San Bernardino County **School Boards Association**

together with

San Bernardino County
Superintendent of Schools

are proud to sponsor the

2023
SPRING AWARDS

a celebration of excellence for

Education Medal of Honor and Distinguished Service Award Recipients

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY EDUCATION MEDAL OF HONOR

Distinguished Service Award

April 24, 2023

San Bernardino County **School Boards Association**

Spring Meeting Agenda

April 24, 2023 | 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Student entertainment provided by
Luna Beltran, Student, Chaffey High School
Chaffey Joint Union High School District

President's Video Message	Mary Sandoval, SBCSBA President *Board Member* *Fontana Unified School District*
Call to Order	Dr. Stephanie Houston, SBCSBA Treasurer *Trustee, San Bernardino Community College District*
Presentation of Colors	San Gorgonio High School Spartan Color Guard under the command of Major Knutson *San Bernardino City Unified School District*
National Anthem	Luna Beltran, Student *Chaffey Joint Union High School District*
Pledge of Allegiance	Laura A. Mancha SBCSBA Executive Committee Member *Trustee Area C and Vice President* *San Bernardino County Board of Education*
Words of Inspiration Video	San Bernardino County Student Voice
Dinner Announcements	Dennis Mobley, Governance Consultant *San Bernardino County* *Superintendent of Schools*

2023 Education Medal of Honor and Distinguished Service Awards

Recognition of Recipients	Ted Alejandre, County Superintendent *San Bernardino County* *Superintendent of Schools* Dr. Stephanie Houston





San Bernardino County

Education Medal of Honor

2023 Award Recipients

Volunteer in Action
Community Volunteer
Jackie Lawson
Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District

Volunteer in Action
Service Group
Music Changing Lives
East Valley Communities

Partners in Education
Small Business or Franchise
Alverson Family Daycare
Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District

Partners in Education
Corporation or Government Agency
CalPortland Company
High Desert Communities

Excellence in Education
Education Professional
Dr. Lisa Lamb
San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools

Excellence in Education
Student Alumni
Dr. Rhea McIver Gibbs
Rialto Unified School District

San Bernardino County

Distinguished Service Award

2023 Recipients

Dr. Ronald J. Powell
Retired CEO of the California Association of
Health and Education Linked Professionals
Apple Valley Unified School District

Dr. Sandra Rodriguez
Assistant Superintendent, Student Services
San Bernardino City Unified School District



San Bernardino County

Education Medal of Honor

2023 Award Recipients

The Education Medal of Honor program annually recognizes individuals and groups who give outstanding service and support to public education within San Bernardino County. Five of the six categories underscore the contributions, commitment and dedication of community and business supporters of public schools. One category is for an education professional. There were 32 individuals and organizations nominated this year. Six designees received the San Bernardino County Education Medal of Honor.

San Bernardino County
Education Medal of Honor
2023 Award Recipients



Jackie Lawson

Volunteer in Action
Community Volunteer

Following her retirement as a yard duty aide at Competitive Edge Charter Academy, Lawson continues to serve the students, teachers and community. She is an integral part of the school family, and her presence is an inspiration.

Bright and early each school day, Lawson is either helping teachers prepare or ensuring the administrative office runs smoothly. She finds the most joy in leading third grade reading groups. These students look forward to their reading time with "Ms. Jackie." Within these groups, her commitment to education and students is evident.

Lawson has made a tremendous impact at Competitive Edge Charter Academy. Students, teachers and staff enjoy working with her and learning from her kindness and wisdom. Her willingness to help and support anyone who asks has undoubtedly had a positive influence on campus and with the students. "Mrs. Lawson commits her time to our staff and students which is a testament to her belief in our education system and everyone involved in it," shared Joe Mead, Principal of Competitive Edge Charter Academy.

Lawson's dedication to the Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District has remained even through her retirement, where she continues to commit her spare time to service and education. Her dedication to Competitive Edge Charter Academy and its students and staff is the purest expression of volunteerism and service.

