



RIVERSIDE COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

EDWIN GOMEZ, Ed.D. | County Superintendent of Schools

RIVERSIDE
COUNTY 2025

*Celebrating
Educators*

LUNCHEON

Riverside Convention Center
3637 Fifth Street | Riverside, CA 92501

Tuesday, May 13, 2025
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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PROGRAM

This special recognition luncheon is an opportunity for our county's K-12 education community and partners to come together and recognize outstanding educators. District nominees from each category will be recognized along with the 2025 Riverside County Educators of the Year.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Ramona High School Jazz Ensemble
Ramona High School
RIVERSIDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

WELCOME

Dominique Samario
Chief Strategic Partnerships and Communications Officer

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

Vista del Lago Marine Corps
Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps
Vista del Lago High School
MORENO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Nellie Kepu
Emily Sanchez
Trianna Sihavong
Rubidoux High School
JURUPA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

REMARKS

Edwin Gomez, Ed.D.
Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

AWARDS CEREMONY

2025 RIVERSIDE COUNTY CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



Maria Lozano

*Career Development Facilitator, College and Career Readiness
MORENO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT*

Maria Lozano brings nearly three decades of dedication to her role as a Career Development Facilitator for Moreno Valley Unified School District. A champion for student success, Maria has overseen Career Technical Education programs and launched transformative initiatives such as the district's highly successful SHINE Summer Internship Program, which has placed over 1,400 students into workforce opportunities. Her leadership in securing community partnerships, managing grant funding, and building sustainable programs reflects her commitment to ensuring every student has access to meaningful career pathways. With a master's degree in Human Resources and Leadership Development, Maria blends professional expertise with an unwavering passion for mentorship, empowering students to envision and achieve brighter futures. Her impact is deeply felt across the district, the community, and in the lives of the students she so tirelessly serves.

Maria's Message: *I am very honored and humbled to have been selected as the Riverside County Classified Employee of the Year and Moreno Valley Unified School District. The journey toward this moment has been filled with challenges and learning experiences that have shaped both my character and intellect. I have not just given of myself but also received of others' experiences and knowledge that I will cherish forever. For that reason, I want to acknowledge that this is not an individual triumph but it represents a culmination of collaborative endeavors and shared aspirations for the well being of our students. Therefore, I want to first thank God, because He gives me the strength I need to face any challenge. Second, I want to thank my family as they have been by my side and supported me every step of the way, especially my daughter Cindy who encouraged and guided me to embrace some of the hardest challenges that came my way. And lastly but not least my amazing team, the selection committee who selected me, our Cabinet and Board Members who always support our programs, and my amazing Director, Mrs. Latoya Brown for recognizing my hard work and nominating me for this prestigious recognition. In Gods' name all is possible!*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Celeste Bautista, Attendance Clerk, Nuvieu Elementary School, Nuvieu Union SD
- Janet Carrillo, Administrative Secretary, San Jacinto USD
- Winston Carter, Data Analyst, Technology, Murrieta Valley USD
- Jennell Crosby, School Administrative Assistant I, Cabot Yerxa Elementary School, Palm Springs USD
- Griselda Flores, Senior Personnel Clerk, Lake Elsinore USD
- Kimberly French, Parent/Community Engagement Clerk, Boulder Ridge Elementary School, Romoland Elementary SD
- Sergio Galvan, Stock Clerk/Driver/Custodian II, Val Verde USD
- Christina Gandy, Secretary I, Chaparral High School, Temecula Valley USD
- Carlos Garcia, Bilingual Clerk Typist I, Alvord USD
- Guadalupe Garcia, Elementary Principal Secretary, Central Elementary School, Banning USD
- Yolanda Gomez, Community Outreach Liaison, Hemet Adult School, Hemet USD
- Madelynn Knust, Events Technician, Riverside COE
- Maria Lozano, Career Development Facilitator, Moreno Valley USD
- Robert D. Marsh Jr., Maintenance Person III, San Gorgonio Middle School, Beaumont USD
- Amber McCoy, Library/Media Technician, Callie Kirkpatrick Elementary School, Menifee Union SD
- Elisandro Muniz, Head Custodian, Grant Elementary School, Riverside USD
- Nina Paz, Secretary II, Paloma Valley High School, Perris Union High SD
- Maria Ramos, Paraeducator, Eagle Mountain School, Desert Center USD
- Vivian Ramos, Wellbeing SOSA, Innovative Horizons Charter School, Perris Elementary SD
- Donna Valenzuela, English Learner Support Assistant, Mountain Vista Elementary School, Coachella Valley USD
- Ailsa Villela, Community Assistant, Corona-Norco USD
- Erica Von Mohr, Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Teams Secretary, Palo Verde USD

