



EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

AWARDS

October 30, 2024
Tulare County Office of Education
Jim Vidak Education Center

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

in partnership with



A Message to the Community

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

Congratulations Excellence in Education winners, finalists, and nominees! You are role models to the children and young adults you serve, and inspirations to everyone around you.

Thank you, Tulare County school districts, for participating in this awards program and for nominating these outstanding individuals.

We extend our appreciation to Educational Employees Credit Union (EECU), its board of directors, and President/CEO Elizabeth Dooley for co-hosting this wonderful breakfast event and for their support of education in Tulare County. EECU is a true partner in education.

Tim A. Hire
Tulare County Superintendent of Schools



We are honored to co-sponsor the Excellence in Education event and we extend our sincere congratulations to this year's nominees, finalists, and winners.

These extraordinary people represent the best of the education profession. We are proud to be part of this event to shine a spotlight on their achievements, talents, and dedication.

Thank you for everything you do to ensure that your students receive a quality education and the best school experience possible.

Elizabeth J. Dooley
President/Chief Executive Officer
Educational Employees Credit Union

Program

Welcome	Tim A. Hire Tulare County Superintendent of Schools
Breakfast	<i>Breakfast generously sponsored by EECU</i>
Tribute to Our Country	Diana Padilla, 11th Grade, El Diamante High School, Visalia <i>National Anthem</i>
Entertainment	Charlie Ray, 5th Grade, Oak Grove Elementary, Visalia singing “I Want It Now” from <i>Willy Wonka KIDS</i> Ruthie Epinoza, 12th Grade, homeschooled and Eleanor Ray, 7th Grade, Ridgeview Middle School, Visalia singing “Adventure Is A Wonderful Thing” from <i>Alice in Wonderland JR</i> Backup singers include Matt Cole, 10th Grade, ERCLC, Abbey Nelson, 9th Grade, homeschooled, Diana Padilla, 11th Grade, El Diamante High School, Visalia, and Zion Sears, 12th Grade, ERCLC
Introductions by the Tulare County Superintendent of Schools	Tim A. Hire
Introduction of Awards Host, Dennis Townsend	Tim A. Hire
Introduction of Past Award Winners	Dennis Townsend, Tulare County Board of Supervisors
Recognition of 2024 Selection Committee	Dennis Townsend
Presentation of Awards, 2024 Nominees & Finalists	Dennis Townsend
Video Introduction of 2024 Award Winners	Dennis Townsend
Presentations to 2024 Award Winners	Dennis Townsend
Closing Remarks	Tim A. Hire

Award Winners



Administrator/Manager of the Year

Alexa Barba-Tepper
Assistant Principal
Redwood High School
Visalia Unified School District



Teacher of the Year

Kristy Caesar
Transitional Kindergarten Teacher
Lincoln Elementary School
Lindsay Unified School District



School Employee of the Year

Lisa Kruger
Administrative Assistant
Linwood Elementary School
Visalia Unified School District

Finalists

Administrator/Manager of the Year Finalists



Evan Halstead
Dinuba Unified School District



Shanelle Herrera
Tulare Joint Union High School District

Teacher of the Year Finalists



Tarek Elsharkawy
Visalia Unified School District



Mary Pauls
Monson-Sultana Joint Union School
District

School Employee of the Year Finalists



Rita Leon
Dinuba Unified School District



Gene Mendes
Tulare County Office of Education

Nominees

Administrator/Manager of the Year Nominees

Oscar Baez, Woodville Union School District

Maria G. Bustos, Earlimart School District

Wendy Corcoran, Monson-Sultana Joint Union School District

Audra Cushing, Tulare City School District

Melissa Delgadillo, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District

Eric Kwong, Pixley Union School District

Conan Palmer, Tulare County Office of Education

Teacher of the Year Nominees

Nicole Borba, Dinuba Unified School District

William Eric Farrenkopf, Tulare City School District

David Hodge, Tulare Joint Union High School District

Xochitl Cristal Montelon-Caceres, Pixley Union School District

Silvia Núñez, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District

Arlene Simoes, Earlimart School District

Chase Yoshida, The Academies Charter Management Organization

School Employee of the Year Nominees

Vicente Acuña, Earlimart School District

Gina Ananian, The Academies Charter Management Organization

Benjamin Bittick, Pixley Union School District

Elizabeth Fonseca, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District

Mari Lopez-Torres, Monson-Sultana Joint Union School District

Lisa M. Lupio, Tulare Joint Union High School District

Stacy Reeves, Lindsay Unified School District

2024 Selection Committee

Nick Anthony, Nick Anthony & Associates

Cheri Barnes, Tulare County Office of Education (retired)

