



**RIVERSIDE COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION**
EDWIN GOMEZ, Ed.D. | County Superintendent of Schools

— 2 0 2 2 —
RIVERSIDE COUNTY

*Celebrating
Educators*
LUNCHEON

Riverside Convention Center
3637 FIFTH STREET, RIVERSIDE, CA 92501

Tuesday, May 3, 2022
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

OUR PLEDGE

Every student in Riverside County
will graduate from high school academically
and socially prepared for college, the workforce,
and civic responsibility.

RIVERSIDE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Edwin Gomez, Ed.D.

RIVERSIDE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Program

This special recognition luncheon is an opportunity for our county's K-12 education community and stakeholders to come together and recognize some of public education's outstanding educators. District nominees from each category will be recognized along with the 2022 Riverside County Educators of the Year.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Color Guard

*Palm Desert Charter Middle School
Desert Sands Unified School District*

WELCOME

Ruth Pérez, Ed.D.

Riverside County Deputy Superintendent of Schools

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

Naval Junior ROTC

*West Valley High School
Hemet Unified School District*

REMARKS

Edwin Gomez, Ed.D.

Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Santiago High School Orchestra

*Santiago High School
Corona-Norco Unified School District*

AWARDS CEREMONY

2022 RIVERSIDE COUNTY *Classified Employee of the Year*



Elia Sanchez

Clerk/Community Assistant, Instructional Support
Corona-Norco Unified School District

Elia wants to be remembered for being a role model in all her encounters with every student. Elia recognizes that students can feel nurtured with a simple morning greeting, and that it powerfully validates their worth. In her daily work, Elia operates as a “hook”, a caring person that gets students and family connected to their education and positively affects student attendance. Her dedication and hard work to address the issues of our most at-risk youth has helped transform them into at-risk youth. Elia took initiative to identify 87 students who were in danger of not graduating on

time and came up with the idea of “Senior SARB,” which was successful in helping 85 of those students graduate. Elia partners with families and compassionately helps them understand the importance and attainability of going to school every day. Elia was instrumental in helping mold the new SARB process by shifting the focus to a more positive and restorative approach. She takes on all challenges with an open mind, positive attitude, a desire to learn, and the drive to do an effective job.

Elia's Message: *Receiving this award has made me feel satisfied both professionally and personally. Being recognized for something that I am passionate about makes me feel very special and appreciated by co-workers because they recognize the hard work that I do. I also feel appreciated by my immediate family who has supported me by listening to all the stories about my students. Attending this event with my family and co-workers allows me to share the recognition with them, as they have also been a part of this journey with me. I also want to share this award with other classified employees who are making an impact on students to ensure they have a brighter future, especially to those working with High School students. For me, working with at-risk youth is the best job that I could ever have. Seeing their confidence grow and succeed after they had no hope or motivation to graduate is priceless. Receiving this award has shown me that I am on the right path in accomplishing my goals of helping as many students as I can.*

Congratulations to the 2022 Classified Employee of the Year Nominees

- Albertina Atienza, Secretary III, Ortega High School, Val Verde USD
- Angelina Bazan, Administrative Assistant, Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, Desert Sands USD
- Jeri Brunton, Paraprofessional, Eagle Mountain Elementary School, Desert Center USD
- Noel Dias, Library Technician, Mission Middle School, Jurupa USD
- Catherine Gonzalez, Office Specialist, Bilingual, Mt. San Jacinto High School, Palm Springs, USD
- Silvia Iniguez, AP/Dean Secretary, Banning High School, Banning USD
- Lisa Inman, Nutrition Services Assistant I, Fruitvale Elementary, Hemet USD
- Patrick Jenkins, Campus Supervisor, Pinacate Middle School, Perris Union HSD
- Candace Jones, Campus Security Officer, Canyon Springs High School, Moreno Valley USD
- Ramiro Mendez, Maintenance I, II, & III, Palo Verde High School, Palo Verde USD
- Eric Mugica, Campus Security Supervisor, Student Programs and Services, Riverside COE
- Leona Mundy, Clerk Typist III, Citrus Hill High School, Val Verde USD
- Amelia Nino, Risk Specialist, Risk Management, Coachella Valley USD
- Janelle Pruitt, Supervision Aide, Valley View Elementary, Nuview Union SD
- Crystal Robbins, Community Engagement Clerk, Mesa View Elementary School, Romoland SD
- Marie Roberson, School, Community and Family Liaison, North Mountain Middle School, San Jacinto USD
- Yanira Rodriguez, Human Resources Technician, Educational Support Facility, Beaumont USD
- Rigoberto Salazar, Technology Support Analyst II, District Education Center, Menifee Union SD
- Elia Sanchez, Clerk/Community Assistant, Corona-Norco USD
- Susan Sikkink, Risk/Safety Technician, Risk Management, Temecula Valley USD
- Lisa Steklof, High School Principal's Secretary, Martin Luther King Jr. High School, Riverside USD
- Cindy Viramontes, School Secretary, Villegas Middle School, Alvord USD