2025 RIVERSIDE COUNTY SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR



Felipe Zanartu School Counselor, Cole Canyon Elementary School MURRIETA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Felipe Zanartu is a passionate advocate for the well-being of students, serving as a dedicated elementary school counselor at Cole Canyon Elementary School. Grounded in the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model, Felipe's work focuses on closing opportunity gaps and ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has access to academic, social-emotional, and career development support. He has championed comprehensive counseling programs

that use data-driven strategies to target student needs, leading to tangible improvements in achievement and engagement. Felipe's leadership extends beyond his school site, contributing nationally through conference presentations and as a RAMP (Recognized ASCA Model Program) reviewer. His commitment to creating safe, supportive environments has not only transformed the counseling program at his site but has also contributed to broader efforts to elevate the profession across California and beyond.

Felipe's Message: *I am deeply honored to be named Riverside County School Counselor of the Year. This recognition is a testament to the unwavering support of those around me and the collective effort of an incredible team dedicated to empowering students every day. I want to express my sincere gratitude to my principal, Joe Shaw, and assistant principal, Rebecca Lane—two outstanding leaders whose guidance, encouragement, and belief in the work we do make all the difference. To my elementary counselor and district support team, thank you for your mentorship, collaboration, and for always pushing me to grow. Your support has been invaluable in shaping the way we serve our students. Every day, I work to remove learning barriers for the 1,000 students at Cole Canyon Elementary School, ensuring they have the tools, confidence, and opportunities to thrive. From classroom lessons to small-group support, my hope is that we are building a foundation for their success, helping them dream big and achieve those dreams. I am also proud to have played a role in bringing RAMP status to this school and others in Murrieta, reinforcing the importance of our work and its lasting impact on students and the community. To the students and staff of Cole Canyon Elementary School, thank you for your enthusiasm, support, and the spirit of teamwork that makes our school such an incredible place to learn and grow. This award is not just a personal milestone—it is a reflection of the dedication of so many who believe in the success of every student. I am grateful for this journey and for the opportunity to continue making a meaningful difference!*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Matthew Beilstein, Banning High School, Banning USD
- Corinne Bodnar, Temescal Canyon High School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Naticha Bussarakonsirivit, River Heights Intermediate School, Corona-Norco USD
- Jasmine Caoile Baldovino, Clayton A. Record Elementary School, San Jacinto USD
- Edward Cardenas, La Familia High School, Coachella Valley USD
- David Childs, Mountain Shadows Middle School, Nuvieu Union SD
- Allan Collins, Vista del Lago High School, Moreno Valley USD
- Princess Etuale Caldera, Patriot High School/JUSD Virtual Learning Program, Jurupa USD
- Minerva A. Gamaros-Ornelas, Manuel L. Real Elementary School, Val Verde USD
- Chelsey Hallberg, Rancho Viejo Middle School, Hemet USD
- Heather Helenihi, Mountain View Middle School, Beaumont USD
- Sandra Izquieta, Riverside STEM Academy, Riverside USD
- Candace Moreno, Vail Ranch Middle School, Temecula Valley USD
- Colleen Nacey, Palms Elementary School, Perris Elementary SD
- Jose Rodriguez, Perris High School, Perris Union High SD
- Gavin Sadow, Rio Vista Elementary School, Palm Springs USD
- Sophai Simok, Student Assistance Program, Desert Sands USD
- Sherelle Talboom, Bell Mountain Middle School, Menifee Union SD
- Erika L. Zamora, Arizona Middle School, Alvord USD
- Felipe Zanartu, Cole Canyon Elementary School, Murrieta Valley USD

2025 RIVERSIDE COUNTY CLASSIFIED ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR



Marcus Ridley
Assistant Director, Classified Personnel
RIVERSIDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Marcus Ridley brings visionary leadership to his role as Assistant Director of Classified Personnel for Riverside Unified School District. With a deep belief that classified employees are essential to student success, Marcus has championed professional development and career advancement for the district's workforce. His strategic partnerships with local organizations and Historically Black Colleges and Universities have expanded talent pipelines, while initiatives like behavioral-based hiring practices ensure that every employee contributes meaningfully to student well-being. Marcus's leadership reflects a commitment to excellence, engagement, and empowerment, using both data-driven strategies and personal connections to foster a thriving, student-centered workforce. Marcus embodies a forward-thinking approach that transforms recruitment into a mission of community building and educational impact.

