

# NOVEMBER 21, 2024





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# Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher, Superintendent

# Fresno County Board of Education

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# Message to Oducators



# Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher Superintendent Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

Tonight, we are celebrating those employees, administrators and teachers who shape future generations with their commitment, kindness, and compassion. I join them in believing the dreams of every parent for their child's bright future live in our Fresno County classrooms. Together, with our shared mission, we will

continue to amplify the abilities of our students to achieve through the power of education. That power, when applied with equitable access and opportunities, can truly transform lives!

Thank you to our honorees for your dedication to education. You are the generators of hope, which is what makes the world go round. And thank you to our exclusive sponsor, Educational Employees Credit Union, for your steadfast commitment to our educators and honoring them at this event for more than 30 years.



# Elizabeth J. Dooley

President/Chief Executive Officer Educational Employees Credit Union

It is an honor for EECU to sponsor the prestigious Fresno County Educator of the Year awards program celebrating outstanding teachers, administrators and school employees.

Those who work in education have demonstrated just how resilient and

resourceful they can be in the face of adversity, particularly these past few years. The honorees should take great pride in their accomplishments and the amazing work they are doing daily to enrich the school experience for all students.

We extend our sincere congratulations to this year's nominees, finalists and winners. These extraordinary people represent the best of the education profession and we are proud to be part of this event to shine a spotlight on their achievements, talents and dedication.



# 2024 Selection Committee

Jennifer Quinn-Yovino, Chairperson Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

Terry Allen Dr. Kelly Eichmann Carmen Garvis Emmelin Herrera

Dr. Jeff Hunt Sherri Johnson Shannon Koontz-Monis Kim Leslie

Alma McKenry Dr. Matilda Soria Ellen Youssef Robert Zavala

# Educational Employees Credit Union Staff

Joe Doyland Nicole Franzen Mark Perez

# ABC30 Action News

Martin Ortiz, President and General Manager Warren Armstrong Margot Kim

### Production Dan Aldape - W.O.W. Productions

Matt Brincefield - FCSS

# Entertainment

**FCSS Players** under the direction of Aaron Bryan

# **Event Support**

Dr. Lisa Benham-Lewis Lisa Birrell Stephen Bock Lexi Carlon Phouvanh Chaimontree Rita Contreras

Barbara Daniel Josh Espinoza Elizabeth Hansel Dr. Jeff Hunt Kim Leslie Christopher Mora

Tim Quinn Joe Riccardi Dan Serrato Janet Sloan Isela Turner Cynthia Villarreal

FCSS Media Department

# Superintendent's Cabinet

Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher, Superintendent Anthony Ayerza Laurie Gabriel Jeff Becker Dr. Corey Greenlaw Christina Borges Brad Huebert Rubén V. Castillo Dr. Diane Lira

Kevin Otto Tannon Pafford Jason C. Parkin Mike Pronovost Helena Silva

#### Trina Frazier

#### Teresa Martinez-Treviño

3



### Entertainment FCSS Players under the direction of Aaron Bryan

# Masters of Ceremony

Warren Armstrong and Margot Kim ABC30 Action News

Greetings from the Superintendent

Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

# Welcome from Educational Employees Credit Union

Elizabeth J. Dooley President/Chief Executive Officer

# Administrator of the Year Award Presentation

Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher

Elizabeth J. Dooley

Dr. Matilda Soria, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools 2023 Administrator of the Year

# Employee of the Year Award Presentation

Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher

Elizabeth J. Dooley Robert Zavala, Kerman Unified <u>2023 Employee of the Year</u>

### **Special Award Presentations**

Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

### Teacher of the Year Award Presentation

Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher

Elizabeth J. Dooley

Emmelin Herrera, Fresno Unified 2023 Teacher of the Year

# **Closing Remarks**

Warren Armstrong and Margot Kim ABC30 Action News





# Baldomero Hernandez Westside Elementary 1955 - 2024



# LEADERSHIP



"The great leaders are like the best conductors - they reach beyond the notes to reach the magic in the players."