2022 RIVERSIDE COUNTY *Confidential Employee of the Year*



Tara Surguine

Executive Secretary to the Superintendent
Menifee Union School District

Tara's success is rooted in her belief that a confidential employee has the privilege to see and hear sensitive information, and the honor to be supportive and resourceful in response. Tara was instrumental in transitioning the organization to the new board agenda system. She has made it a goal to have all board policies (over 800) updated before she retires! As a promoter of positive culture and climate, Tara reinvented Menifee Union School District's annual Christmas luncheon by turning it into an event that raised \$900 to help provide toys, books, stuffed animals, jackets, and more to approximately 1,000 students in need. She also assisted in the creation of an annual tradition of a Giving Tree. This collaborative project provided a Christmas tree to a family that was decorated by Menifee Union School District staff. Tara's colleagues describe her as "the glue that held the District together over the past year" as there was a great transition in leadership. As a distinguished confidential employee, Tara is exemplary in treating people with kindness, dignity and respect.

Tara's Message: *I am humbled and honored to have been selected by Menifee Union School District as the Confidential Employee of the Year. To move forward to the semifinals, and then ultimately be selected by the Riverside County Office of Education was unbelievable! I am so grateful to work with such an amazing team. Thank you to the Superintendent, Dr. Jennifer Root, for always lifting me up and helping me shine. To Cabinet, thank you for supporting me and letting me be part of your team. To the Board of Trustees, thank you for your kindness and support, it means the world to me. To my friend and coworker Betti, thanks for being my sounding board and bringing humor to every day. Thank you to Gaby, Sarah, and Chanelle, without my three amigos, all things would not be possible. Last but not least, thank you to my husband John, and my girls Alison and Aubree for your love and support every day. This award has made me feel unbelievably loved, appreciated, and supported. Thank you for believing in me.*

Congratulations to the 2022 Confidential Employee of the Year Nominees

- Helene Astorga, Administrative Assistant, Educational Services, Student Services Center, Perris Union HSD
- Regina Chacon, Human Resources Technician, Education Center, Jurupa USD
- Pamela Cordero, Human Resources Technician, Human Resources, Hemet USD
- Christina Fabanich, Confidential Secretary II, Palo Verde High School, Palo Verde USD
- Cynthia Hernandez, Confidential Secretary, Nuview Union SD
- Pauline Kawahara, Administrative Assistant, Business Services, Alvord USD
- Rhonda LaVigne, Assistant Superintendent's Secretary, Education Services, Murrieta Valley USD
- Maria Lomeli, Credential Analyst, Desert Sands USD
- Nancy Mireles, Administrative Assistant, Human Resources Development, Temecula Valley USD
- Sylvia Nunez, Human Resources Secretary, Corona-Norco USD
- Sarah O'Brien, Administrative Secretary, San Jacinto USD
- Jasmine Persaud, Human Resources Specialist, Human Resources, Coachella Valley USD
- Leticia Romero, Executive Assistant I - Confidential, Riverside USD
- Katie Solorzano, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Perris Elementary SD
- Jesse Sotelo, Risk Management Program Analyst, Palm Springs USD
- Tara Surguine, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent, Menifee Union SD
- Sarah Taylor, Confidential Payroll Assistant, Educational Support Facility, Beaumont USD
- Angela Williams, Human Resources Specialist, Human Resources Division, Moreno Valley USD
- Susie Zema, Credential Analyst, Lake Elsinore USD

2022 RIVERSIDE COUNTY *Principal of the Year*



Jannette Price

Principal, AMC-YTEC, Southwest, LF Smith
Riverside County Office of Education

Jannette's vision for her juvenile court school students means understanding that we treat every student as a student who has the right and ability to learn with our support, guidance, and knowledge of their unique, individualized educational needs. An effort that Jannette is most proud of is being awarded approximately \$10,000 for a Unique Projects Grant. This allowed her and her team to purchase backpacks and fill them with school supplies for Alan M. Crogan Youth and Treatment Center probation program graduates so they can continue their education

fully prepared. Jannette was a co-creator of the RCOE Alternative Education Suicide Prevention Policy. She also was the creator of the RCOE Alternative Education Transition Policy and documents for juvenile court school students in response to AB2276. Through partnerships with UC Riverside Extension and Riverside City College, Jannette and team were able to create a Dual Enrollment CTE program and offer course enrollments for juvenile court school students. Jannette is recognized by colleagues for her ability to restore the self-confidence and strength of students who have experienced multiple social-emotional and academic challenges in their lives by prioritizing the future over the past and embracing a growth mindset. As an outstanding principal, and with no hesitation, Jannette takes on responsibilities with intense commitment and dedication. She exudes passion for education, and concern for staff and students alike.