Marcus's Message: *To whom much is given, much is required. This truth has shaped my journey, reminding me that leadership is not about titles—it's about impact. I am honored to be named Riverside County's 2025 Classified Administrator of the Year, but this achievement is shared with all who have supported, challenged, and inspired me. To my family and friends, your unwavering belief in me is my foundation; your encouragement, my fuel. To my colleagues, your passion turns vision into reality, proving that teamwork is the heartbeat of progress. And to the extraordinary students of Riverside Unified School District, you are at the forefront of our work—pushing us to know better, do better, and be better. This recognition is more than an award; it is a renewed call to serve, uplift, and empower. Because when much is given—care, opportunity, knowledge—it is not ours to keep, but to share. Thank you for this incredible honor!*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 CLASSIFIED ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- David Aguilera, Plant Supervisor, Paloma Valley High School, Perris Union High SD
- Myles Allen, Manager, Information Technology, Corona-Norco USD
- Shirley Chavez, Supervisor, Nutrition Services, San Jacinto USD
- Danielle Esquivel (McClain-Parks), Coordinator, Mental Health, Palm Springs USD
- Joe Garcia, Assistant Director, Transportation, Temecula Valley USD
- Edrai Hernandez, Director III, Maintenance and Operations, Alvord USD
- Elizabeth Hernandez, Assistant Director, Nutrition Services, Moreno Valley USD
- Timothy Hernandez, Maintenance and Operations Supervisor, Coachella Valley USD
- Victor Herrera, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services, Banning USD
- James Hickman, Assistant Director of Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation, Beaumont USD
- Cody Horner, Director of Technology, Perris Elementary SD
- Christopher Hutchinson, Director, Food Services, Val Verde USD
- Judy Meza, Director, Nutrition Services, Nuvieu Union SD
- Tiffany Norton, Chief Innovation and Information Officer, Desert Sands USD
- Jacqueline Paul, Director, Strategic Communications, Jurupa USD
- Jonathan Pratt, Chief Technology Officer, Murrieta Valley USD
- Sonia Ramirez, Chief Communications Officer, Hemet USD
- Josue Reyna, Director, Communications and Community Engagement, Menifee Union SD
- Marcus Ridley, Assistant Director, Classified Personnel, Riverside USD
- Alex Tsubota, Director, Technology, Palo Verde USD
- Melissa Valdez, Public Information Officer, Lake Elsinore USD
- Charles Viramontes, Director II, Early Education Services, Riverside COE

2025 RIVERSIDE COUNTY SITE SUPPORT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



Jennifer Camargo

*Social Emotional Learning Support Provider, Wildomar Elementary School and William Collier Elementary School
LAKE ELSINORE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT*

Jennifer Camargo serves as a Social Emotional Learning Support Provider with a profound dedication to nurturing the emotional well-being and growth of students across Lake Elsinore Unified School District. Drawing from her background as a teacher and social emotional learning specialist, Jennifer creates safe environments where students build emotional resilience, empathy, and leadership skills. Her work extends beyond the classroom, leading parent workshops, professional development sessions, and community partnerships that reinforce the critical role of social-emotional learning in student success. Through targeted interventions, collaborative peer groups, and trauma-informed practices, Jennifer empowers students to thrive academically and personally. Her leadership, compassion, and commitment to creating a culture of care have made a lasting impact on her schools and the district community.