Tammy Bradford, Assistant Superintendent, Tulare County Office of Education

Erin Brooks, Office of the Tulare County Public Defender

Brady Hochhalter, Assistant General Manager, Visalia Rawhide

Kathy Johnston, Tulare County Office of Education (retired)

Leigh Mosconi, Area Director, Special Olympics Northern California

Terri Rufert, Retired Superintendent, Sundale Union School District

Valarie Seita, Librarian, Tulare County Office of Education

Deborah Volosin, Kaweah Health

Greg White, Office of the Tulare County District Attorney

Past Winners

Administrator/
Manager of the Year

Teacher of the Year

School Employee
of the Year

2023 Tammy Bradford
Tulare County Office
of Education

Jennifer Powers
Tulare City Schools

Sonya Lopez
Porterville Unified

2022 Leanne Cerda
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified

Nancy E. Warkentin
Dinuba Unified

Blanca Esparza
Earlimart

2021 Michael Lee Akins
Dinuba Unified

Manuela Silveira
Tulare County Office
of Education

Jeff Lemos
Tulare County Office
of Education

2020 Philip Pierschbacher
Tulare City Schools

Stacy Trapletti
Tulare City Schools

Micaela Macareno
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified

2019 Clare Gist, Ed.D.
Tulare City Schools

Tabby Grabowski, Ed.D.
Tulare Joint Union High

Taurie Thayer
Tulare County Office
of Education

2024 Excellence in Education Awards

Administrator/
Manager of the Year

Teacher of the Year

School Employee
of the Year

2018 **Eloysa Segura**
Tulare City Schools

Susan Ang
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified

Jose Juan Juarez
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified
Bobby Richardson
Tulare Joint Union High

2017 **John Pendleton**
Tulare City Schools

Kathleen Jarvis
Tulare City Schools

Naomi Schuler
Porterville Unified

2016 **Luis Cobarruvias**
Tulare Joint Union High

Stephen Amundson
Tulare Joint Union High

Erik Gonzales
Lindsay Unified

2015 **Leticia Treviño**
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified

Christopher Cumiford
Visalia Unified

Evelia Alvarez
Porterville Unified
(Nominated by
Exeter Unified)