Jannette's Message: *I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those that nominated me for this recognition as well as the panel members that selected me to represent Riverside County's 2022 Principal of the Year. I am genuinely humbled at the honor to represent my district, RCOE Alternative Education and our Juvenile Court School program. Professionally, I am full of pride to win this award because it gives me the platform to put a spotlight on a unique and gratifying student population that most people do not know exists. Personally, this award signifies for me that people believe I am making a positive difference in students' lives and that is the reason I got into education. I hope I continue to make my court school students and team proud by making every effort to make a positive difference in such a rewarding educational setting. Thank you to Riverside County Probation for being a great collaborative partner that is always youth focused. Together we are saving starfish. Thank you to all my fellow colleagues, staff, mentors, my husband and family, and the parents and students for helping motivate and push me when days get tough. I am so appreciative of this recognition.*

Congratulations to the 2022 Principal of the Year Nominees

- Rachel Angel, Palo Verde High School, Palo Verde USD
- Lisa Arseo, Bella Vista Elementary School, Palm Springs USD
- Jeremy Barnes, Eisenhower Elementary School, Corona-Norco USD
- Latoysa Brown, Moreno Valley High School, College and Career Ready Department, Moreno Valley USD
- Victor Cisneros Jr., Ramona High School, Riverside USD
- Marcia Cole-Fijabi, Central Elementary School, Banning USD
- Melinda Conde, Menifee Valley Middle School, Menifee Union SD
- Elizabeth del Campo Hartman, Indio Middle School, Desert Sands USD
- Steve Ellis, Murrieta Mesa High School, Murrieta Valley USD
- Rommel Guerrero, Toro Canyon Middle School, Coachella Valley USD
- Cyndy Guerrettaz, Mesa View Elementary School, Romoland SD
- Jacqueline Howe, Rob Reiner School, Perris Elementary SD
- Jeffrey Keeney, Dartmouth Middle School, Hemet USD
- Andrew Mante, Record Elementary, San Jacinto USD
- Carrie Mondt, Lake Hills Elementary, Alvord USD
- Annamarie Montanez, Adult Education Learning Center, Jurupa USD
- Jannette Price, Juvenile Court Schools, Riverside COE
- Aimee Ricken, Great Oak High School, Temecula Valley USD
- Dr. Mariana Saenz, Anna Hause Elementary School, Beaumont USD
- Juan Santos, Perris High School, Perris Union HSD
- Dr. Michael Schanze, Withrow Elementary School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Deni Seagrave, Triple Crown Elementary School, Val Verde USD
- Erica Williams, Valley View Elementary School, Nuvview Union SD

2022 RIVERSIDE COUNTY *Site Support Employee of the Year*



Joana Pirvu Robles

Secondary Math TOSA
Palm Springs Unified School District

As an educator, Joana believes that to validate and uplift students in our community, we must work as a community. Her passion drives her to present to the education community (students, teachers, and staff) on numerous socially complex topics. Because of her experience in presenting Unconscious Bias workshops, Joana has been invited to be a guest speaker multiple times and facilitates challenging conversations with students and teachers about microaggressions. Joana makes sure to meet with administrative staff at her assigned school sites and brings up concerns and possible solutions to empower students to grow. Joana works closely with counselors to monitor and celebrate student growth, particularly in the area of mathematics. She believes that celebration is what instills a sense of community and belonging, which students need in order to thrive, and this belief is at the core of one of her passion projects: Mission Graduate. Colleagues share that Joana stands out through her impeccable work, supportive spirit, and has proven to be a wonderful person and a remarkable educator. Schools have witnessed a significant shift in students' attitudes and confidence levels because of Joana's influence. Teachers trust her, administrators appreciate her, and students respect and adore her.

