

INNOVATIVE SPIRIT VISION AWARDS 2023

The recipients were selected based on the following criteria:

- Actively takes risks to seek and implement change by considering different perspectives to improve the educational setting
- Participates in collaborative relationships which promote or support a dynamic environment for learning
- Consistently creates projects that exceed conventional standards
- Inspires enthusiasm for change and risk taking

ANDERSON ELEMENTARY

Cindy Bosworth – Kinder/1st Grade SDC Teacher

Cindy has been an active collaborator and cheerleader for the Kindergarten team as long as I have been here - and even before that, I am certain. She is always putting students' needs first and finds new and creative ways to engage her new students. She doesn't miss a beat when faced with a new challenge; she just finds a new way to teach an old trick. She is inspiring and supportive and an asset to our team.

BALDWIN ELEMENTARY

Carleen Wallace – TK Teacher

It is an honor to recommend Carleen Wallace for the Innovative Spirit Award. Carleen has been instrumental in moving Baldwin's practice of Writer's Workshop forward. She is collaborative and promotes different perspectives that consistently drive and move our instructional practices in the right direction. She has been a long-standing member of our Leadership Team and PBIS Team. As such, she has modeled and inspired enthusiasm for change and risk taking. She has helped lead the way for our school to earn the Platinum PBIS Award. Carleen is a support not only to her kinder peers but to our whole school. She is a leader of our night and evening events such as Literacy Night and STEAM Night which promote community and team building. She is also co-leading our Saturday Academies. Baldwin is honored to have her as an instrumental part of our team.

BERNAL INTERMEDIATE

Lina Sar – Science Teacher

Lina Sar is an exceptional educator. She sets up all of her classes to be a community of learners. They demonstrate working independently and collaboratively with their peers. Engagement is always evident any time you walk into her classroom. Routines and procedures are consistent from period to period. Her students know that she holds them all to high standards regardless of readiness level. Lina uses inclusive language and practices to ensure equitable access to the curriculum for all her students.

Lina is the epitome of a team player. She collaborates with her department weekly if not daily. That is in addition to monthly PLCs and department meetings. She is always reflecting and designing effective and relevant lessons, including making improvements. She believes in sharing ideas with her department and accepting others' ideas and lessons.

Lina addresses her students as scholars and integrates college and career goals, mantra, and strategies throughout her classroom.

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CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL

Karin Vieira – English Language Teacher Partner

Karin has worked hard in this past year to help bring change by helping others develop having a different perspective through her Anti-Bias Work Professional Development series. This work has allowed multiple perspectives to be seen that ultimately took staff to go on a journey of trust and a practice of risk taking that has benefited all students.

In her role as ELTP and SEAL Demo Site Coach, Karin is adept at creating collaborative relationships to support dynamic, language-rich environments through strategies and pedagogy that directly support the needs of all learners and most intentionally the needs of Multilingual Learners.

In addition, Karin, along with her site leadership team, is continuing to engage the staff at Christopher in Anti-Bias and Anti-Racist teaching and learning. This work supports creating a welcoming and affirming community where all students are seen and celebrated. Karin, and the team at Christopher, created the learning sequence modeling SEAL strategies integrated with adult learning theory. Karin, and the team, carefully and intentionally planned the professional development sessions while recognizing they were taking a risk as the content can be sensitive in light of the varying degrees of comfort with this work. As a result, this work is being scaled for District Leadership.

Karin's leadership and enthusiasm for equity in all of her endeavors make her an excellent candidate for the Innovative Spirit Vision Award.

DEL ROBLE SCHOOL

Laura Briones – 5th Grade TWBI Teacher

Maestra Briones collaborates with her colleagues to provide students with wonderful opportunities that are innovative and go beyond the standards. She provides rigorous instruction that helps students take risks and attempt new dynamic representations of their learning.

Sandra Lopez – 1st Grade TWBI Teacher

Maestra Lopez collaborates with her colleagues all the time and provides creative insight to bring wonderful opportunities that are innovative and go beyond the standards. She provides lessons that help students take risks and attempt new dynamic representations of their learning through dance and music.

EDENVALE ELEMENTARY

Laura Alvarez – 5th/6th Grade Bilingual Teacher

Mrs. Alvarez goes above and beyond for the students at Edenvale. This year she has helped the whole upper grade team with ideas for new field trips, applied for grants to help pay for those field trips and organized how to fundraise when needed. Laura thinks outside the box when creating projects/assignments for her students and helps them connect the relevance to what they are learning. Edenvale is so lucky to have Mrs. Alvarez!

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Debbie Rothacher – Administrative Secretary

Debbie's insights on improving systems for efficiency has been instrumental in making changes to the curriculum ordering, distribution, and inventory process that occurs between the central office and school sites. She uses a design process lens to come up with ideas to streamline communication and get teachers instructional materials they need quickly. Working with CIA administrators, warehouse and printshop staff and Ed Tech, Debbie collaborates to develop online tools that support the ordering process and manage inventory. She is a valuable member of the team!

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FROST ELEMENTARY

Pedro Guerra – 5th/6th Grade Teacher

Mr. Guerra is such an asset to Frost in particular and OGSD in general. His classroom is not just about learning facts, but also about discovering who you are as a person and where you fit in this world. He brings his unique perspective to class and frees students to bring their unique perspectives. He provides numerous hands on projects that build lifelong connections to content taught. He builds lifelong bonds with students and helps them to respect one another as well. Mr. Guerra is flexible and willing to try new tools and strategies to promote growth for all of his students. Lastly, he collaborates well with other teachers, particular our other 5th grade combo to support all student learning.

