

EXEMPLARY STAFF VISION AWARDS - August 2023

The recipients were selected for their work in 2022-2023 based on the following criteria:

- Develops, seeks out and attends or facilitates ongoing professional development programs that reflect current research and exemplary practices, and successfully implements new learnings, and serves as a model or coach for others
- Aggressively recruits quality staff who are committed to excellence and able to meet the diverse needs of students and community
- Consistently seeks feedback about job performance; engages in peer coaching activities and training that supports reflection and self/peer evaluation; develops support systems to enhance professional understanding and continuous improvement; reflects and critically uses feedback for improvement
- Is an exemplary model of the District Core Values

ANDERSON ELEMENTARY

Erika Alvarez – School Psychologist

For someone so new to our District, Erika has made tremendous contributions to the success of our Anderson SPED Team. Erika's focus on students and their needs is second to none. She is willing to challenge current thought processes, try new things, engage in reflective conversations and pushes herself outside her comfort zone. Erika has worked very closely with her mentor and advocates for what is best for Anderson Students. Anderson is so fortunate to have her on our team.

Sheryl-Ann Ganitano – 1st/2nd Grade Teacher

Sheryl has been integral in helping our school grow and support all of our students. Her keen knowledge of, and focus on, data and systems has been a huge support to our Leadership Team, of which she has been a member for the last four years. She is open to ideas and suggestions, shares insight, is eager to try new things and is always reflective and willing to challenge current practices to grow our school. Fellow teachers, students, and parents adore her; she is an asset to Anderson and we are so lucky to have her.

BALDWIN ELEMENTARY

Marites Marcelo – Occupational Therapist

It is an honor to recommend Marites Marcelo for the Exemplary Staff Vision Award. Marites is an integral part of our Baldwin Support Staff team. Marites is always willing to jump in and support in a moment's notice. She continually engages in professional development and seeks out new training and ideas to better our students' OT experience. She is reflective in her practices and continually advocates for the needs of her students. She is an exemplary model of the Districts Core Values and it is an honor to have her as part of our Baldwin Team.

Michelle Otero – 1st Grade Teacher

It is an honor to recognize Michelle Otero for the Exemplary Staff Vision Award. Michelle has gone above and beyond to step up and provide Baldwin Teachers Writer's Workshop training. She has opened up her practice to support teachers learning and implementing Writer's Workshop. Michelle is reflective on her work and continually seeks feedback on the professional development that she has facilitated to support meeting the teachers' needs. She is an exemplary model of the Districts Core Values and it is an honor to have her as part of our Baldwin Team.

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BERNAL INTERMEDIATE

Andrea Fennern – Band/Concert/Science Teacher

Andrea Fennern teaches Band, Concert, and Science. She consistently collaborates with her Science department, her colors TEAM, and her PLC. She also provides lessons after school to 6th graders who are interested in joining Band in 7th grade. Andrea develops relationships with both students and parents; she recruited parents to help chaperone on a field trip to Six Flags Discovery Kingdom during a competition.

Andrea seeks feedback from her colleagues, counselors, and administrators. She opened her classroom for observations with Partners in School Innovation's multilingual learners shadowing protocol. During the observations, Andrea exemplified the facilitation of student collaboration, academic language output, student voice and choice, and providing descriptive feedback on student work.

She volunteers to help with supervision outside of her regular yard duty. She also volunteers going above and beyond her assigned adjunct duty because she genuinely wants to keep students safe and to lend a hand to the office staff during school events while she has young children of her own. She makes time. Andrea does a fine job of work-life balance. No matter the challenges she faces, she keeps her head up, maintains a positive attitude, and is one of the most professional employees we have ever worked with.

CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL

Maribel Fong – 2nd Grade Teacher

Christopher School is honored to nominate Maribel Fong for the vision award. Maribel's dedication to her students extends beyond academics. She serves as a mentor and a role model, offering guidance and support not only in the classroom but also in the personal lives of her students. She creates a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels seen, heard, and valued.

In recognition of her remarkable qualities, we honor Maribel Fong for her unwavering dedication, her exceptional creativity, and her unwavering passion for pushing her students to excellence. She serves as an inspiration to both her colleagues and her students, reminding us of the transformative power of an educator who combines creativity, passion, and unwavering dedication to empower the minds of tomorrow.

Xochil Garcia – 2nd Grade Teacher

It is with great pleasure and admiration that Christopher School nominates Xochil Garcia for the vision award. Xochil's tireless efforts, unwavering dedication, and remarkable commitment to her students have set a shining example for educators everywhere.