Joana's Message: *Winning this award has truly humbled me as an educator. It sheds a powerful spotlight on all the paraprofessionals, counselors, teachers, and administrators who are a quintessential part of Palm Springs Unified School District's Mission Graduate program. This team has helped our high school students recover their credits, become A-G ready, and move beyond high school to adulthood with the motivation they need to follow their dreams. We are all in this together. So this award is for all of us who firmly believe that students can and will succeed with the proper mentoring and guidance despite the challenges they may face. Our students at Palm Springs Unified School District are some of the brightest and most capable. They need to believe in themselves to have hope for the future. Without them, I would not have won this award. So I want to thank everyone I work with and the students I mentor for making this possible. On a personal note, this award has made me smile and has made my mom, Emily, very happy. I want to thank her and my dad in heaven for raising me to be a compassionate human being. I could not have won this without their guidance throughout the years.*

Congratulations to the 2022 Site Support Employee of the Year Nominees

- Carlos Castaneda, Data Assessment Specialist, Educational Services, Coachella Valley USD
- Josh Combs, Information Technology Analyst III, Technology Innovation and Assessment, Moreno Valley USD
- Betsy Escobar, District Nursing Coordinator, Student Services Center, Perris Union HSD
- Hugo Esparza, Head Psychologist, Summerwind Trails School, Beaumont USD
- Catherine Espinosa, Speech Pathologist, Nuvview Elementary School, Nuvview Union SD
- Dr. Evelin Farias, School Psychologist, Boulder Ridge Elementary School, Romoland SD
- John Fox, Coordinator II, Educational Services, Murrieta Valley USD
- Donna Jones, License Vocational Nurse, Palo Verde High School, Palo Verde USD
- Susan Kadel, Registered Nurse, Desert Sands USD
- Annalissa Madriaga, District Nurse, Student Services, Banning USD
- Pamela Montgomery, Elementary TOSA/CTI Reflective Coach, Professional Development, Hemet USD
- Stacey Negrete, School Nurse, Lake Elsinore USD
- Lisa O'Steen, Licensed Vocational Nurse II, Student Welfare and Success, Temecula Valley USD
- Elga Paquet, School Psychologist, Ridgemoor Elementary School, Menifee Union SD
- Joana Pirvu Robles, Secondary Math TOSA, Palm Springs USD
- Nicole Robertson, Program Specialist, Coronita Elementary School, Corona-Norco USD
- Micah Seabrook, School Psychologist, Psychological Services, Riverside USD
- Lydia Song, Elementary Numeracy Teacher, Foothill Elementary School, Alford USD
- Adriana Vargas, Instructional Coach, Rancho Verde High School, Val Verde USD
- Kathy Villareal, Educational Services Math TOSA, San Jacinto USD
- Annika White, Behavior Specialist, Education Center, Jurupa USD

2022 RIVERSIDE COUNTY *Classified Administrator of the Year*



Daniel Cappello

Director of Nutrition Services
Desert Sands Unified School District

Daniel believes strongly that children cannot learn if they do not eat and that equity in the cafeteria is just as important as equity in the classroom. This is his fundamental and core belief that forms every decision and every action within nutrition services. Job number one for Daniel and his department is ensuring that children walk through the school gates, grab breakfast, and head to classrooms with their stomachs full and ready to learn. He created a farm to school program with local farmers when it was becoming more difficult to procure supplies for meals.

This helped mitigate potential losses for farms while successfully addressing supply chain issues. He acquired community eligibility for 18 schools which removed barriers for students and provided them access to free lunch. This achievement also reduced student lunch debt by over \$100,000. Daniel is an icon in Desert Sands Unified School District and is known for his professional demeanor and innovative spirit. As the Director of Nutrition Services, Daniel is a team player that sets clear expectations and shows unmatched support for his department to serve healthy, nutritious meals.

Daniel's Message: *Food is my passion. How lucky am I that I was able to take that passion and create a wonderful career. There is no doubt that I am blessed to be in a career that I enjoy, and that allows me to make a difference in the world to almost 27,000 children. I joined my team almost seven years ago. From day one, the staff in the kitchen made me look good. There are 170 people who understand that what they do matters. "Children cannot learn if they are hungry"—the perfect quote to explain our philosophy happened during COVID, when we closed buildings on a Friday and began serving food from parking lots on Monday. A co-worker said, "We've got this...it is what we do." I want to thank every team member- our passionate cafeteria workers, those in our central kitchen, delivery drivers, and the management team. We are united in what we do—feed children. I would like to thank Assistant Superintendent Jordan Aquino and Superintendent Scott Bailey for always listening to me champion opportunities for children as well as our incoming Superintendent, Dr. Kelly May-Vollmar. I also want to thank my friend and PIO, Mary Perry, who listens to my crazy ideas and helps to make them happen. Finally, I want to thank the most important people of all, the students of Desert Sands, my customers who welcome me on campus and give me great menu ideas and occasionally, some not-so-gentle criticism. Thank you for recognizing the importance of Nutrition Services. This award is truly the highlight of my career.*