# -Blaine Lee



# Kirstin Coronado

Principal, Sanger High School Sanger Unified School District Dennis Wiechmann, Ed.D., Superintendent

I am honored to be here to represent Sanger Unified School District and Sanger High School as a nominee for Administrator of the Year. I appreciate EECU and the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools for supporting this honor and highlighting the amazing educational work happening in our schools. I would like to thank Sanger Unified School District for allowing me to represent our district at such a prestigious event. I also would like to thank the Sanger community for the opportunity to serve as a leader for Sanger High School and for trusting my leadership in supporting their children as they follow their educational goals. Finally, I greatly appreciate my family, including my husband, Roger, for all their support of my career. Thank you!





# Melody Lee

# Principal, Rafer Johnson Junior High School

Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District Dr. Wesley Sever, Superintendent

I am incredibly honored to be recognized as a finalist for Administrator of the Year. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools for this prestigious acknowledgment. Your support and dedication to education continue to inspire all of us in the field. I also want to express my sincere gratitude to EECU for your ongoing commitment to our schools and communities. This recognition reflects my team's collective efforts, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve the students and families of Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District. A special thank you to my husband and our five children for your unwavering love and support. You are my greatest motivation, and I couldn't do this without you by my side. Thank you for believing in me and making all of this possible.





# Melissa Locke

### **Director of Instructional Services**

Riverdale Joint Unified School District Jeff Percell, Superintendent

I am honored to be here on behalf of Riverdale Joint Unified School District. It is truly a privilege and a blessing to work alongside Riverdale's staff, students, and parents, as we all work together to support students in finding success. Thank you to Fresno County Superintendent of Schools and Educational Employees Credit Union for the opportunity to recognize and showcase the amazing work that our team in Riverdale is doing to educate our students and impact lives. I want to thank all of my colleagues and mentors, present and past, within Riverdale Unified for all of your inspiration, support, and willingness to do silly things that convinced you to participate in over the years to engage with our students. would like to sincerely thank my family for all of their love and support. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for always emphasizing how important and how much of an impact education can have in life. To my husband, Jason, thank you for always supporting, encouraging, and pushing me to improve daily. Thank you to my children, Ayden, Teagan, Emerson, and Rylan. You inspire me daily to be a better mom, educator, and human. You remind me how important it is to remember that each of our students is unique and intelligent individuals with different backgrounds and interests. These reminders continue to ignite my excitement to provide the best opportunities for our students to find success.





# Tachua Vue, Ed.D

Principal, Tarpey Elementary School

Clovis Unified School District Corrine Folmer, Ed.D., Superintendent

I am deeply honored to be named a finalist, representing both Tarpey Elementary and Clovis Unified School District. As a proud former Spartan, it brings me immense joy to now serve the very community that has shaped my life. Tarpey has always been a place I call home, and I am truly humbled to have the opportunity to give back to this incredible community that means so much to me. I want to express my deepest gratitude for the incredible honor of being entrusted to lead a team of dedicated teachers, students, and community members. It has been a privilege to collaborate and contribute to our district's continued success. My journey is driven by the unwavering belief and support of those who inspire me. Thank you to my father and my late mother for instilling in me the core values that continue to guide my work today – grit, integrity, and the importance of family. Their lessons are at the heart of everything I do. I am equally grateful to my sister, Pa, and the other Dr. Vue for mentoring me and continuously challenging me to grow. To my brothers, Yee, Pheng, and Jeff, and my husband, Arthur, thank you for your constant encouragement. And to my son, Avery, thank you for your patience and for sharing Mommy with CUSD. Your boisterous spirit and zest always remind me why I chose to pursue a career in education. I am humbled and inspired to continue serving with passion and dedication.