As a hard worker, Xochil consistently goes above and beyond, investing countless hours to ensure that her students receive the best education possible. Her unwavering dedication is evident in her meticulous lesson planning, creative teaching methods, and continuous pursuit of professional development.

But what truly sets Xochil apart is her unwavering support and selflessness. She places her students at the forefront of everything she does, going the extra mile to understand their individual needs, challenges, and aspirations. Xochil creates a nurturing and inclusive classroom environment where every student feels valued and supported.

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DAVIS INTERMEDIATE

Jennie Moody – School Psychologist

Jennie Moody has served as our Davis School Psychologist and we are proud to nominate her for the Exemplary Staff Vision Award. Jennie shows dedication and warmth in her daily work with students, parents, and staff. She is a key member of our Davis School Support Staff and contributes positively. She is solution-oriented and always has a strength-based approach when working with colleagues, families, and students. She is an asset for the extra care and knowledge she brings to our Davis team. Through challenges, she is able to complete her responsibilities with a smile. We appreciate all that she embodies and models as a school psychologist.

Kristie Morikawa – ELA Teacher

Kristie Morikawa is an exemplary Davis teacher. One only needs to step into her classroom to see how much she embodies the core values of the District and the school. Her classroom is engaging and culturally relevant. She provides a welcoming environment conducive to all learners. What else does Kristie do for Davis? She also opens her classroom up at lunch for students to have a safe and fun space to enjoy. She has helped to cofacilitate a GSA club, Lunch Bunch, and co-coordinated a "Warm Closet" for students to pick out donated warm coats. She has helped to run after-school Migrant Ed support and a schoolwide Homework center/tutorial. This on top of being a member of our District DEIB committee, a student teacher mentor, and coaching our girls' softball team. She does all of this with a calm and cool demeanor and a warm smile. We are so fortunate to have Kristie on our team and we are proud to honor her as an Exemplary Staff Vision Awardee for 2023.

EDENVALE ELEMENTARY

Bao-Tran Nguyen – RSP Teacher

Bao-Tran is such an asset to Edenvale! She is an absolute joy to work with. Bao-Tran is on top of her caseload and manages all IEPs with the utmost professionalism. She includes families in the decision making during IEP meetings and is in constant communication with them. Edenvale is so very lucky to have Bao-Tran.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Katherine McMurry – English Language Teacher Partner

Katherine is an avid learner with a goal of improving her practice as a coach and teacher leader across various content areas. She has taken online training regarding best practices for English Learners, she is a coach for Elevate Math, and has taken extensive NGSS Professional Development as well. She played a critical role in supporting the NGSS pilot process in the last two years. She is currently on the Math Pilot Committee and provided Math Language Routine PD at one of this year's District Curriculum Team Meetings. Additionally, Katherine supports the District with Guided Reading Training. In 23 -24 Katherine will continue her learning regarding Dual Language Pedagogy to best support Dual Language teachers at SEAL Unit Development Days. Katherine's passion for equity and inclusivity for all students is at the heart of all her endeavors.

Gaylan Nickle – District Licensed Vocational Nurse

Gaylan, our District Licensed Vocational Nurse, worked tirelessly to support diabetic students. She handled all of the COVID parent letters for the 22-23 school year. Gaylan also cross-trained and supported diabetic students at sites other than those assigned to her to help the District.

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Shannon Penrose – Administrative Assistant, Special Education

Shannon has been instrumental in facilitating clear, ongoing communication between the special education department and wider special education staff. She supports the formatting and distribution of special education quick sheets to staff and administrators, which helps keep everyone informed on important information. She was a huge organizer of the first OGSD Special Education Institute which provided engaging training opportunities for classified and certificated support staff around important topics such as compliance, behavior support and trauma informed practices to support students. Additionally, Shannon is critical in managing quality staff for one of our most vulnerable student populations in the District. She stays on top of the steady flow of contracts, PAFs, invoicing and other administrative needs that helps support necessary staffing who are committed to excellence and able to meet the diverse needs of our special education population.

HAYES ELEMENTARY

Katlynn Baalke – 3rd Grade Teacher

Katlynn is an exceptional educator. She understands the importance of building solid relationships with her students and her students' families. She also values the importance of Social Emotional Learning as the foundation for academic success. Katlynn is a collaborative teammate with her grade level colleagues and also a supportive thought partner for all Hayes Staff. She is a risk taker and innovative in her approach to teaching. Hayes is proud to honor Katlynn as an exemplary staff member at Hayes Elementary.