Congratulations to the 2022 Classified Administrator of the Year Nominees

- David Allenbaugh Jr., Manager Network/Computer Services, Technology Services, Riverside USD
- Olga Allende, Transportation Supervisor, Nuview Union SD
- Ana Alvarado, Accounting Manager, Fiscal Services, Coachella Valley USD
- Amanda, Benitez, Benefits Manager, Human Resources, Alvord USD
- Renee Brunelle, Director of Risk Management, Palm Springs USD
- Daniel Cappello, Director of Nutrition Services, Desert Sands USD
- Mariela Garcia, Centralized Registration Data Manager, Hemet USD
- Nicholas Hilton, Director, Human Resources, Perris Union HSD
- Brad Knipscheer, Director, Child Nutritional Services, Temecula Valley USD
- Miguel Mendoza, Coordinator, Operations, Murrieta USD
- Jennifer Miller, Business Services Director, Business Services Department, Moreno Valley USD
- Barry Mulcock, Facilities Project Manager, San Jacinto USD
- Mac Patel, Director of Information Technology, Banning USD
- Tracy Payne, Administrative Director, Business Services, Corona-Norco USD
- Valerie Solorio, Assistant Manager, Centralized Registration, Val Verde USD
- Roxanne Stearns, Payroll Supervisor, Menifee Union SD
- Javier Trevino, Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations, Jurupa USD
- Jeff Vaca, Chief Governmental Relations Officer, Riverside COE
- Michael Veliquette, Director of Maintenance, Operations and Transportation, Beaumont USD
- Tammy Williams, Supervisor: District Student Information, Lake Elsinore USD
- Jodi Yager, Director of Nutrition Services, Perris Elementary SD

2022 RIVERSIDE COUNTY *Certificated Administrator of the Year*



Donna Lione

Director, Student Welfare and Success, Student Support Services
Temecula Valley Unified School District

Donna strives to leave a legacy of being a fierce advocate for the well-being of the whole child. Donna led her team in the creation of a comprehensive, district-wide discipline and behavior initiative. This initiative was a shift in the team's vision which now seeks to focus resources that support "the whole child", with an emphasis on behavior and social-emotional support. When working with at-risk students, Donna has worked hard to create systems so that vulnerable students have a positive first experience and undeniable access to the right resources. Over the last

4 years, Donna's focus has been on revamping the health services team to create a cohesive, collaborative team to ensure optimal service for the health, safety, and welfare of all students. Donna is naturally gifted as a team builder and problem solver. As an effective Director, she understands the importance of relationships and empowers staff members and students with much positivity and encouragement.

Donna's Message: *It is an absolute honor to be recognized by the TVUSD community and County of Riverside Leadership as the 2022 RCOE Certificated Administrator of the Year. This award honors not only my body of work, but also recognizes the collective sum of the actions and the collaborative spirit of district leadership, peers, colleagues, and the support teams that embrace every student's current reality and the collegial spirit to work tirelessly to ensure equity and access for ALL students. It is my privilege to lead and work alongside an amazing team of individuals who embrace the notion that the work we do is instrumental to the overall well-being of our students and families, and the belief that there is no task or obstacle too small or too large that we can't navigate to provide optimal services and supports to ensure student success. I would like to thank all of the outstanding educational leaders, partners, parents, and students throughout my career who have been instrumental to my growth as a Teacher, Curricular Coach, Site Administrator, and District Director. These professional and personal relationships have made me an effective leader and educational partner. Thank you doesn't begin to measure the depth and extent of my gratitude to my husband and daughters. It is because of your unwavering support and love, that I have been allowed the space, time, and support to make a positive difference in the lives of students and families.*

Congratulations to the 2022 Certificated Administrator of the Year Nominees

- Dr. Mathew Barnett, Director of TK-12 Programs, Education Support Facility, Beaumont USD
- Robert Brough, Assistant Superintendent Educational Services, Student Services Center, Perris Union HSD
- Chris Calderwood, Assistant Principal, Athletic Director, Rancho Mirage High School. Palm Springs USD
- Martha Cepeda-Medina, Coordinator, Academic Instruction Linguistic Support, Moreno Valley USD
- Rosa Farfan, Coordinator of Educational Services, Staff Development, Perris Elementary SD
- Cheryl Frye, Coordinator, Curriculum & Instruction, District Education Center, Menifee Union SD
- Ashley Fulmer, Coordinator, NGSS, Instructional Services, Riverside USD
- Denise Hernandez, Director of Human Resources, Education Center, Jurupa USD
- Dr. Maricela Hernandez, Coordinator, English Language Support K-12, Ed Services, Coachella Valley USD
- Kathleen Israelsen, Director, Family Services, Murrieta USD
- Dr. Kathy Lee, Administrative Director, Human Resources, Corona-Norco USD
- Donna Lione, Director, Student Welfare & Success, Student Support Services, Temecula USD
- Dr. Deanna McCarty, Administrator, Alternative Education/Special Education, Student Programs & Services, Riverside COE
- Shelley Mendez, Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction, San Jacinto USD
- Rita Post, Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction, Lake Elsinore USD
- Dr. Bob Presby, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources, Alvord USD
- Michael Sims, Assistant Principal, Tahquitz High School, Hemet USD
- April Smith, Director Human Resources, Palo Verde USD
- Adriana Vazquez, Coordinator, English Learners Support Services, Education Services, Val Verde USD
- Barbara Wolford, Director of Student Services, Banning USD

