

news galleryweek

June 14, 2023

Retirees honored for service to Tulare County students and schools

This afternoon, a number of employees who retired during the current school year or plan to retire this month attended a meeting of the Tulare County Board of Education where they were congratulated on their years of service to TCOE.

This year, a total of 20 teachers, administrators, and support staff retired with 431 years of service to Tulare County students and school districts.

“Our retirees devoted an average of over 20 years each of service to our programs – from the Early Childhood Education and Special Services to Business Services and SCICON,” said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. “They have left a remarkable impact on Tulare County students, families, and the districts we serve. We wish each of them a happy and healthy retirement!”

Below is a brief summary of each retiree as submitted by their supervisors and coworkers:

2022-23 Tulare County Office of Education Retirees

Christine Alfaro, Instructional Assistant, AcCEL Program, 25 years

Christine always arrives at school with a positive attitude. She is a natural leader and displays qualities that allow her to better assist students, both academically and behaviorally. Not only does she have a great sense of humor, but she also has patience in times of stress and is able to help regulate a calmness among students when needed. Christine is naturally gifted with the skills to meet the needs of students with the most challenging behaviors. Christine does a great job of building a connection with



her students. She has a huge heart and love for the students she has worked with over her career. Christine will be greatly missed by students and staff.

Pauline (Cecilia) Archuleta, Intervention Resource Teacher, Intervention Resource Classrooms, 27 years

Cecilia has a passion for reading and shares that passion with her students. She spent most of her career as a teacher in TCOE Court Schools. She was dedicated to serving students that faced many challenges. Her positive attitude when speaking to and about her students was noticed. Cecilia concluded her teaching career at TCOE in the Intervention Resource Classrooms where she again used her skillset to teach reading and create a positive space for students that need individualized support. Thank you, Cecilia, for your many years of service. We appreciate you!



Consuelo Avina, Teacher, Early Childhood Education Program (ECEP), 22 years

Connie enjoyed being a teacher and it showed by the smile on her face. She served the program in our Lindsay, Woodville, and Clinite child development centers. She had a positive attitude and was a positive role model for others. She was always willing to help others by sharing her knowledge and experiences. For her outstanding teaching skills, Connie received several certificates from First 5 of Tulare County. During her time at the Woodville center, she was recognized as an Educator of the Week by KSEE24 for her exceptional work with children with special needs.



Ray Buchanan, Clinical Supervisor, Behavioral Health Services, 10 years

Ray Buchanan was a clinical supervisor with Behavioral Health Services since January 2013. He was appreciated for his use of humor and his emphasis on the importance of self-care in order to best serve others. He provided many self-care presentations in the community. In addition, Ray played a significant role in the multi-agency South Tulare County Mental Health Conference that is held annually in Porterville. In 10 years, Ray made a meaningful contribution to the service and support of schools, students, and families across Tulare County.



Scott Castillo, Network Engineer, Information Systems, 3 years

Scott provided technical support for our network services as an engineer in the Information Systems Department over the past three years. He was heavily involved in the Central California Learning Network project. He served as a mentor and coach for other Information Systems staff that were working to earn advanced technical certifications, and he lead many lunch study groups that he used to share knowledge about networking and resources to enhance their skills.



Maria Martha Chavez, Teacher Assistant, Early Childhood Education Program (ECEP), 20 years

Martha moved to Porterville in 1996, enrolling her children in the Woodville Child Development Center and volunteering there. The teachers immediately noticed her potential as an educator and encouraged her to apply as a substitute. Martha enrolled in college for the first time to pursue her associate's degree in child development. In 2002, she was hired as a teacher assistant, spending the next 20 years working at the Woodville and Porterville Education Center child development centers. Martha, who is known for her sweet and patient spirit, reports that she is she is putting into practice everything that she has learned while working at ECEP with her own grandchildren.



Vince Delgado, Delivery/Supply/Mail Clerk, Internal Business Services, 33 years

Thirty-three years of service supporting the Tulare County Office of Education is a tremendous accomplishment, which Vince Delgado always performed with a smile. I cannot think of a time that I did not get a smile or a laugh while passing him in the hall. All employees enjoyed working with Vince because of his great personality. He had a heart for service and a talent for managing the hundreds of pieces of mail, equipment, and other deliveries that came through the warehouse and then moved from site to site. Vince, you are truly missed. We hope you are having an amazing retirement. You deserve it!