Jennifer's Message: *I am incredibly honored and grateful for this recognition. Being part of the Wildomar Elementary and William Collier Elementary communities has been an absolute privilege, and I sincerely appreciate their support. Working as a Social Emotional Learning Support Provider has been a fulfilling journey, made even more meaningful by the collaboration of dedicated SELSPs, teachers, staff, and administrators who prioritize students' well-being every day. This recognition reflects the teamwork and commitment I witness across our schools. I'm especially thankful to the Lake Elsinore Unified School District for its dedication to the SEL program and for fostering an environment where students' emotional growth is a priority. Being part of such a compassionate and committed educational community is truly humbling. Thank you for this honor and for allowing me to contribute to the success and well-being of our students in such a meaningful way.*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 SITE SUPPORT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Elizabeth Areiza, District Librarian, Temecula Valley USD
- Angela Belfry, Common Core Teacher on Special Assignment, San Jacinto USD
- Alanna Bjorklund, Speech Language Pathologist, Freedom Crest Elementary School, Menifee Union SD
- Brittany Boeck, Speech Language Pathologist, Starlight Elementary School, Beaumont USD
- Donia Briones, Teacher on Special Assignment, Jurupa USD
- Diana Cadigan, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialist, Adams Elementary School, Corona-Norco USD
- Jennifer Camargo, Social Emotional Learning Support Provider, Wildomar Elementary School and William Collier Elementary School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Janel Carpenter, Vice Principal, Palo Verde High School, Palo Verde USD
- Bertha Celedon, Caterer, Nutrition Services, Desert Sands USD
- Amber Driscoll, Teacher on Special Assignment, Val Verde USD
- Angela Dube-Robinson, Coordinator, Professional Development, Moreno Valley USD
- Itzel Farias, School Psychologist, Mesa View Elementary School, Romoland Elementary SD
- Michelle Faulkner, Licensed Vocational Nurse, Banning USD
- Ernesto Garcia, Building/Grounds Maintenance Person, Riverside COE
- Kari Gonzalez, Coordinator, Student Support, Murrieta Valley USD
- Sarah Johnson, Elementary Instructional Coach, Palm Springs USD
- Kelli Lawson, Middle School Intervention Teacher, Ysamel Villegas Middle School, Alvord USD
- Maria Mickelson, Administrative Specialist, Peter Pendleton Elementary School, Coachella Valley USD
- Nerni Mink Miller, Assistant Coordinator, Individualized Student Support Program, Hemet USD
- Teri Rowe, Multi-Tiered System of Supports Elementary Liaison, Patricia Beatty Elementary School and Madison Elementary School, Riverside USD
- Jacqueline Thompson, School District Nurse, Nuvieu Union SD

2025 RIVERSIDE COUNTY CERTIFIED ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR



Kimberly Velez, Ed.D.

*Assistant Superintendent of Educational Support Services
TEMECULA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT*

Kimberly Velez exemplifies transformative and servant leadership in her role as a certificated administrator. Grounded in a belief that leadership is most impactful when it inspires and empowers others, she has led efforts to align educational and student support services, creating a unified, student-centered approach across her district. Kimberly's work fosters a culture where academic and social-emotional considerations guide every decision. As an interim superintendent during a time of intense national scrutiny, she demonstrated unwavering professionalism, compassion, and focus on student success. Her leadership is marked by collaborative mentorship, high expectations, and data-driven decision-making, always centering the voices of staff and the needs of students. Kimberly's vision continues to shape a culture of excellence and innovation within Temecula Valley Unified School District, leaving a legacy of leadership grounded in trust, shared purpose, and empowerment.