HERMAN INTERMEDIATE AND ADVENTURE PROGRAM

Christine Lovejoy – Band Teacher

Christine consistently creates projects that exceed conventional standards and encourages active engagement among her students. She inspires them to take risks and stretch their knowledge to improve their musical talents. She has led her classes to win several awards and her students are always happy and motivated. She is always trying new strategies to support all levels of musical talent and she is well respected for her innovations by parents, students and staff.

Megan Wells – Language Arts Teacher

Megan actively takes risks to see and implement change by considering different perspectives to improve the educational setting. She is an activist and supporter of our LGBTQAI+ students and inspires enthusiasm for change on our campus. She engages students in deep conversations around this topic and encourages them to speak up against hate speech and injustices. She is well respected for her innovative approach to tough topics by students and staff.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Veronica Navarro – HR Technician and Return to Work Specialist

Veronica, has been employed with Oak Grove School District since 1/2/2019 as an Administrative Secretary. During that time Veronica was responsible for the Absence Tracking System, Frontline, and also was responsible for Employee Industrial Accident reporting/tracking. Veronica, left for a short period (3 months), then returned to the position of Human Resources Tech & Return to Work Spec. During Veronica's tenure she implemented new systems, created several Google Docs in order to maintain current and relevant data, has created systems to streamline the Substitute Teacher process, created spreadsheets for collecting and accurately tracking critical information. Veronica, who is one of the most important persons at the District Office and from the moment she starts her day, makes it her priority to assure the school sites have a substitute teacher and sub classified workers ready to greet all students.

One of the most appreciated attributes Veronica possesses is her calm and patient demeanor. She is always ready to answer questions on the phone with her kind patient voice, always has a warm sunny smile, and always welcomes all guests that visit HR with an inviting spirit. The District and Human Resources was very lucky when Veronica returned to work for OGSD after leaving us for three months. It was as if Veronica never left. She hit the ground running and knew exactly what the HR dept and school sites needed before the first day of school. Because of Veronica's dedicated work efforts and teamwork all of our school sites were staffed with a long-term roving sub. I can go on and on about the great work and how lucky the District is to have such a dedicated worker, miraculous and exemplary employee that Veronica is.

It is with great honor that I, and on behalf of the HR Family, nominate Veronica to receive the Innovative Spirit Vision Award.

LEDESMA ELEMENTARY

Olivia Harms – Parent and HSC Board Member

Olivia has a collaborative spirit which shines through in numerous ways at Ledesma. She is an amazing champion for our Art Vista program as well our monthly art club. She is a valued HSC board member and regularly seeks to initiate or strengthen programs or ideas that will benefit the Ledesma school community such as school beautification efforts, community events and schoolwide challenges that support our students.

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OAK RIDGE ELEMENTARY

Shannon Rose – Speech and Language Pathologist

Shannon is a leader amongst the SLPs within the District. She works collaboratively with the SLPs to discuss, share expertise, and problem solve with her colleagues to improve upon practices SLPs utilize to support their students. Shannon is also constantly seeking ways to improve systems within her department so that there is consistency across the District. Furthermore, she mentors new SLPs in the District and is always willing to be of support not only for other SLPs, but teachers and support staff at Oak Ridge.

Shannon has been instrumental in building a strong speech and language therapy team. She has worked collaboratively with our HR department to create pathways for the District to hire Clinical Fellows who are on their path to becoming fully credentialed speech therapists. She works collaboratively with nearby universities to bring in these Clinical Fellows. Shannon also demonstrated strong and compassionate leadership by providing supports to all our current speech therapists.

Shannon is innovative and always thinking outside of the box to bring professional development to our speech team.

SAKAMOTO ELEMENTARY

Krista Warner – 4th Grade Teacher

Krista is an AMAZING teacher that has avidly demonstrated an Innovative Spirit to support all students. Last year, Krista worked with Support Staff to develop support plans for her students. She collaborated with stakeholders to ensure that the plans would be rigorous and implemented with high-fidelity. Ms. Warner's classroom instruction is also a great source of innovation. Her classroom projects challenged students to think critically and use technology in pioneering ways. With such high levels of innovation, Ms. Warner is the perfect candidate for this award.

STEAM AT STIPE ELEMENTARY

Mariceña Hernandez – Kinder/1st Grade Teacher

Mariceña has begun to teach Maker Mindsets to her Kindergarten students and present them with design challenges that allow them to explore, design, create, revise, test, improve, and test again. She collaborates with our STEAM Coach in order to continue to develop her instructional practices related to STEAM learning.

Laurie Loforti – 3rd Grade Teacher

Laurie works in partnership with our STEAM Coach to learn and implement new practices related to STEAM in our Makerspace. She has demonstrated a willingness to take risks and challenge her students to develop Maker Mindsets.

TAYLOR ELEMENTARY

Daniel McDonald – 5th/6th Grade Teacher

Mr. Daniel McDonald is known for his passion for teaching and unwavering commitment to his students' success. He has a classroom that is a haven for learning. Mr. McDonald believes in continuous improvement and knows that the key to becoming an even better teacher lies in the power of constructive feedback.

But his quest for feedback continued. Mr. McDonald is also an active member of the school's student council and PTA. He believes that students should have a voice in shaping their educational experience and is determined to be a part of that change. During student council meetings, he listens attentively to students' suggestions, whether about improving school events, enhancing the learning environment, or introducing new programs.

Mr. McDonald is also a mentor teacher for the induction program. He is currently mentoring a new 5th-grade teacher at Taylor. He supports this teacher to become a better educator for her class and the school.

Mr. McDonald's story serves as a potent reminder that, in pursuing excellence, it's essential to remain open to new ideas, encourage feedback, and be a catalyst for positive change. His students and colleagues admire him for his dedication to their growth.