Shelly DiCenzo, Administrative Legal Assistant, Business Services, 18 years

For 18 years, Shelly DiCenzo was the administrative legal assistant, keeping the office, the county superintendent, the board of education, and the Business Services Division apprised of state and federal laws and regulations. This included inter-district transfers and expulsion appeals, school district governing board vacancies, and the latest regulations. Additionally, Shelly was the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) coordinator for TCOE, and assisted with elections for the school districts, community college districts, and the county board of education. Valued by TCOE staff and district personnel for her knowledge and thorough nature, she assisted with the distribution and collection of various information, including district budget hearings, instructional materials resolutions, audit contracts, annual audits, annual organizational meeting forms, and annual notifications to parents.



Beverly Furnier, Home Base Supervisor, Early Childhood Education Program (ECEP), 22 years

Beverly dedicated 22 years to ECEP and made a positive impact on many families and staff. In her last position as Home Base supervisor, she continued working positively with all staff around her. She never hesitated to help others in need. Beverly showed true kindness to the families in our program. We wish Beverly the best in her new journey of retirement.



Lynne Goodwin, Administrator, California Friday Night Live Partnership (CFNLP), 26 years

Lynne Goodwin served as administrator of the statewide CFNLP since 2020. Prior to her appointment, she was the program's director for 15 years, guiding its work in youth development, the prevention of underage/binge drinking and gambling, and youth traffic safety issues. Lynne began her career with TCOE 26 years ago with the CHOICES Prevention Programs. Lynne is the recipient of numerous local, state, and federal awards, including the National Liquor Law Enforcement Association (NLLEA) Program of the Year Award for her work in developing the TRACE Program (Target Responsibility for Alcohol Connected Emergencies). TRACE is a statewide notification system, which alerts the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) to investigate any death or serious injury involving underage drinking.



Shirley Gowett, Teacher, AcCEL Program, 22 years

During the 22 years that Shirley was an AcCEL teacher, she worked with students of all ages, but found her passion for working with transition-age students (18-22 years of age) in Community Based Instruction Classrooms. She was a recipient of Special Service's Brent Rast Award – an award given annually to one exemplary teacher of students with special needs. Shirley is not only an outstanding teacher, but she is also a world traveler! She has been to Australia, China, Greece, Italy, France, and Germany to learn all she could about the different cultures. She then brought what she learned back to share with her students. She is looking forward to moving to Wyoming to be with family and to an amazing trip to Africa this summer. The AcCEL program will definitely miss Shirley, but we wish her the best in all her travels to come.



Christina Hanger, Supervisor, Early Childhood Education Program (ECEP), 25 years

Chris Hanger began her career with ECEP in June 1998 as a site supervisor at the Senaida Garcia Center. She moved to the Fairview Child Development Center in 2014. Always helpful, Chris supervised various age groups of children, including preschool, toddler, and infant. Chris participated in many trainings and groups such as the Sunshine Committee, TIPS Teacher Trainings Life Mentor, CLASS, and ECERS. Chris has definitely been an asset to the program and will be greatly missed. We wish her the best in her new journey!



Nikki Kennedy, Instructional Assistant, AcCEL Program, 18 years

Nikki worked many years in the AcCEL program and supported students of all ages during her time. Her last assignment was at Mt. Whitney High School in Visalia where she was an integral member of both her Special Day Classroom and campus culture. Nikki loved to help her students be the best they could possibly be, and she went above and beyond for them every day. We wish Nikki the best in her retirement!

Laura Lawrence, Cook, SCICON, 16 years

Laura Lawrence was a member of the SCICON kitchen staff for many years. She dedicated herself to providing healthy meals and snacks to students at our outdoor education program. Laura always had a smile and a friendly voice, and encouraged the students when they assisted her in the kitchen with clean up to earn cabin points.



Michelle McNiece, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, Bright Start Program, 18 years

Prior to TCOE's Bright Start Program, Michelle worked for 10 years as a resource specialist and department chair at Tulare Union High School and eight years as a teacher and girls basketball coach at both Woodlake High School and Central Valley Christian. During that time, Michelle was selected as Tulare County special education teacher of the year and was part of three Valley basketball championships! At Bright Start, Michelle served on the Central Valley Regional Center baby clinic team, helping to evaluate Early Start eligibility for children, ages 0-3. She has also "paid it forward" by mentoring new teachers as a practicum supervisor and teacher for the TCOE Impact Program for 16 years, and was a BTSA support provider for six years.