Kimberly's Message: *I am deeply honored to be selected as the Riverside County Certificated Administrator of the Year. This recognition reflects the incredible teams, colleagues, mentors, and students I've had the privilege to work alongside throughout my career in TVUSD. I am continually inspired by the passion and dedication of educators across our county who work tirelessly to create opportunities for all students to thrive. I share this honor with those who lead with heart, innovate with purpose, and never lose sight of the power of public education to transform lives. Thank you to the Riverside County Office of Education for this recognition and your unwavering commitment to educational excellence.*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 CERTIFIED ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Olga Alferez, Director, Educational Equity, Jurupa USD
- Kristen Anderson, Director, Instructional Development, Hemet USD
- Elizabeth Atkinson, Director, Local Control and Accountability Plan and State/Federal Programs, Lake Elsinore USD
- Allison Barry, Assistant Principal, Innovative Horizons Charter School, Perris Elementary SD
- Melissa Bazanos Hutton, Executive Director, Assessment, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement, Riverside COE
- Domenica Bernauer, Director, Human Resources, Beaumont USD
- Jesenia Garcia Macias, Director, Early Childhood Education, Nuvie Union SD
- Renee Hill, District Superintendent, Riverside USD
- Sabrina Kaspar, Director, Title I, Corona-Norco USD
- Mike Kint, Senior Director, Elementary Education, Desert Sands USD
- Gregory Loewen, Assistant Principal, Painted Hills Middle School, Palm Springs USD
- Sumer Martinez, Director, Certificated Human Resources, Coachella Valley USD
- Scott Moore, Assistant Principal, Athletic Director, Liberty High School, Perris Union High SD
- John Morgan, Director, Technology, Menifee Union SD
- Joe Parla, Executive Director, Elementary Instruction, Murrieta Valley USD
- Michelle Pierce, Director III, Elementary Education, Alvord USD
- Cathryn Remily, Coordinator, Student Support Services, San Jacinto USD
- Maurice Sievers, Assistant Principal, Val Verde High School, Val Verde USD
- Anna Torres, Assistant Principal, Banning High School, Banning USD
- Kimberly Velez, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Support Services, Temecula Valley USD
- Peter Whitmore, Coordinator, Technology, Innovation and Assessment, Moreno Valley USD

2025 RIVERSIDE COUNTY CONFIDENTIAL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



Erika Barragan
Executive Assistant, Office of the Superintendent
PALM SPRINGS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Erika Barragan exemplifies excellence, professionalism, and innovation in her role as Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Palm Springs Unified School District. With a career spanning public education and state agency operations, Erika brings a wealth of expertise to ensuring district operations run with efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness. Among her many contributions, she led the district's groundbreaking implementation of Assembly Bill 275, making Palm Springs USD the

first in the Coachella Valley to provide financial compensation to student board members — a major step in elevating student voice and leadership. Erika's work fosters collaboration across departments, strengthens ties with the broader community, and supports a culture of trust and inclusivity. Her unwavering commitment to service, operational excellence, and student advocacy leaves an indelible mark on the district and its mission.

Erika's Message: *I am honored to be recognized as the Riverside County Confidential Employee of the Year. This recognition is truly special because it reflects the incredible support I've received from so many people. I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my Palm Springs Unified School District family. It has been a privilege to work alongside the staff in the Superintendent's office who are dedicated to supporting our families and ensuring a bright future for the children in our community. Thanks to my family, my husband, who has always been my rock, thank you for your unwavering support; to my sons and parents, your love and encouragement mean the world to me. This award is a reminder that I am part of something much bigger, I am excited to continue to represent such an amazing district and to continue to support the students whose passion and commitment inspire me daily.*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 CONFIDENTIAL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Carol Araujo, Executive Assistant, Beaumont USD
- Cynthia Avila-Medina, High School Principal Secretary, Perris High School, Perris Union High SD
- Erika Barragan, Executive Assistant, Palm Springs USD
- Gabriela Burrell, Assistant Superintendent's Secretary, Menifee Union SD
- Elvira Castillo, Human Resources Analyst, Moreno Valley USD
- Nora Diaz, Executive Assistant, Desert Sands USD
- Christine Fierro, Personnel Analyst, San Jacinto USD
- Sylvia Hernandez, Budget Analyst, Palo Verde USD
- Stephanie Kemmer, Executive Assistant, Corona-Norco USD
- Lanea May, Confidential Secretary, Perris Elementary SD
- Sandi McDowell, Administrative Assistant II, Temecula Valley USD
- Nancy Perez, Credential Analyst, Banning USD
- Hilaree Pugh, Benefits Analyst, Murrieta Valley USD
- Marisa Raya, Credential Analyst, Coachella Valley USD
- Yadira Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Board Trustees, Nuvview Union SD
- Judiel Sanchez, Superintendent's Secretary, Lake Elsinore USD
- Constance Smith, Administrative Assistant II, Hemet USD
- Yurydia Vietti, Confidential Executive Assistant II, Riverside USD
- Susan Worley, Senior Executive Assistant, Jurupa USD

2025 RIVERSIDE COUNTY PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR



Jason Marquez
Principal, Norte Vista High School
ALVORD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Jason Marquez leads Norte Vista High School with a leadership philosophy rooted in empowerment and collective ownership. Guided by the belief that true leadership creates more leaders, Jason has fostered a culture where teachers, students, and families are deeply engaged partners in the school's success. Through initiatives aligned with WASC growth goals and a data-driven instructional model, he has strengthened academic rigor while supporting students' social-emotional development. Jason's ability to navigate challenges with resilience — including district transitions and the pandemic — reflects his commitment to student achievement and community collaboration. Known for elevating staff leadership, inspiring student ownership of learning, and connecting families meaningfully to school life, Jason continues to build a legacy of excellence and shared purpose at Norte Vista High School.

