El Diamante was also the winner of the Super Quiz competition and the top overall team in the large school category.





The top team in the small school category was Orosi High School.

All Academic Decathlon teams are comprised of two to three students in each of three grade divisions: Honors (GPA 3.800 and higher), Scholastic (GPA 3.200-3.799), and Varsity (GPA 3.199 and below).

The top students in the three categories were all from Granite Hills High School in Porterville. Sofia Biagio (Honors), Daniel Gomez (Scholastic), and Christopher Andersen (Varsity) took home the top individual trophies.

Students also received medals and awards in each of the competition's 10 categories. The top students in each category were:

## ART

Patrick Oliver, El Diamante High School (Visalia)

**ECONOMICS**

Sofia Biagio, Granite Hills High School (Porterville)

**LITERATURE**

Sofia Biagio, Granite Hills High School (Porterville)

**MATHEMATICS**

Angel Gutierrez, Dinuba High School

**MUSIC**

Taylor Bennett, El Diamante High School (Visalia)

**SCIENCE**

Sofia Biagio, Granite Hills High School (Porterville)

**SOCIAL SCIENCE**

Taylor Bennett, El Diamante High School (Visalia)

**ESSAY**

Sofia Biagio, Granite Hills High School (Porterville)

**INTERVIEW**

Taylor Bennett, El Diamante High School (Visalia)

**SPEECH**

Karen Gerges, El Diamante High School (Visalia)



*Photos above: The winning team from El Diamante High School, pictured with advisor Mikk Jolly, won the 2022 Academic Decathlon and will represent Tulare County at the state competition next month.*

*Sofia Biagio of Granite Hills High School (Porterville) poses with her awards. (Photo courtesy of Granite Hills High School Facebook)*

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## Dinuba student wins 2022 Poetry Out Loud competition

Last week, Evelyn Jaime, a senior from Dinuba High School, was crowned 2022 Tulare County Poetry Out Loud champion. Evelyn will represent Tulare County at the California Poetry Out Loud competition next month.

View a video of Evelyn's performance [here](#).

In second place was Sabrina Castillo from Tulare Union High School, and in third was Stephanie Soria from Mission Oak High School in Tulare.

The three winners presented their poetry Friday night to a virtual audience as part of the Arts Consortium's virtual First Friday event. At the conclusion of the event, audience members voted for their favorite. Evelyn Jaime received the People's Choice Award.

Poetry Out Loud is the nation's largest youth poetry recitation competition, which promotes the development of public speaking skills, improved English-fluency and comprehension, and self-confidence.

The competition is open to high school students who select their poems from an anthology of over 900 classic and contemporary poems, spanning a variety of cultures and genres. Participants recite their chosen poems, using only their voices to convey all of the emotion and energy of the printed word.

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## Visalia students recognized for Pursuing Victory With Honor



In partnership with the Visalia Kiwanis, the CHARACTER COUNTS! Program celebrated this winter's Pursuing Victory With Honor (PVWH) Award winners with an awards lunch this week. The Visalia Kiwanis recognizes student-athletes, nominated by their coaches, each season for their sportsmanship.

Students were presented with a certificate, lawn sign that read "An Athlete of Character Lives Here," and gift bags from the Visalia Kiwanis. Marion Reneau-Perez, a retired educator and mixed martial artist, was the special guest speaker.

Below is a list of the winter Pursuing Victory with Honor Award winners along with a quote from their coaches.

### Central Valley Christian Schools

**Zoe Ames** – girls soccer: “She is reliable, dependable, and very deserving of this Pursuing Victory With Honor Award. She shows trustworthiness to her teammates and coaches by being a leader on and off the field. She is very respectful to others, including her opponents during matches, and she plays to the best of her ability when she steps on the field, encouraging her teammates to do the same. She listens to her teammates

and coaches, and applies instruction through her actions. Zoe is a responsible student-athlete, who models hard work both in the classroom and on the soccer field.”

**Carter Moons** – boys basketball: “Carter has excelled in both basketball and as school president while proving himself to be a passionate and caring leader among not only his peers and teammates, but for the entire school community. Carter is great at making everyone around him better. His teammates trust that he is present for them whether on the court or in the classroom. He has built a high level of respect in this school community not just because he talks the talk, but he walks the walk. He is a wonderfully well-rounded and grounded individual.”

## El Diamante High School

**Cristian Velazquez** – boys soccer: “He shows his leadership by being the example. Cristian is always getting the best out of his teammates and motivates them to pursue victory with honor. He never says anything negative about anyone, he works hard, plays smart, and respects the game. He is always seen hanging out with everyone on the team. He helps everyone feel included. Cristian is a great player and we are lucky to have him at El Diamante.”