Margarita Aguilar Kerman Unified Gordon Pacheco



Vanessa Covarrubias Mendota Unified Paul Lopez, Ed. D.



### **Beth Doyle** Selma Unified Ed Gomes



Anthony Evaristo Kings Canyon Unified

### **Debbie Duran** Fresno Unified Misty Her



Mallary Errotabere Fowler Unified







#### Javier Gamboa Washington Unified Randy R. Morris

#### **Titus Karvon** Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher



#### Keith Mackey Golden Plains Unified Felipe Piedra



### Shannon Monroe Central Unified



### Mayra Magallanes Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified Roy Mendiola, Ed.D.



### Dr. Rene Rosas Parlier Unified





"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."

-Lou Holtz



# Karnell Grijalva

### **Executive Assistant to the Superintendent**

Fowler Unified School District Lindsay Sanders, Superintendent

It is such an honor to be selected as a finalist for Classified Employee of the Year with Fresno County Superintendent of Schools. I truly believe this is a shared honor with my Fowler Unified School District colleagues! Our team believes in making a difference and a better place for kids to feel welcomed and supported in their goals and dreams. This vibe or momentum resonates everywhere at Fowler Unified, and I am so blessed to be part of this community.

We are small, but our students accomplish and strive for "BIG" things because our staff and parents help them believe their dreams can come true with hard work and dedication. I am passionate about kids, and it is so wonderful to be a part of this dynamic, team-oriented, collaborative group of leaders with core values and mission that I am committed to and believe in.

A heartfelt thank you to my husband, Joe, with a kid's heart that always makes me laugh, and to my children, Caleb and Kim, who have grown into such compassionate, responsible adults, and lastly to my grandchildren, Brooke, Jax and JJ, for their beautiful innocence that keeps it "all real!"





# Kris Ingrao

# Maintenance & Transportation Supervisor

Orange Center Elementary School District Terry Hirschfield, Superintendent

I want to start by thanking my family and friends and expressing my heartfelt gratitude to them. They have been pillars of support and have always been there with me through thick and thin. It is also with great pride that I represent the Orange Center School District. I am truly honored to be nominated by my peers and selected by the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools as a finalist. I have had the privilege to work as part of the OC team for the past five years, where I have built my skill set, helped promote a positive atmosphere, and participated in a modernization project that will be so impactful to the children of Orange Center. I want to thank Superintendent Terry Hirschfield and the Orange Center School Board for their continued support.