Jason's Message: *I am deeply grateful to the Riverside County Office of Education for this recognition — not just of my work, but of the incredible efforts of my staff, my students, and the community I am so honored to serve. To my many current and past mentors, your generosity in sharing your knowledge, wisdom, and experience has shaped me in ways I cannot fully express. Without your guidance, I would be lost. Because of you, it seems I'm able to make a small difference in this world, and that's all I've ever hoped to do. Thank you, once again, for this honor.*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Jeremy Barnes, Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary School, Corona-Norco USD
- Colette Burgess, Florida Street Discovery Center, Banning USD
- Andrew Candelaria, Innovative Horizons Charter School, Perris Elementary SD
- Dana Childs-Mazzei, Winchester Elementary School, Hemet USD
- Jon Cole, French Valley Elementary School, Temecula Valley USD
- Corey Crow, Tuscany Hills Elementary School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Daryl Drinkwater, Mountain Shadows Middle School, Nuview Union SD
- Amanda Gonzales, Della S. Lindley Elementary School, Palm Springs USD
- Lucie Gonzalez, Milo P. Johnson Regional Learning Center, Riverside COE
- Darel E. Hansen, Polytechnic High School, Riverside USD
- Jason Marquez, Norte Vista High School, Alvord USD
- Ruby Mejico, Badger Springs Middle School, Moreno Valley USD
- Olivia Mejorado, West Shores High School, Coachella Valley USD
- Jonathan Mitchem, Chester W. Morrison Elementary School, Menifee Union SD
- Jessica Morrow, John F. Kennedy Elementary School, Desert Sands USD
- Pamela Picchiettino, Monte Vista Elementary School, Murrieta Valley USD
- Drew Scherrer, Beaumont High School, Beaumont USD
- Kristine Sherrett, Harvest Valley Elementary School, Romoland Elementary SD
- Debra Sigala, Jurupa Middle School, Jurupa USD
- Steve Simpson, San Jacinto Leadership Academy and San Jacinto Middle College High School, San Jacinto USD
- Corby Warren, Mead Valley Elementary School, Val Verde USD

2025 RIVERSIDE COUNTY TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



Amanda Zonker Riverside STEM Academy RIVERSIDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Amanda Zonker is a dedicated educator who transforms her humanities classroom at Riverside STEM Academy into a place of challenge, creativity, and connection. Blending rigorous academic expectations with genuine care, Amanda empowers her seventh-grade students to think critically, engage in rich discussions, and see themselves as capable scholars and leaders. Her students not only master history and language arts but also develop confidence, resilience, and a deep sense of self-worth. Amanda's leadership extends beyond the classroom through project-based learning initiatives, student-led research, and advocacy for student well-being. Recognized for her impact on both academic achievement and social-emotional growth, Amanda exemplifies the transformative power of education and the profound role teachers play in shaping futures.

Amanda's Message: *Thank you sincerely to everyone who has been a part of recognizing me as a Riverside County Teacher of the Year. The experience has been truly humbling, introspective, and inspiring. Educators have the incredible honor of helping raise up the next generation. I feel so blessed I get to support our students in this way and for the heartwarming affirmations receiving this award has given me. I am grateful and proud to represent Riverside STEM Academy, Riverside Unified School District, and the city of Riverside. We have incredible communities and there is nowhere else I'd prefer to call home! Finally, my greatest thanks goes to my husband Joshua - the STEM to my Humanities, the ying to my yang - he is my best and lifelong collaborator who helps make me better every day and to tangibly live out the growth and values I hope to model to our students. Thank you!*



Amy Torres Indio High School DESERT SANDS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Amy Torres is a dynamic mathematics educator at Indio High School who believes in fostering resilience, collaboration, and confidence in every student. With a philosophy that views mistakes as stepping stones to learning, Amy cultivates a classroom culture where students support one another, embrace challenges, and develop the critical thinking skills needed for lifelong success. Her innovative approach includes real-world problem-solving and leadership development. As an advisor for student organizations and a champion for community engagement, Amy inspires her students to see education as a pathway to empowerment. Her dedication to building a safe, welcoming environment where students thrive both academically and personally reflects the highest ideals of teaching.