2022 RIVERSIDE COUNTY *School Counselor of the Year*



Damon Bonelli

School Counselor, Bella Vista Elementary
Desert Sands Unified School District

Damon is an outstanding and passionate school counselor that has demonstrated a strong determination for student wellbeing. In 2021–2022 Damon facilitated the Counseling Collaboration, which included P.E. coaches, and was the most successful and meaningful collaboration for student success that he has ever done as a school counselor. Damon also developed the Counselor Climb, an evening event for students and parents at a community rock climbing gym in which parents practice encouraging their children while they rock climb.

Damon provided support to parents and teachers during the pandemic by creating resources, contacting families for specific referrals or assistance, and helping with contacting parents of students who were not participating. He encouraged mindfulness in his social-emotional learning virtual lessons and would remind students that were having a hard time to use those mindful skills such as breathing, repeating positive affirmations, and talking to someone when feeling sad. The students at Bella Vista are always eager to see him and welcome him into their classrooms. Damon values student agency and voice, and therefore, he creates conditions for students to develop their leadership skills. His humility, humor and optimistic outlook make him a very remarkable counselor!

Damon's Message: *I appreciate my principal, Lisa Arseo, for giving me the opportunity to start my elementary counselor career at Bella Vista Elementary. The support I have received, especially this year returning from the pandemic, has allowed me to work and be aligned with the ASCA National Model. You have always given time and amazing suggestions. Dr. Nava—You have been a beacon of hope, motivation, and direction over the last year. I have used your input on the ASCA model and RAMP to make more productive use of my time, and it has brought in appreciation and support for elementary counseling and the RAMP program in Palm Springs Unified School District. Tanisha Taylor—I always have support and guidance from you; guidance that has boosted me and all 16 elementary counselors with Palm Springs Unified School District. Our elementary team was not idle during our virtual time, but rather we were unified and productive from your leadership. To the students and staff at Bella Vista Elementary—you all are amazing. You have given me inspiration and guidance. Our teachers have shown me the uniqueness and power of elementary instruction. Thank you all!*

Congratulations to the 2022 School Counselor of the Year Nominees

- Francisca Ammerman, Summerwind Trails School, Beaumont USD
- Victor Bond, Ortega High School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Damon Bonelli, Bella Vista Elementary School, Palm Springs USD
- Amanda Carrillo, Villegas Middle School, Alvord USD
- Frank Felipe, Corona Fundamental Intermediate, Corona-Norco USD
- Gayle Fleming, Chester W. Morrison Elementary School, Menifee Union SD
- Temeca Green, Monte Vista Elementary School, Murrieta Valley USD
- Susan Griffith, Tahquitz High School, Hemet USD
- Elliot Holt, Vista Heights Middle School, Moreno Valley USD
- Leslie Hughes, Cahuilla Desert Academy, Coachella Valley USD
- Elearie Johnson, Palo Verde High School, Palo Verde USD
- Francisca Mená, Estudillo Elementary, San Jacinto USD
- Rosio Merino, Rubidoux High School, Jurupa USD
- Ryan Provencher, Banning High School, Banning USD
- Cristian Salazar, Railway Elementary, Perris Elementary SD
- Carissa Teachout, Educational Support Services, Temecula Valley USD
- Andrea Vansant, March Middle School, Val Verde USD
- Xochitl Velazquez, Desert Sands USD
- Cynthia Wakugawa, Nuvview Bridge Early College High School, Nuvview Union SD
- Benjamin Washburn, Heritage High School, Perris Union HSD

2022 RIVERSIDE COUNTY *Teachers of the Year*



Karrie Carlson

CTE Teacher, Murrieta Valley High School
Riverside County Office of Education

Karrie Carlson has been teaching for over 17 years. She brings a unique background and expertise being a former police officer for over 12 years. She decisively shares that moving to the classroom was the best decision she ever made. She teaches students in the Career Technical Education Program, specifically the Public Services Pathway. She also is a Students Against Destructive Decisions (S.A.D.D.) Advisor. As a collaborative educator, Karrie regularly brings in FBI, DEA, detectives, local police and sheriff, along with many other community members into the classroom as guest speakers. Her efforts in promoting student wellbeing include Mental Health Mondays, which are designed to help her students gain tools and strategies to cope with their stress as well as teaching others. Through a beautiful blend of compassion and real-life lessons, Karrie remains committed to her students and their pursuit of innovative endeavors.