Cristina Parker, Instructional Assistant, AcCEL Program, 27 years

Cristina spent most of her TCOE career supporting students in the Court and Community Schools. She had a knack for working with challenging students and was an amazing support to her colleagues. In recent years, Cristina shifted to be an instructional assistant in the AcCEL program. She did a wonderful job providing the students with whatever they needed to be successful and it was clear she enjoyed working with this population of students. We thank Cristina for her many years of service to TCOE and wish her the best in her retirement.

Kurt Quint, Teacher, Court/Community Schools, 25 years

Kurt graduated from Fresno State with a bachelor's of social science and then obtained his teaching credential from Fresno Pacific University. His first teaching assignment was at Farmersville Community School in 1998 and he continued to supported community school students since. Kurt's last 17 years were spent at Superior Community School in Tulare. It was evident that Kurt was meant to be a teacher and it showed in all he did for his students. He is looking forward to spending more time with his wife of 36 years, Susan, and golfing as much as he can. The Court and Community staff will miss him terribly but are excited for Kurt's new life adventure!



Gail Sayers, Instructional Assistant, AcCEL Program, 14 years

Gail was an amazing instructional assistant. She was so calm and always gave the students so much respect. She seemed to have endless patience. She was also very creative, both artistically and musically. She frequently brought those talents into the classroom and shared them with the students. She was amazingly helpful during COVID remote instruction by leading small groups on Zoom. The way she explained concepts allowed each student to grasp them. She was also very adept at asking thoughtful questions that got each student thinking independently. She was able to adapt lessons and tie the content to real-life examples that really made it meaningful to the students.



Steve Tellez, Youth Development Specialist, SEE & Co., 32 years

Steve Tellez is a remarkable human. Not many people can say they have helped over 1,000 youth and adults find their purpose in life, but Steve can. Throughout his 32 years at TCOE, he has been an assessment technician, job developer, trainer, instructor, and youth development specialist. Out of all of his experiences at TCOE, Steve's favorite has been working with teens and young adults, and he especially enjoyed his eight years teaching at La Sierra High School when it had a location in Porterville. When you witness him running into a former client who gives him a hug and says, "Mr.



T, thank you for being there for me when I was struggling,” you know that person has been a good and faithful servant.

Dianne Thompson, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, Bright Start Program, 28 years

With her special education teaching credential and master’s degree in special education, Dianne has served Bright Start families since 1995. She has expertise in working with children and families with complex needs and has recently specialized in providing services to children at-risk for receiving a diagnosis of autism.



She was a recipient of Special Service’s Brent Rast Award – an award given annually to one exemplary teacher of students with special needs. Dianne has also shared her passion of infant massage with families throughout Tulare County. She disseminates handcrafted sensory blankets to children with vision impairments as a member of the Blanket Ladies. Dianne is looking forward to traveling, quilting, gardening, and playing with her own grandchildren.

Educational Resource Services hosting ELOP Tech Bootcamp in late July

This summer, Educational Resource Services (ERS) is hosting a four-day Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) Tech Bootcamp from July 24 to July 27 for teachers and after-school staff.

The ELOP Tech Bootcamp is an innovative program designed to provide educators with the skills and knowledge to incorporate robotics, coding, 3D printing, and Makerspace technology into their classrooms and after-school extended learning programs.



Attendees will get the chance to work with technology such as Microsoft Make Code Arcade and Code.org. Make Code Arcade enables one to transform game ideas into reality using an intuitive interface and a vast library of coding blocks. Code.org offers comprehensive courses for learners of all levels, guiding one through the captivating world of coding, from website development to exploring artificial intelligence. These platforms provide the foundations for a future driven by digital literacy and imaginative expression.

The bootcamp will be held at the ERS Library's Makerspace, located at 7000 W. Doe Avenue in Visalia. Makerspaces provide collaborative environments equipped with cutting-edge tools like 3D printers and laser cutters, fostering hands-on learning experiences that encourage problem-solving and collaboration.

To register for the bootcamp, visit tulare.k12oms.org/147-234414.

For more information, contact Sara Torabi at sara.torabi@tcoe.org or (559) 651-3031.

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