**Preston Boswell** – boys basketball: “Not only is Preston a valuable teammate and leader but he is an extremely hard worker who never steers clear of a challenge. His positive attitude and attention to detail is what makes Preston so valuable to the basketball team. These qualities will be a great foundation for his future success inside and outside the world of academia.”





## **Golden West High School**

**Luna Blair** – girls soccer: “Luna is easily one of the best soccer players in the valley, and yet, she has always been humble about her abilities on the field. She has managed to maintain her grades and balance a busy soccer schedule throughout high school. She often goes out of her way to praise people and be uplifting, which is one reason why she is so well liked and respected by her teammates and opponents. She is a natural leader who uses kindness and her own hard work to motivate the people around her.”

**Jonathon Lopez** – boys soccer: “As the captain of the team, Jonathan is an excellent example for the younger players to observe. He is not very vocal but he is always working hard and quietly helping the less experienced players on the team by showing how to be consistent and responsible in their training. Because of this sacrifice on the field and his dedication in practice, Jonathan has the respect of all his teammates and all his coaches.”

## **Mt. Whitney High School**

**Carter Glick** – boys basketball: “When it comes to defining Pursuing Victory With Honor, Carter is a perfect fit. He follows the rules and never argues with officials. He respects the game and loves to see those on his team do well. He treats teammates and his opponents fairly and would never take advantage during competition. He cares about each person on his team and the opposing team, willing to lend a hand to help a fellow player off of the floor.”

**Addyson Chandler** – girls soccer: “Her work ethic, attitude, skill level, and sportsmanship are the things coaches dream that every player would develop! She is such a good sport and has been known to check on opponents that fall to the ground in the middle of hotly-contested games! Off the field, Addison is an excellent student and serves her community. She volunteers at her church, provides leadership in her church community, and she helps her family. She often assists her parents with shuttling her younger siblings to and from school and activities.”



## Redwood High School

**Jocelyn Arellano**— girls soccer: “She is a fantastic player and a tough competitor, but she is also a tremendous teammate. Jocelyn brings a quiet confidence to our team that helps bring calm to her teammates in big moments during games...She cares deeply for her teammates and is always the first to provide praise or a solid high five to a job well done. Jocelyn Arellano personifies what it means to be a Redwood Ranger.”

**Nahir Karimi** – boys basketball: “Nahir helped Redwood to a share of the WYL his sophomore year and a trip to the valley championship game. He is the starting point guard on this year's team. Nahir is a leader on our team and the glue that keeps us together. His work ethic and competitiveness are why all of our team's goals are still attainable.”

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## Around the County

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### Sundale's Brandon Dodson teaches Black history with YouTube lessons



Last year when the pandemic still had many behind screens, Brandon Dodson saw an opportunity to teach in a new way. Inspired by a book given to him by his father and titled *1,001 Things Everyone Should Know About African-American History*, Dodson took to YouTube to teach Black history during Black History Month. Fast-forward to this February and the Sundale Union School (Tulare) fourth-grade teacher is continuing to teach through his series [Black History With Mr.Dodson](#).

“It’s beneficial for everybody,” Dodson said about the videos. “Not just for the kids. Literally for anybody looking for a lesson, anybody looking to learn something. Not even just about Black history, just about history in general.”



The videos are intentionally kept short and created as an introduction to the historical individuals, places, and events that people can research further at their own leisure. The history lessons covered in *Black History With Mr. Dodson* are ones that aren't always taught in school, like [Diane Nash](#), who helped to integrate lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee and desegregated interstate travel. This was another intentional move by Dodson.

"At least with me growing up, the only people I really heard about was Dr. (Martin Luther) King (Jr.) – somewhat of Dr. King. You hear about Rosa Parks and you hear about Harriet Tubman," Dodson said. "You don't hear about everything else – the many other influences, the impact, and many other awesome stories there are out there."

Dodson said he will continue to make the videos every year during Black History Month and plans to expand to other months, like National Hispanic Heritage Month, so that his students can continue to see and learn more about themselves.

"America's awesome because it's just a bunch of people from different countries and that's what makes up my classroom. That's what makes up the world," Dodson said. "So I think it's really important, whether it's one kid or two kids, that you touch on their cultures and their contributions in American history, in our country today, because that gives them hope. Seeing somebody that looks like you do something amazing or make it through something, like that's awesome."

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