HERMAN INTERMEDIATE AND THE ADVENTURE PROGRAM

Najat Alnajjar – Instructional Assistant

Najat is an exemplary model of the District Core Values; Respect, Integrity, Inclusivity, Positive Interdependence, Student Learning and Quality Performance. She always has a positive attitude and a smile on her face, even in difficult situations. She always shows respect to staff, students and parents and can be counted on to tell the truth. She is accepting of all people and works to build strong relationships. She is a team player and works well with everyone! She goes above and beyond to support students and teachers to promote learning in both general and special education classes. She is true asset to have on the Herman staff!

Matt Scoppettone – Elective and World History Teacher

Matt is an exemplary model of the District Core Values; Respect, Integrity; Positive Interdependence, Inclusivity, Student Learning and Quality Performance. Not only does Matt model these values, but he teaches them to his students. He always engages in respectful interactions even in tense situations. He can be counted on to do the right thing and be supportive of his colleagues. High academic performance is important to Matt as evidenced by his high expectations for student behavior and learning. He has been a pillar that supports the new staff at Herman.

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INDIGO PROGRAM

Amanda Bishop – Math/Science/Electives Middle School Teacher

Ms. Bishop is an incredible teacher who cares deeply about her students. She creates learning opportunities for all students. It ranges the spectrum of universal supports from visual supports, guided inquiry, and high interest lessons and hands-on experiences, to more individualized support for individual students. She leads the middle school at Indigo taking on tasks such as working with parents to plan and organize electives, facilitating graduation presentations, and supporting student council. Ms. Bishop is a deep thinker about teaching and learning, leading her team through the PLC process, despite the many changes that occurred in her team throughout the year. She reflects on and analyzes student behavior, interests, and student work to adapt and build on her teaching repertoire. Ms. Bishop not only inspires those she works with, but she inspires students and parents as well. So much so that in one film-making elective, they've chosen to make a documentary about her! Although, she might not fully see it in herself, she is an incredible model of the District Core Values.

Diana Krygier – Occupational Therapist

Ms. Diana is an incredible asset to the Indigo/Oak Grove team. She exemplifies an asset-oriented approach to teaching and collaboration. Her empathetic and positive communication style makes students and parents alike feel at ease in her presence, which is especially important as they are often navigating the sensitive waters of Special Education. Diana is constantly reflecting on both her teaching practice as well as how to be more inclusive of parents throughout the Special Ed process. She cares deeply for the whole-child and that is reflected in how she interacts with students. She is fully present with them and really tries to understand what's going on with them so that she can adjust to their day-to-day needs and advocate for their overall and long-term needs. Diana is a bright light on our campus that brings energy and joy wherever she goes. Diana is an exemplary model of the District Core Values.

LEDESMA ELEMENTARY

Michelle Crocker – 4th/5th Grade Teacher

Michelle Crocker is an emerging teacher leader at Ledesma and, in her short time here, she has made an incredibly positive impact on our school community. Ms. Crocker has sought out and implemented a variety of professional development opportunities such as differentiated instruction and restorative practices and is an extremely reflective practitioner. She goes above and beyond for her students and families, and is quickly emerging as a respected leader among her peers and colleagues. We are extremely lucky to have Michelle Crocker as one of our valued, exemplary team members!

OAK RIDGE ELEMENTARY

Sandy Sanchez – RSP Teacher

Sandy is always seeking ways to improve her practice. As a lifelong learner, Sandy spends her time researching best practices to support her students who have learning challenges and finds strategies to support all types of learners. Furthermore, she engages in any professional development that will deepen her knowledge around students with learning disabilities. Sandy is very thoughtful in creating IEP goals for her students and seeks shared input in creating the goals. She is also willing to support teachers with strategies to support students in the classroom and is a wealth of knowledge for all. She participates in PLC collaboration time to understand the work that her students should be able to do and tailors that to meet their needs when working with her in small groups. This year, she also mentored an induction teacher and truly prepared this candidate for their role as a resource specialist. Sandy truly embraces the District Core Values as she is always student-centered.

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PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY

Kimloan Tran – Kindergarten Teacher

I would like to nominate Kimloan Tran for the Exemplary Staff Award. As an experienced teacher and a beacon of positivity, Kimloan has made an indelible impact on the lives of her students, colleagues, and the entire school community. Her unwavering dedication, patience, and genuine care for others has consistently shone through, making her an exceptional candidate for this recognition.

Kimloan's commitment to her students' growth and well-being is truly commendable. She not only imparts knowledge but also goes above and beyond to ensure that each student reaches their true potential. Her nurturing approach and the support she provides to her students creates an environment where learners feel valued and motivated to excel.