"Jackie's commitment to students and teachers and her willingness to give her time so openly to support others is an inspiration for our entire Competitive Edge Charter Academy family. We feel so fortunate to have her on our campus," shared Mead.

San Bernardino County
Education Medal of Honor
2023 Award Recipients



Music Changing Lives

Volunteer in Action
Service Group

Music Changing Lives, a non-profit organization founded by Chief Executive Officer Josiah Bruny, is the recipient of the 2023 Education Medal of Honor, Volunteer in Action/Service Group.

The mission of Music Changing Lives is to empower minority and at-promise students in underserved communities through high-quality music and art enrichment programs. Music Changing Lives is a rapidly growing after-school program in the Inland Empire. The organization provides students a safe space to work on homework, receive tutoring and learn the power of self-expression through various art mediums.

In addition to music and art, Music Changing Lives recently partnered with the Inland Empire Health Plan and Inland Empire Resource Conservation District to teach students about agricultural business and how to reduce their carbon footprint.

One judge commented, "I am impressed with an after-school program that not only helps students with their homework but continues the fine arts. I am even more astounded by the farm-to-table concept of teaching students about agriculture and the benefit of spending time outside."

Bruny's vision to change students' lives through music, art, civic engagement, environmental education and financial literacy has undoubtedly come to fruition as today's youth begin to step into roles of leadership and influence. Music Changing Lives is proving to be a game changer for the youth of the Inland Empire, and as a result, more and more students are learning how to make a difference in the world by utilizing their talents, unique perspectives and voices.

San Bernardino County
Education Medal of Honor
2023 Award Recipients



Alverson Family Daycare

Partners in Education
Small Business or Franchise

Valley Elementary's Dean of Students, Chris Rekstad, nominated Alverson Family Daycare for this award, highlighting the facility and owner Dawn Alverson's long-lasting impact on young children in the Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District.

"In her home daycare center, she creates awareness for education by having her students come to our schools prepared for the beginning of their education. They have been shown how to properly socialize in small groups so that when they get with others in the classroom and on the playground, they have a good background of how this works from her leadership," said Chris Rekstad.

Mrs. Alverson began her career as a daycare business owner at the young age of 19. More than 30 years after accepting her first student, she continues to care for and educate the young minds of children all over the Yucaipa-Calimesa area. Alverson not only cares for children in her community, but also welcomes her own grandchildren to her daycare center. Alverson says she considers each and every student as a member of her own family.

"When they know they have that security [from you], it makes you feel like you're the best thing in the world. It's wonderful. Those hugs can melt away anything," said Dawn Alverson.

More than three decades after opening her home to children, Alverson says she couldn't see spending her life any other way. "Anything that we can do to help build a better community, we try and do," said Alverson.

San Bernardino County
Education Medal of Honor
2023 Award Recipients



CalPortland Company

Partners in Education
Corporation or Government Agency

CalPortland, the largest building materials company producing cement and construction material products in the western United States, is the recipient of the 2023 Education Medal of Honor, Partners in Education/Corporation or Government Agency.

With operations out of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, several Canadian provinces and San Bernardino County, CalPortland uses their industry expertise to educate and inspire students interested in a career in STEM. Employees at CalPortland's flagship cement plant in Oro Grande have made it a mission to actively participate in their community by supporting local schools.

"The Oro Grande cement plant has been supporting education through the Oro Grande Foundation since the 1960s, which CalPortland has continued to support since acquiring the plant in 2015. As the area has grown, the foundation has concentrated on scholarships for deserving graduates in local high schools. In the past 10 years alone, the foundation has given out $364,000 in student scholarships to local public high school students for both academic and vocational pursuits," said CalPortland's Environmental Manager, Catalina Elias.

CalPortland's Oro Grande plant has partnered with school districts in the High Desert including Snowline Joint Unified, Apple Valley Unified and Barstow Unified. While the company welcomes students and schools to visit their Oro Grande plant, during the pandemic they also offered teachers educational activity kits. Students were able to make concrete with the kits, giving them a hands-on experience on how cement is made at their plant.

