Congratulations to the 2023-24 San Diego County Teachers of the Year and all the district nominees

Christina Bass
Painted Rock Elementary
Escondido Union School District

Courtney Coffin
Orange Glen High School
Escondido Union High School District

Amanda Ford
Flying Hills School of the Arts
Cajon Valley Union School District

Wendy Threatt
Felcita Elementary School
Escondido Union School District

Melanie Villanueva
District Office
Sweetwater Union High School District
(formerly at Hilltop Middle School)

“Cox Presents: Salute to Teachers,” brought to you by San Diego County Credit Union, in partnership with the San Diego County Office of Education and Cox Communications.

SaluteToTeachersSD.com
For 33 years, Cox Communications and the San Diego County Office of Education have teamed up for “Cox Presents: Salute to Teachers” as a way to showcase the region’s 23,000 public school teachers and give the community a way to say, “Thank you, teachers!”

On Friday, Aug. 25, a special reception and show were held in downtown San Diego for the 44 San Diego County Teacher of the Year nominees. At the end of the night, five local educators were announced as the 2023-24 San Diego County Teachers of the Year. “Cox Presents: Salute to Teachers” brought to you by San Diego County Credit Union featured heartwarming moments from the local education community, and shifted the spotlight on San Diego County’s public school teachers.

Since the inception of “Cox Presents: Salute to Teachers” in 1991, more than 1,000 teachers have been nominated, 140 teachers were named a County Teacher of the Year, 16 became California Teacher of the Year, and one was honored as National Teacher of the Year (Sandy McBrayer received the honor in 1994 for her work in establishing a school for homeless youth in downtown San Diego, known today as the Monarch School). Additionally, three San Diego County teachers went on to be named one of the four finalists for National Teacher of the Year:

2005: Stan Murphy from San Diego High School in the San Diego Unified School District
2009: “Rappin’ Mathematician” Alex Kajitani from Mission Middle School in the Escondido Union School District
2017: Special education teacher Megan Gross from Del Norte High School in the Poway School District

For a full list of this year’s San Diego County Teacher of the Year nominees, turn to the inside page.

A Community Says “THANK YOU”

Throughout my time as teacher of the year, there were many memorable moments that stood out to me. First, being able to bring my dad along with me to these once in-a-lifetime experiences meant the world to me. And for me, out of all of the events, throwing the first pitch at the Padres game with my family and friends watching is truly a moment that will stay with me forever.”
– Aimee McCoy
Mesa Verde Middle School, Poway Unified School District

“In the past year, I’ve experienced countless moments of gratitude and joy. One of my fondest memories was walking in the Holiday Bowl Parade and being humbled as the crowd went wild for teachers! The community pride for educators was tangible as pom poms waved and families cheered! It was a collective thank you to the remarkable teachers across our county.”
– Stephanie Cluxton
Torrey Hills School, Del Mar Union School District

“My year as a County TOY was not defined by one singular memory but rather by a soundtrack message that played in the background as I navigated the unique circumstances of each teaching day: “These efforts for my students, my colleagues, and greater school community matter. Keep going.”
– Melissa Rains
Castle Park Middle School, Sweetwater Union High School District

For a full list of this year’s San Diego County Teacher of the Year nominees, turn to the inside page.

Tune in to the “Cox Presents: Salute to Teachers” 30-minute television special in October with highlights from the evening and stories on the new County Teachers of the Year.

SaluteToTeachersSD.com
San Diego County Teachers of the Year

Amanda Ford

Flying Hill School of the Arts

Caylee Valley School District

Amanda is a third grade teacher who has taught for 18 years. Amanda believes that the best teachers are those who are patient, passionate, and genuine. She instills teamwork, confidence, and a sense of positivity in her students. Amanda's greatest accomplishment is being a part of the discovery process where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities. She is a role model for anyone interested in creating a welcoming classroom environment.

Christina Bass

Orange Glen High School

San Juan Capistrano Three Silvers School District

Christina is a third grade teacher who has taught for 20 years. She has a passion for teaching and is committed to connecting students with a functional communication method and partnering with families. Christina's greatest accomplishment is being a part of the discovery process where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities. She is a role model for anyone interested in creating a welcoming classroom environment.

Courtney Coffin

Flora Vista Elementary

San Diego Unified School District

Courtney is a third grade teacher who has taught for 13 years. She has a passion for teaching and is committed to connecting students with a functional communication method and partnering with families. Courtney is a role model for anyone interested in creating a welcoming classroom environment.

Melanie Villanueva

Orange Glen High School

San Juan Capistrano Three Silvers School District

Melanie is a teacher who has taught for 10 years. She has a passion for teaching and is committed to connecting students with a functional communication method and partnering with families. Melanie is a role model for anyone interested in creating a welcoming classroom environment.

Congratulations to all the nominees!
We are thrilled to once again recognize our local educators with the 33rd annual “Cox Presents: Salute to Teachers,” brought to you by San Diego County Credit Union.

Every day, our teachers play the lead role in helping students overcome academic barriers, feel safe and welcome, and succeed. Together with counselors, school social workers, and support staff, they are focusing on student health and wellness to ensure students – and their families - have everything they need and deserve.

We recognize the challenges teachers face each day and admire them for persevering and continuing to shine. Teachers: thank you for all you do for our students, and the communities we all call home.

“Cox Presents: Salute to Teachers” is an opportunity to spotlight all teachers, recognizing those selected by their districts as teachers of the year, and to announce the five 2023-24 San Diego County Teachers of the Year who will go on to represent our region in the California Teacher of the Year program.

The new San Diego County teachers of the year were announced during a special reception and show on Friday, Aug. 25. Highlights of the evening will air as part of a “Cox Presents: Salute to Teachers” 30-minute television special in early October on YurView (Channel 4 on Cox and Spectrum).

As a company founded by a teacher, Cox Communications is proud of its 33-year partnership with the San Diego County Office of Education to “Salute” our local teachers.

We also couldn’t do it without the support of all our show’s sponsors, who share our commitment to education and join us in supporting our local teachers. They include returning title sponsor San Diego County Credit Union, Murray Lampert, Procopio, Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Meritage Wine Market, Oggi’s, The San Diego Union-Tribune, The Mightier 1090 and KPBS.

Thank you for joining us in celebrating our local teachers.