Karrie's Message: *I'm honored and thrilled to receive the Teacher of the Year award for Riverside County. I have been teaching for 17 years, and not once did I perform my job to win an award. I go to work everyday to make a difference in the lives of my students. As a Career Technical Education teacher, I introduce them to the world of law enforcement and I also teach them about real life lessons and how to be a productive and engaged citizen. Winning the Riverside County Office of Education and Riverside County Teacher of the Year Awards has been extremely gratifying. I'd like to thank my husband David, my best friend, editor, and travel buddy, as well as my colleagues at RCOE and Murrieta Valley High School, administrators, and students for this wonderful honor. Reflecting upon my career in the essays, I was required to write reminded me of the importance of my job as a teacher. Being recognized with an award such as this is the coolest thing that could happen to a teacher who loves their job like I do! I'm proud to be part of the Riverside County Office of Education and represent RCOE as County Teacher of the Year. I'm thankful to be teaching at Murrieta Valley High School and appreciate all of the support I receive from both organizations.*



Kathleen Magana

Elementary Teacher, Garretson Elementary School
Corona-Norco Unified School District

Kathleen Magana has been teaching for over 24 years and currently teaches a 3rd grade class. She holds a cross-cultural language and academic development (CLAD) certification and was an AVID pioneer and leader. As such, she facilitates and leads AVID Family Nights where students and their families receive tools, strategies, and school supplies while they are building relationships with each other and staff. She also introduced the myBuddy Mentorship Program to the Corona-Norco Unified School District which serves to bridge the path from elementary to high school for minority students. Kathleen knew since she was eight years old that she wanted to be a teacher. Today she carries that same certainty and passion for both her students and the teaching profession.

Kathleen's Message: *I am very proud and humbled to receive this recognition. I'd like to thank the Riverside County Office of Education for the honor of representing teachers in Riverside County. Thank you, County Superintendent Gomez and Riverside County Office of Education staff for the support you've given me and the teaching profession. Thank you to my family, especially my husband, Roman, for your continued love and support to allow me to dedicate my time and my love to my profession and my students in all the ways that I can. I will never take for granted the honor and privilege of being a teacher. For the past 24 years, I have proudly taught, knowing my "why"; I do it for my students and hope that I instill in them the value of education. It is a true gift to teach, love, and inspire my students to be the best they can be. I am so grateful to represent Garretson Elementary and a staff that helps each other to grow and shine. I truly thank the Corona Norco Unified School District, our superintendent, Dr. Samuel Buenrostro, and our school board for your demonstration of leadership and your dedication and support. I am so grateful, proud and honored to be a part of this community! We are better and stronger when we work together!*

2022 RIVERSIDE COUNTY *Teachers of the Year*



Kristan Morales

Mathematics Teacher, Chaparral High School
Temecula Valley Unified School District

Kristan Morales has been teaching for over 26 years and currently teaches high school math. She is the California Teachers Association Liaison to the California Mathematics Council. As a teacher making a large impact, she provides professional development to teachers statewide. She initiated and led Temecula Valley Unified School District's first Teacher-Led Professional Development Conference. Kristan is also the founder and advisor for ESports, Super Smash Bros. Club, which sparked the interest of other districts to start their own ESports clubs, and eventually became the model for the county level program of the same nature.

Kristan's Message: *I'm a lifelong learner who loves learning and teaching. I wake up every morning with a smile on my face eager to learn and make a difference in people's lives. I let my students know I truly care about them. I tell students I'm their math mom who is there to inspire, support, spark curiosity, and lift them up when they fall down. As a tech coach, I support a staff of over 200 educators who are my friends. I'm there for them anytime, and during COVID that meant weekends and nights too. I enjoy the camaraderie, the problem solving, and the lesson planning designed to inspire and uplift students. I never set out to earn an award, but when you give love and truly care, people notice. It means the world to me to be the 2022 Riverside County Teacher of the Year.*



Nichi Avina

Science Teacher, Cielo Vista Charter School
Palm Springs Unified School District

Nichi has been teaching for over 15 years. She keeps the academic advancement of her students central to all she does and views her students as scientists in training. This belief drives her to stay at the forefront of educational technology, and as such, she is a facilitator on multiple topics as well as a certified educator in Google, Peardeck, and Nearpod. Nichi constantly asks herself, "What is the best thing that I could do for my students?" Nichi is a problem solver and teaches her students to do the same. She believes that creativity is much more important than rote knowledge so she teaches her students to be critical thinkers. Both students and parents give much praise for Nichi and her incredible ability to build strong relationships.