# Nicole Potter

# Library Media Technician

Fresno Unified School District Misty Her, Superintendent

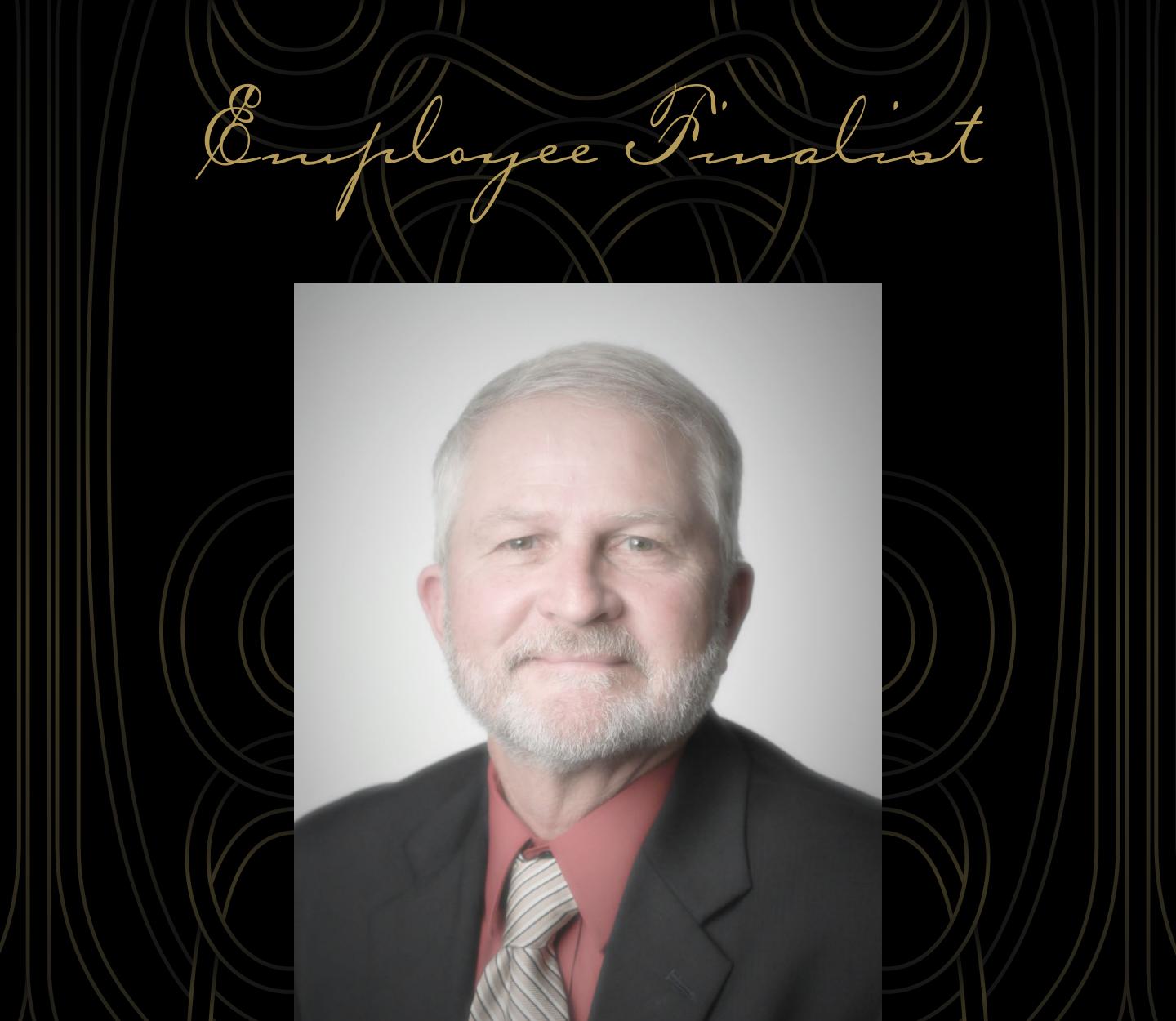
I am deeply honored to be a finalist for the Fresno County Employee of the Year. I want to thank FCSS and EECU for this recognition. It is a privilege to represent Fresno Unified, Powers-Ginsburg Elementary School, and FUSD Library Services.

This recognition is an opportunity to highlight the vital role library services play in our families, schools, and communities. No matter how the world changes, libraries will always remain a constant, reliable presence in a child's life, a place where they can escape, explore, and grow through books.

This award reflects my work in the library with students whose enthusiasm for reading inspires me every day. I proudly share this recognition with them.

I would also like to thank the FUSD Library Services team for their training and collaboration and my Powers-Ginsburg family for their unwavering support and encouragement in continuously developing my library for and by my students. Lastly, a heartfelt thank you to my family, my husband Ron, and my children, Ryan and Amy, for understanding how much I love my work in the library.





# Steve Soma

### Plant Supervisor I

Clovis Unified School District Corrine Folmer, Ed.D., Superintendent

It is an honor to represent Sierra Vista Elementary in Clovis Unified for the Fresno County Employee of the Year. The past 30 years have really flown by. I've enjoyed working with the staff and being around the students. I've had other jobs that I have not looked forward to coming to work, but this job is different. It's like my second family, so I don't mind coming to work most days. I hope I've made their jobs a little easier every day, and I just want to give a shout-out and thank my son, Trevor, and my daughters, Gillian and Camryn. I love you very much! I want to thank my crew who work with me and the rest of the staff who make me look better than I do at my job.