Amy's Message: *Thank you for the honor of being named a 2025 Riverside County Teacher of the Year! My heart is overflowing with gratitude, and this recognition truly shines a light on the amazing students of Indio High School – they are the real stars! My biggest joy is helping them believe in themselves and reach for their brightest futures. While their dedication and community spirit through NHS and CSF are fantastic, I've noticed a common hurdle: math confidence. It's my passion to build not just their math skills, but also their self-assurance. Seeing them grow in both areas, tackling challenges head-on and making a positive impact, is incredibly rewarding. This award is a wonderful chance to share their stories of hard work, resilience, and how building confidence in the classroom empowers them in all aspects of their lives. Thank you for celebrating their potential and achievements!*

2025 RIVERSIDE COUNTY TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



Misty McBee Harvest Hill STEAM Academy MENIFEE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

Misty McBee brings creativity, innovation, and heart to her role as a STEAM educator at Harvest Hill STEAM Academy. With more than two decades of teaching experience, Misty is a pioneer in designing hands-on, project-based learning opportunities that integrate science, technology, engineering, art, and math. Her groundbreaking animtronics program empowers students to collaborate, problem-solve, and apply twenty-first-century skills in real-world contexts.

Beyond the classroom, Misty fosters strong community partnerships, leads after-school enrichment programs, and champions student exhibitions of learning that celebrate curiosity and achievement. Her commitment to creating dynamic learning environments inspires students to dream boldly and prepares them to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

Misty's Message: *I am honored and humbled to be selected as a Teacher of the Year by the Riverside County Office of Education. This recognition is a reflection of the incredible support and collaboration I receive from my students, colleagues, and the community of Menifee Union School District. I am incredibly fortunate to work alongside passionate educators who inspire me daily to do my best for our students. To the Riverside County Office of Education and the Menifee Union School District, thank you. Thank you for fostering an environment where educators are empowered to make a difference and students are empowered to make strides toward their limitless futures. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the growth and development of our future leaders. I will continue to strive to support and inspire every student I encounter. Thank you for all you do to support education in our community.*



Robert Mauger Corona High School CORONA-NORCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT 2025 CALIFORNIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Robert "Bob" Mauger brings passion, resilience, and real-world learning to life in his Career Technical Education Automotive Technology classes at Corona High School. Drawing from a career marked by hands-on expertise and a commitment to student growth, Bob creates an environment where students are challenged to develop technical skills, critical thinking, and confidence. His approach emphasizes perseverance, celebrating mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth. Under Bob's guidance, students not only master industry standards but also build the character traits essential for success beyond high school. A strong advocate for Career Technical Education, Bob's impact extends beyond the classroom, inspiring students to envision bright futures in high-demand fields. His dedication to connecting instruction to life skills and career readiness has transformed his program into a model of excellence within the district.

Robert's Message: *I am incredibly honored to be named the 2025 California Teacher of the Year. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Riverside County Office of Education and Dr. Edwin Gomez for their unwavering support, and to State Superintendent Tony Thurmond for this extraordinary recognition. This award is not just a reflection of my efforts, but a celebration of the amazing students I have the privilege to teach every day. Their hard work, passion, and deep commitment to our community have made our CTE Automotive Technology program a true success. I am inspired daily by their determination and drive to grow—not only as skilled technicians but as responsible, community-minded individuals. Thank you to my colleagues, mentors, and everyone who has supported this journey. This honor motivates me to continue pushing boundaries and helping students reach their full potential. I am deeply grateful for this recognition and opportunity.*