Nichi's Message: *It is truly a representative honor to be chosen to become a Riverside County Teacher of the Year and a California Teacher of the Year. Coming into this country as immigrants from the Philippines was not easy. My family had its share of struggles growing up in a neighborhood where crime was rampant. My eldest brother succumbed to the lure of the streets and died at the tender age of 27 from drug related issues. We all become teachers for a reason, and I became a teacher to change lives. I had to find meaning in my brother's early death and to help prevent other children from going down the wrong path. As teachers, the best that we can do is offer students the types of interactions and words that help them reveal the strength and potential that already exists in their own lives. These last two years revealed that teachers, along with frontline workers, are modern-day superheroes. We taught through the pandemic, social unrest, an election, Zoom fatigue, remote or hybrid learning, and great loss. Despite our fears, we showed up and created powerful learning experiences for our students. What we did required a level of resilience, ingenuity, and empathy that rivaled that of any CEO. Thank you educators and thank you Riverside County Office of Education for celebrating our noble profession.*

2022 RIVERSIDE COUNTY *Teachers of the Year*

Congratulations to the 2022 Riverside County Teacher of the Year Nominees

- Veronica Aceves, Sky View Elementary, Perris Elementary SD
- Kristi Alvers, Arlington High School, Riverside USD
- Nichi Aviña, Cielo Vista Charter School, Palm Springs USD
- Guia Blaske, Vista Murrieta High School, Murrieta Valley USD
- Kathy Boyd, Abby Reinke Elementary School, Temecula Valley USD
- Miguel Capinpin, McAuliffe Elementary, Alvord USD
- Karrie Carlson, Murrieta Valley High School, Riverside COE
- Roberto Castro, Nuvview Bridge Early College High School, Nuvview Union SD
- George Crusoe, Henry W. Longfellow Elementary School, Riverside USD
- Rebecca Dagnino, Margaret White Elementary, Palo Verde USD
- Barbara Dowling, James L. Day Middle School, Temecula Valley USD
- Anna Drabik, Romoland Elementary School, Romoland SD
- LaToya Flowers, Moreno Elementary, Moreno Valley USD
- Shane Frakes, James Workman Middle School, Palm Springs USD
- Alicia Fults, Tahquitz High School, Hemet USD
- Macaria Gonzalez, Murrieta Mesa High School, Murrieta Valley USD
- Adela Gradilla, Tournament Hills Elementary School, Beaumont USD
- Jennifer Hockman, Cawston Elementary School, Hemet USD
- Carrie Holguin, Colonel Mitchell Paige Middle School, Desert Sands USD
- Ryan Klopp, Elsinore High School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Kimberly Lambert, Granite Hill Elementary, Jurupa USD
- Christopher Lindquist, Landmark Middle School, Moreno Valley USD
- Patricia Lopez, Saul Martinez Elementary, Coachella Valley USD
- Kathleen Magana, Garretson Elementary, Corona-Norco USD
- Richelle Massey, Jurupa Middle School, Jurupa USD
- Delaney McGinley, Acacia Middle School, Hemet USD
- Claudia McMains, Nueva Vista High School, Jurupa USD
- Dana Minock, Luiseño School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Kristan Morales, Chaparral High School, Temecula Valley USD
- Gemise Morris, Triple Crown Elementary School, Val Verde USD
- Marta Olmedo, Adult Education, Coachella Valley USD
- Christina Osborne, Horizon School, Desert Sands USD
- Angelica Osuna, Perris High School, Perris Union HSD
- Shauna Petersen, Eagle Mountain Elementary, Desert Center USD
- Janaye Phelps, San Jacinto Technology Institute, San Jacinto USD
- Elicia Placencia, Vista Heights Middle School, Moreno Valley USD
- Nicole Ramirez, Ronald Reagan Elementary School, Desert Sands USD
- Rachelle Randeon, Norco High School, Corona-Norco USD
- Jana Remington, Canyon Springs High School, Moreno Valley, USD
- Kellie Richmond, Stokoe Elementary, Alvord USD
- Arianna Runquist, Arlanza Elementary, Alvord USD
- Alexandra Shores, E. Hale Curran Elementary School, Murrieta Valley USD
- Colleen Smith, Lakeland Village School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Jona Spencer, Centennial High School, Corona-Norco USD
- Tamara Taylor, Summerwind Trails School, Beaumont USD
- Jennie Vasquez, Bobby Duke Middle School, Coachella Valley USD
- Natalie Vinyard, Park Hill Elementary, San Jacinto USD
- Jennifer West, Paloma Valley High School, Perris Union HSD
- Dana Zahler, Cahuilla Elementary School, Palm Springs USD
- Heather Zaragoza, Matthew Gage Middle School, Riverside USD

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