**Lynn Bartels** Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher



### Manuel Bustos Parlier Unified

Dr. Rafael Iniguez



### Tomas Leon Delgado

Sanger Unified Dennis Wiechmann, Ed.D.



### Karen Mavrikis Kerman Unified



### Andrea Garcia Golden Plains Unified Felipe Piedra



### Maribel Mendiola Mendota Unified







Thomas Paige Central Unified Ketti Davis



Manuel Perez Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified Roy Mendiola, Ed.D.



### **Liliana Rubio** Washington Unified Randy R. Morris



Erica Torres Selma Unified



### Tara Schram

Pine Ridge Elementary Steven Rosa

#### Not Pictured

Daphne "Shay" Lane Riverdale Joint Unified

Danny McIntyre Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District



# INSPIRATION



"Come to the edge he said. They said: We are afraid. Come to the edge he said. They came. He pushed them, and they flew..."

-Guillaume Apollinaire



# Benjamin Canzano

**Adapted Physical Education Specialist** 

Clovis Unified School District Corrine Folmer, Ed.D., Superintendent

I am honored and humbled to be a finalist for Fresno County Teacher of the Year. As an Adapted Physical Education Specialist for over 24 years, I have had the privilege of working with many different children of all ages and abilities. There's nothing more rewarding than watching a student reach their full potential. I would like to thank the entire CUSD Special Education Support Services Team of dedicated individuals who go above and beyond every day; I feel blessed to be part of it. Thank you to all the retired Adapted PE Specialists of CUSD who made me want to be part of such a strong and wonderful team. To the current team of Adapted PE teachers that I work with, you continue to impress me, and I look forward to our continued journey supporting children. I appreciate all the teachers, support staff, and individuals I work with; I see you. You motivate me to continue to strive for excellence for our students and to persevere when the chips are stacked against you. I could not have become the man I am today without my parents supporting me in becoming an educator. To my wife, Angel, and our three children, Jackson, Aubrey, and Jordan, thank you for all the support that you have given me. Thank you, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools and the Educational Employees Credit Union, for recognizing all the hard work that goes into educating our students.





# Lawrence Jarocki

## English Teacher, University High School

Fresno Charter School Jeffie Hickman, Principal/Superintendent

To be nominated as Teacher of the Year is both humbling and invigorating, and I want to thank the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools for this opportunity. I also need to thank three women: my principal, my mother, and my wife. Jeffie Hickman for always having an open door and for saying "yes" to all my wild ideas. Mom, thank you for instilling in me a lifelong love of learning and a passion for public service. Nailya, thank you for forcing me on the doctoral journey with you and for a quarter-century of love and support. Without the three of you, I would not have enjoyed this journey so much. Though I stumbled into teaching later in life, it has been my joy, headache, and what makes me happy to go to work each day. I truly believe that teachers are the unsung heroes in our society, ensuring our country's future by developing literate, knowledgeable, civic-minded citizens. I'm proud to be nominated, but I'm even more proud of my colleagues and our work daily in our classrooms.





# Garrett Smothers

# Teacher, Rafer Johnson Junior High School

Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District Dr. Wesley Sever, Superintendent

I am very humbled by this honor and have never felt more driven to be the best I can be at my craft. I wish to thank my coworkers for sabotaging me and getting me into this mess, especially Mrs. Dedini, who has been my rock and the rock for so many others, and Mrs. Lee, who convinced me to stay in the game when I was ready to pack my bags. I stand on the shoulders of titans and would not be here today without the great teachers who impacted me over the years. Thank you, Mr. Remy, for noticing my knack for words. Thank you, Mr. Williams, for teaching outside the box. Thank you, my friend Kirk Stone, for showing me what real education looks like. Thank you, Mom, for teaching me to make my own stuff whenever possible. Thank you, Dad, for teaching me how to think. Thank you, Nina, for teaching me that when things get hard, you don't give up; you make a change and take a leap. Kristen, my love, thank you for being my biggest inspiration. It is for you that I wage this war for a better future.