2025 RIVERSIDE COUNTY TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 TEACHER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Katelyn Alva, Canyon Springs High School, Moreno Valley USD
- Crystal Barragan, West Valley High School, Hemet USD
- Michael Bernbaum, Valley View High School, Moreno Valley USD
- Mychelle Blandin, Vista Heights Middle School, Moreno Valley USD
- William Bodnar, Rancho Mirage High School, Palm Springs USD
- Erica Campos, Loma Vista Middle School, Alvord USD
- Alexsys Candelario, Nuview Bridge Early College High School, Nuview Union SD
- Aishling Castaneda, Mesa View Elementary School, Romoland Elementary SD
- Socorro Ceja, Toro Canyon Middle School, Coachella Valley USD
- James Curtis, Thompson Middle School, Murrieta Valley USD
- Keenan Curtis, Highland Elementary School, Riverside USD
- Kassandra Dorado, Cahuilla Elementary School, Palm Springs USD
- Julie Drago, Educational Options Center, Riverside COE
- Kristin DuCharme, Donald Graham Elementary School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Jonathan Eichinger, Sunny Sands Elementary School, Palm Springs USD
- Tiffany Star Ferreira, Phillip M. Stokoe Elementary School, Alvord USD
- Melissa Fink, Temescal Canyon High School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Nicole Gray, San Jacinto High School, San Jacinto USD
- Carrie Griffin, Sundance Elementary School, Beaumont USD
- Sara Giuliano, Susan LaVorgna Elementary School, Temecula Valley USD
- Maria Huerta, Hemet Dual Language Academy, Hemet USD
- Ladawn Johnson, Heritage High School, Perris Union High SD
- Jeremy Kavanagh, Erle Stanley Gardner Middle School, Temecula Valley USD
- Matthew Kreps, Desert Mirage High School, Coachella Valley USD
- Jernea Lewis, Avalon Elementary School, Val Verde USD
- Tamara Lindsay, James Monroe Elementary School, Desert Sands USD
- Robert Mauger, Corona High School, Corona-Norco USD
- Misty McBee, Harvest Hill STEAM Academy, Menifee Union SD
- Jennifer McGrath, Landmark Middle School, Moreno Valley USD
- Ronnie Mendoza, Rancho Verde High School, Val Verde USD
- Andrea Michelson, Lakeland Village School, Lake Elsinore USD
- Sherri Moerer, Ina Arbuckle Elementary School, Jurupa USD
- Ashton Moroyoqui, Patriot High School, Jurupa USD
- Lisa Nelson, Twinhill Elementary School, Alvord USD
- Patrick Nevens, Great Oak High School, Temecula Valley USD
- Elizabeth Nicolas, North Mountain Middle School, San Jacinto USD
- Sara Oaks, Louis VanderMolen Fundamental Elementary School, Corona-Norco USD
- Diane Pales, Liberty High School, Perris Union High SD
- Dale "Tim" Palmer, Mira Loma Middle School, Jurupa USD
- Mark Pearson, Hemmerling Elementary School, Banning USD
- Shauna Petersen, Eagle Mountain School, Desert Center USD
- Wendy Quintana, Orange Grove High School, Corona-Norco USD
- Shawna Robinson, Oak Meadows Elementary School, Menifee Union SD
- Lucia Rodriguez, Peter Pendleton Elementary School, Coachella Valley USD
- Anne Rogers, Diamond Valley Middle School, Hemet USD
- Amy Torres, Indio High School, Desert Sands USD
- Jacqueline Truong, Enchanted Hills Elementary School, Perris Elementary SD
- Rebecca Turner, Dr. Bernice Todd Elementary School, Corona-Norco USD
- Gloria Wallace, Palo Verde High School, Palo Verde USD
- Paul Williams, Beaumont High School, Beaumont USD
- Magdalena Zepeda-Selegue, Lincoln High School, Riverside USD
- Amanda Zonker, Riverside STEM Academy, Riverside USD

Riverside County, We Celebrate You.

Thank you for your commitment to education and the community in Riverside County. We're privileged to serve school employees and recognize all that you do to inspire brilliance and help our community thrive.



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Altura is proud to celebrate the Educators of the Year and congratulate our Supervisory Committee Chairman, Marcus Ridley, on being named Classified Administrator of the Year. A well-deserved honor — congratulations to all!

"I am honored to be recognized as Riverside County's 2025 Classified Administrator of the Year. This recognition reflects the heart I put into serving students, supporting employees, and building community—both in our schools and through the mission-driven work of Altura Credit Union. Moments like these remind me that I am exactly where I am meant to be." Marcus A. Ridley



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EDUCATION UPDATE
from the desk of Riverside County
Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Edwin Gomez

RIVERSIDE COUNTY
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