

# SBCSS Announces Regional Teachers of the Year

*Source: San Bernardino County Superintendent of School Press Release*

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SAN BERNARDINO – Six San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools’ teachers have been recognized as regional teachers of the year.

The teachers, who represent special education, alternative education, juvenile court school and state preschool, will be recognized during a ceremony hosted by the County Board of Education on June 5. The recognition ceremony will be held at Etiwanda Gardens, located at 7576 Etiwanda Ave. in Rancho Cucamonga.

“These amazing teachers deserve tremendous credit for the work they do daily in our County Schools’ classrooms on behalf of our students,” County Superintendent Ted Alejandre said. “They truly transform lives through education, and we applaud their dedication and commitment to students.”

This year’s County Schools’ teachers of the year, the programs they represent and their school sites are:

- Cynthia Cervantes, state preschool program, Live Oak State Preschool in Ontario;
- Brenda Deas, alternative education, Bob Murphy Community School in Rialto;
- Suzanne Edwards, West End special education, Mulberry Early Education Center in Rancho Cucamonga;
- JoAnna Haefele, Desert/Mountain special education, Crestline State Preschool in Barstow;
- Sheryl Schmidt, East Valley special education, Highland Grove Elementary in Highland;
- Louie Vega, juvenile court school program, Central Juvenile School in San Bernardino.

Among the six teachers, Vega was chosen as County Schools’ Teacher of the Year for Student Services. He will represent County Schools in the countywide Teacher of the Year competition later this year.

Following are biographies of each of this year’s honorees:

Cervantes began her career with County Schools 15 years ago as a state preschool teacher. Her co-workers say that Cervantes’ cheerful demeanor and outgoing personality are a draw for parents, families and staff. Cervantes says her devotion to education is what drives her to help build a strong foundation for her students. “What I enjoy most is making a difference by instilling hope and confidence in children that have none,” she said. “I like to make sure that all children feel loved while at school. I treat all my students the same as I would treat my own.”

For the past 30 years, Deas has been working in education, beginning as a librarian. Her love of language – especially through poetry – is a draw for her students. “On-going, continuous, life-long learning is what I want to engender,” Deas said. She takes every day as an opportunity to learn and share with her students. “Teaching is a noble, honorable profession that I have loved

for over 30 years, each day in the classroom is another chance to get it right. Now more than ever, I want to be able to look back and see a job well done.”

With her last 18 years teaching with County Schools at Mulberry, Edwards is a strong educational leader inside and outside the classroom. She serves as a coach for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support, helping to develop and implement programs and activities that support the staff and students. She said she’s known from her first day as a teacher that this profession was the perfect fit for her. “Every day is different and seeing these little one’s grow is incredibly rewarding,” she said.

Haefele teaches children with disabilities at Crestline State Preschool in Barstow. She has taught with County Schools since 1998. Her passion for teaching feels more like a calling than a career, according to Haefele. Of her work with special needs students, Haefele sees improvements in different ways. “Every child’s accomplishment is worthwhile, big and small. For special needs children, the moment of eye contact, the exchange of a gentle touch or just sheer enjoyment from a child tells me my life has purpose,” she said.

At Highland Grove Elementary, Schmidt works with visually impaired students in an age range from birth to 22. She serves as an educational leader, helping to recruit other teachers working with students who are visually impaired. She also collaborates with several school districts and specialists from other programs. “I am committed to promoting the possibility of becoming a (visually impaired) teacher to all who may have an interest in teaching, advocating the need to states and universities to fund more programs in this field,” she said.

For Vega – chosen as the Student Services’ Teacher of the Year for the County Schools office, he has been working as a teacher at the Central Juvenile Court School since 2012. His current assignment is in the maximum-security unit, where students enthusiastically endorsed him for recognition. “Mr. Vega is honestly a role model that I’ve never had,” one student remarked. Vega said he has overcome his own personal obstacles to be a teacher where he feels he can make a difference. “(I) can use my experience to help students overcome their obstacles and reach their goals,” he said of his impact in the classroom.

<http://www.sbcss.k12.ca.us/index.php/newsroom/newsroom-press-releases/1815-sbcss-announces-regional-teachers-of-year>