One of Kimloan's most outstanding qualities is her ability to remain calm and composed, even in the face of challenges. Her infectious smile and positive attitude have a remarkable impact on her colleagues and students alike. She has an uncanny ability to uplift others and create a sense of camaraderie within the school community.

A standout characteristic of Kimloan is her consistent pursuit of feedback and professional growth. She actively engages in peer coaching activities and embraces various training opportunities to enhance her teaching skills continuously. By fostering an environment of reflection and self/peer evaluation, she not only improves her own practice but also inspires others to do the same.

SAKAMOTO ELEMENTARY

Kari Priest – RSP Teacher

Kari Priest is an exemplary teacher and team member. As a leader at Sakamoto, Kari is a lead learner, pushing beyond the typical limitations of teachers in her position. She skillfully creates learning plans that target her students' needs. In teaching her students, she works first to learn about her students, building relationships with them. She parses out the various components of the content she teaches, and almost musically engages students in reading and solving math problems. Students find themselves nurtured and loved, and not to mention open and apt to learning about topics that once brought them so much fear and frustration. Orchestrating this medley might suffice for recognition, Kari leads amongst her peers as both the SPED liaison and a member of the ILT team. She models learning and continuous self-improvement. Not to mention, an exemplary model of our District Core Values.

SANTA TERESA ELEMENTARY

Stacey Ramos – 5th/6th Grade Teacher

Stacey Ramos is an educator that is committed to equity and quality instruction at Santa Teresa Elementary. She is a member of both the DEIB and Ethnic Studies Committees, and has taken what she has learned and applied it to her teaching practice, helping to further develop student belonging and voice in her classroom. Stacey thoughtfully creates and delivers rigorous lessons that challenge her students to be their absolute best selves. Her commitment to working with colleagues to share her ideas has built capacity in others. Stacey Ramos is a worthy candidate for the Exemplary Staff Vision Award.

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SANTA TERESA ELEMENTARY

Larissa Vallejo – 5th Grade Teacher

Larissa Vallejo is an outstanding educator that is constantly seeking ways to improve the instructional programs and practices at Santa Teresa Elementary. She has participated in many professional development opportunities over the years, including being an active member of the Leadership Team and running a successful Multicultural Club. She has been a key contributor to refining ST's PLC process, and is committed to leading the charge for continuous improvement. Larissa always delivers a thoughtful and comprehensive instructional program and is particularly adept at providing Tier 1 and 2 supports for students below standard. Mrs. Larissa Vallejo is a worthy candidate for the Exemplary Staff Vision Award.

STEAM AT STIPE

Michelle Link – STEAM Coach

As the needs of our students are changing and the educational landscape is progressing, the educational system must adapt to the evolving demands and environment. Ms. Link has been a critical component of STEAM@Stipe's ability to respond to our students' academic and socio-emotional needs. Ms. Link successfully supports teachers in delivering engaging instruction to our students, rooted in changing mindsets of problem-solving and collegial discourse. Equally, Ms. Link has developed and facilitated processes to ensure all students have the appropriate individual accommodations to achieve academic and socio-emotional success. She has been a wonderful and constructive thought partner to our support staff and principal, always centering discussions on what is best for our students. Her tireless work effort and empathy for our students are exemplary and appreciated.

TAYLOR ELEMENTARY

Marcy Nagatani – 3rd Grade Teacher

Ms. Marcy Nagatani possesses an uncanny ability to connect with her students on a deep level. She sees beyond their academic capabilities and understands the unique challenges they face. She believes that education is not confined to textbooks alone but extends to fostering character, empathy, and resilience.

Ms. Nagatani is not just an exceptional educator but also a lifelong learner. She continuously seeks out new teaching methodologies, attends professional development workshops, and collaborates with her colleagues to enhance her pedagogical skills. She believes that a teacher should always strive to grow and evolve, inspiring her students to do the same.

As a mentor teacher, Ms. Nagatani creates a welcoming and supportive environment for her student teachers. She recognized their unique strengths, interests, and aspirations, tailoring her guidance to suit their individual needs. She fosters an open and trusting relationship, where her mentees feel comfortable seeking advice, asking questions, and sharing their concerns.

Ms. Nagatani's mentorship is beyond classroom instruction. She exposes her student teachers to the intricacies of the profession, providing them with opportunities to observe her teaching methods, co-teach lessons, and gradually take on more responsibilities. She encourages them to experiment, innovate, and develop their own teaching styles while providing constructive feedback and guidance along the way.