# Lee Strange

### **Curriculum Support Provider**

Sanger Unified School District Dennis Wiechmann, Ed.D., Superintendent

I am deeply honored and humbled to be a finalist for Educator of the Year. I know it would not have been possible without the incredible support of Sanger Unified administrators, my Sequoia Elementary family, and my family at home. To my family, thank you for being my unwavering foundation and for understanding the time, dedication, and passion this profession requires. To my colleagues, thank you for inspiring me every day and for creating a collaborative environment where we lift each other up. I am privileged to work alongside such talented and committed educators. To my administrators, thank you for your support, guidance, and commitment to excellence. Your leadership and vision help make Sequoia Elementary a place where students and staff can thrive. To Fresno County Superintendent of Schools and Educational Employees Credit Union, thank you for allowing me to share my story on this platform. Most importantly, to my students, who are at the heart of all that I do – my dedication to you and our classroom is unwavering. Watching you learn, grow, and overcome challenges brings me profound joy and purpose. Every day, I strive to create a space where each of you feels valued, inspired, and empowered to reach your full potential.







### **Cynthia Acevedo** Parlier Unified Dr. Rafael Iniguez

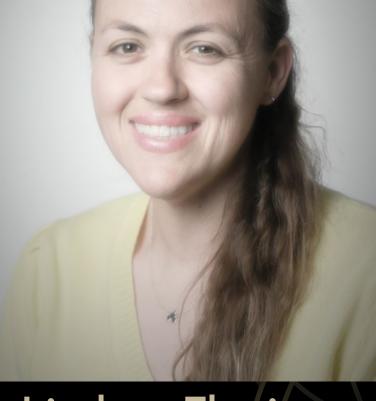
**Jose Alvarez** Kings Canyon Unified John Campbell



### **Emily Chavez** Fowler Unified Lindsay Sanders



### Michelle Karagozian Kerman Unified



### Lindsey Flanigan Pine Ridge Elementary Steven Rosa



### Jennifer Manter Selma Unified







**Sarah Quintana** Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified Roy Mendiola, Ed.D.



# Cynthia Ramirez

Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher



### Alex Rangel Laton Unified Lupe Nieves



Carrie Rocha Riverdale Joint Unified



### Michael Robinson Fresno Unified Misty Her



### Stephanie Sierras Mendota Unified







### **Rogelio Trevino** Orange Center Elementary Terry Hirschfield



Lauren Vang Washington Unified Randy R. Morris



### **Faith Yee** Golden Plains Unified Felipe Piedra



#### TEACHERS

- 2023 Emmelin Herrera Fresno Unified
- 2022 Dr. Kelly Eichmann Clovis Unified
- 2021 Sherri Johnson Clovis Unified
- 2020 Catherine Cooper Sanger Unified
- **2019** Greg Barragan Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
- 2018 Carmen Garvis Sanger Unified
- 2017 Ellen Youssef Clovis Unified
- 2016 Jacqueline Ruiz Fresno Unified
- 2015 Renee Gomez

#### ADMINISTRATORS

- Matilda Soria, Ed.D. Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
- Jason Stricker Sanger Unified
- Alma McKenry Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
- Aaron Bryan Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
- Dr. Dennis Wiechmann Sanger Unified
- Valerie Vuicich Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
- Rick Church Sanger Unified
- Bob Kampf Clovis Unified
- Rodolfo Garcia

### **EMPLOYEES**

- Robert "Bobby" Zavala Kerman Unified
- Gabriel Hughes Clovis Unified
- Richard Delgado Clovis Unified
- Annette Montague Fresno Unified
- Praxades Torres III Parlier Unified
- Marco Franco Kerman Unified
- Ray Zavala Clovis Unified
- Danny Alberty Fresno Unified
- Linda Amparano