2014 **John Snavelly, Ed.D.**
Porterville Unified

Anne Clifford
Tulare County
Office of Education

Ruben Alvarez
Porterville Unified

2013 **Luis Castellanoz**
Tulare City Schools

Susan Burley
Tulare City Schools

Gail Inman
Porterville Unified

2012 **Brian Hollingshead**
Tulare City Schools

James Kusserow
Porterville Unified

Cherí Barnes
Tulare County
Office of Education

2011 **Sue Ann Hillman**
Tulare City Schools

Richard Lambie
Porterville Unified

Teresa Sharley
Tulare City Schools

2010 **Brent Calvin**
College of the Sequoias

Katryn Gonzales
Lindsay Unified

Pete Renteria
Exeter Public Schools

2009 **Dave Tonini**
Visalia Unified

Michael Young
Tulare Joint Union High

Letty Magallan
Farmersville Unified

2008 **Howard Berger**
Tulare Joint Union High

Rebecca Bullick
Visalia Unified

Jennie Daniels
Tulare Joint Union High

2007 **Katherine Johnson**
Porterville Unified

Rick Pence
Tulare City Schools

Maria Hinojosa
Woodlake Union
Elementary

Celebrating Those Who Make a Difference in Our Schools

Administrator/
Manager of the Year

Teacher of the Year

School Employee
of the Year

2006 Manuel R. Lucero
Dinuba Unified

Susan Mathews
Visalia Unified

Silvia Thomas
College of the Sequoias

2005 Rick Mitchell
Tulare County
Office of Education

Jeff Cozad
Porterville Unified

Glenna Haley
Tulare City Schools

2004 Robert “Bob” Perez
Porterville Unified

Nancy Machado
Tulare City Schools

Belen Gomez
Woodlake Union
Elementary

2003 Senaida Garcia
Tulare County
Office of Education

Martha Karjala
Exeter Union Elementary

Martha Flores
Porterville Unified

2002 Don Mierau
Dinuba Unified

Mary Cairns
Exeter Union High

Linda Milligan
Strathmore Union High

2001 Carlyn Lambert
Visalia Unified

Terri Fishbough
Oak Valley Union

Janie Elson
Lindsay Unified

2000 Dr. Don Goodyear
College of the Sequoias

James Kliegl
Lindsay Unified

Bill Hall
Tulare City Schools

1999 James Henderson
Tulare City Schools

Cheryl Schellenberg
Dinuba Unified

Arlene Ramirez
Tulare County
Office of Education

1998 Roger Trujillo
Dinuba Elementary

Kathleen Williams
Dinuba Elementary

Shirley Holguin
Tulare Joint Union High

1997 John Beck
Tulare City Schools

Bob Doyle
Dinuba Joint Union High

Elaine Webb
College of the Sequoias

1996 Ken Bryan
Tulare Joint Union High

Mary Jo Lichty
Strathmore Union High/
Tulare County
Office of Education

Vicki Howes
Exeter Union High

1995 Renée Whitson
Exeter Public Schools

Mark Rupe
Dinuba Elementary

Mary Howe
Alta Vista School
District

About the Artist



Clement Renzi, creator of the sculpture given to the Excellence in Education winners, passed away in 2009. Mr. Renzi was a native Visalian who resided in Fresno. He graduated from Visalia High School and attended College of the Sequoias, the University of California (Berkeley) and art schools in Berkeley, New York, London, and Vienna. Mr. Renzi was commissioned by the Educational Employees Credit Union to create the sculpture, Graduation Day, which now stands in front of the Tulare County Office of Education building. This morning, nominees, finalists and winners receive a limited-edition print of Graduation Day. In addition, each award winner is presented with a small, bronze sculpture, The Graduate, created by the famous artist.



“Graduation Day”
by Clement Renzi

Describing Clement Renzi’s work, Joyce Aiken, Professor Emeritus of Art at California State University, Fresno wrote: “Renzi was a major factor in the renaissance of public art in this area.” He will be remembered through his sculptures which can be seen at the Visalia Convention Center, Kaweah Health Medical Center, on Fresno’s Fulton Mall, the Fresno County Public Library, Courthouse Park, Selland Arena, Chaffee Zoological Gardens, Fresno City College, CSU Fresno, St. Agnes Medical Center, St. Anthony of Padua Church, Shrine of St. Therese, and public and corporate buildings around the Central Valley, including a sculpture at the Kings County Office of Education.

Acknowledgements

TULARE COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

TIM A. HIRE

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Marlene Moreno, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
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Nayirah Dosu, Communications Specialist
Jennifer Fisher, Administrative Secretary

Tulare County Board of Education

Joe Enea, President
Debby Holguin, Vice President
Judy Coble · Tom Link · Celia Maldonado-Arroyo
Chris Reed · Tony Rodriguez

Cohosted by: **EECU**

ELIZABETH J. DOOLEY
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ADDITIONAL THANKS

Dennis Townsend, Awards Host
2024 Excellence in Education Awards Selection Committee
Annabel Prindle, Community Relations Officer, and
Nicole Franzen, Marketing Coordinator, EECU
Tulare County Office of Education staff members Craig Alameda,
Therese Arnold, Vanessa Cantu, Nicholas Carrillo, Kathleen Green-Martins,
Brook Killingsworth, Jeff Lemos, Kelley Petty, Freddy Reyes, Juan Sánchez,
and Paula Terrill

Roy Dressel Photography

Video by Conan Palmer of the TCOE Planetarium & Science Center and
Bethany Rader, Director, TCOE Theatre Company

Ruiz Catering · Christine's Flowers · Awards and Signs

Floral table arrangements are given to winners, finalists, and nominees



EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

A W A R D S

Celebrating Those Who *Make a Difference* in Our Schools