2015	Renee Gomez Washington Unified	Edison Bethune Charter Academy	Clovis Unified
2014	Magdalene Bowman	Hank Gutierrez	Selena Rico
	Washington Unified	Fowler Unified	Fresno Unified
2013	Roy Swift Selma Unified	Marcus P. Johnson Sanger Unified	Setha J. Nhim Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
2012	William Magnusson	Edward Gomes	Salvador Cisneros Jr.
	Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified	Fresno Unified	Burrel Union Elementary
2011	Jill Delano	Norm Anderson	Albert Mendoza
	Sanger Unified	Clovis Unified	Sanger Unified
2010	Peggy Foletta	Tim Lopez	Suzanne Dias
	Kingsburg Jt. Union High School	Sanger Unified	Washington Union High School
2009	Kent Hammons Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools	Rosario Sanchez Fresno Unified	Amanda James Central Unified
2008	Neriada Barba	Victoria Armstrong	Steve Fusi
	Kerman Unified	Selma Unified	Washington Union High School
2007	Donna Vincenti	Samuel M. Hines	Arturo Huizar
	Sanger Unified	Fresno Unified	Washington Union High School
2006	Angela Ballew	Peter Tozlian	Victor Lemus
	Sanger Unified	Central Unified	Kerman Unified
2005	Bill Feaver Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools	Carlo Prandini Clovis Unified	Tim Crow Clovis Unified
2004	Carol Stone	Chris Williams	Valentino Vital
	Kingsburg Elementary	Central Unified	Central Unified
2003	Karen vonFelten Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools	Elaine Beyer Fresno Unified	Robin Lund Kingsburg Joint Union High



#### TEACHERS

- 2002 Karin Larka Fresno Unified
- 2001 Gary Nelson Central Unified
- 2000 Diana Decker Central Unified
- 1999 Gina Gravatt Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified
- 1998 Linda Coleman Fresno Unified
- 1997 Anthony Ayerza Kerman Unified
- 1996 Stephen Bock Selma Unified
- 1995 Laura Allen Washington Union High
- 1994 Pauline Sahakian Clovis Unified
- 1993 Glenn McFall Selma Unified

#### ADMINISTRATORS

t VC

Daniel Safreno Raisin City Elementary

Phil Stovall Kingsburg Elementary

Joe Faria Clovis Unified

Teresa Wood Selma Unified

Jeff Eben Clovis Unified

Alfred Sanchez Mendota Unified

John Marinovich Fresno Unified

Terry Simerly Fresno Unified

Linda Hauser Clovis Unified

Diane Parrish Fresno Unified

### **EMPLOYEES**

Gabriel Gutierrez Fowler Unified

Linda Dominguez Orange Center Elementary

Lydia Martinez Parlier Unified

Christine M. Lopez Sanger Unified

Barbara McColm Fowler Unified

Cheryl Craddock Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified

Gerald Chames Kerman Unified

Charles Roberts West Fresno Elementary

Savonia Sharp Sierra Unified

Bill Jackson Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

Julia Hollenbeck Clovis Unified	Gary Kinsey George Cisneros Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified Burrel Elementary
Robert Bullwinkel Fresno Unified	Linda Terry Pine Ridge Elementary
Mario Guerrero Selma Unified	
Lee Skidmore Clovis Unified	
Elizabeth Sullivan Pine Ridge Elementary	
Sherla A. Cox Clovis Unified	
Lyn Swanson-Natsues Kerman Unified	
John Panzak Kings Canyon Unified	
Finian John McGinn Fresno Unified	
Kathy Soligian Mesple Central Unified	
Valerie Welk Clovis Unified	
Carl Gong Sanger Unified	
Helen Hoyt Parlier Unified	
Verna Benzler	







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