"The partnerships CalPortland has developed with the communities in which we work, live and play, reflects an important part of who we are," said Elias.

San Bernardino County
Education Medal of Honor
2023 Award Recipients



Dr. Lisa Lamb

Excellence in Education
Education Professional

Dr. Lisa Lamb is being recognized for her leadership, commitment and contributions to students throughout San Bernardino County.

She has dedicated more than 25 years to education. Dr. Lamb started her career as a middle school teacher in the Barstow Unified School District before taking on new challenges in administration, eventually leading her to her current role as President/CEO of the Lewis Center for Educational Research. Under her direction, the non-profit has earned national recognition for its charter schools and programs in San Bernardino County.

"Her love for education, particularly at the TK-12 level, is unparalleled," said The Lewis Center for Educational Research's Public Relations and Marketing Coordinator, Jisela Corona-Gonzalez. "Lisa provides opportunities for children and youth to develop skills and knowledge that will benefit them throughout their lives, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status."

Dr. Lamb has made it her mission to create and maintain strong collaborations with community members and organizations such as NASA/JPL, Mexican Space Agency, the Taiwanese Delegation and Apple Valley Center for Innovation (AVCI). Her dedication to bridging communities to provide students with access to STEM education is evident as she creates avenues for incredible partnerships. This helps foster exploration and interest in an industry students may not have had access to otherwise.

"I've always worked with underserved students," said Dr. Lamb. "I feel that when students have opportunity, the whole world opens up to them and there's no better way to do that than through education."

San Bernardino County
Education Medal of Honor
2023 Award Recipients



Dr. Rhea McIver Gibbs

Excellence in Education
Student Alumni

A product of the Rialto Unified School District (RUSD), Dr. McIver Gibbs has established roots within the community she loves and serves. She successfully built a 29 year career with RUSD, and now effects change as the district's Lead Strategic Agent.

Her passion-driven leadership spurred the development and implementation of the University of Southern California (USC) Reading and Literacy Added Authorization program. As a result of this program, 129 RUSD teachers received their certification from USC in Reading and Literacy Added Authorization. She also leads RUSD's Customer C.A.R.E. (Communication, Appreciation, Responsiveness and Environment), a customer service campaign, and the Body, Soul, and Spirit management evaluation system, a new management assessment model.

In partnership with California State University, San Bernardino, Dr. McIver Gibbs worked to implement the Rialto Project Impact. The goal of this program is to promote the recruitment, employment and retention of minority male teachers in the classroom.

She is also involved with a number of community organizations, some of which include: National Alliance of Black School Educators; University of California, Los Angeles Alumni Association; University of Redlands Alumni Association; Inland Empire Alliance of Black School Educators and the Association of California School Administrators.

Dr. McIver Gibbs' impact transcends the roles she fulfills on paper as she continues to build a legacy grounded in her innate ability to be compassionate, inspirational, innovative and service-oriented. One judge commented that Dr. McIver Gibbs is a "recognized leader in education equity and inspiring teachers through mentoring and professional development."



San Bernardino County

Distinguished Service Award

2023 Recipients

The San Bernardino County School Boards Association and the San Bernardino County Committee on School District Organization created the Distinguished Service Award program to celebrate exceptional service sustained over many years by an individual. The award recognizes significant leadership and outstanding contributions to education in San Bernardino County. Additional partners in the awards program are the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools and Fifth District PTA.

San Bernardino County
Distinguished Service Award
2023 Recipient



Dr. Ronald J. Powell

Retired CEO of the California Association of Health and Education Linked Professionals
Apple Valley Unified School District

Dr. Ronald J. Powell is an exceptional leader and has been a significant contributor to public education in San Bernardino County.

With over 40 years of district and county experience, Dr. Powell retired as the Chief Executive Officer of the California Association of Health and Education Linked Professions (CAHELP), a Joint Powers Authority.

As CEO of the CAHELP JPA, he was the Administrator of the Desert/Mountain Special Education Local Plan Area, the Desert/Mountain Charter SELPA, and the Desert/Mountain Children's Center, a community-based mental health clinic serving over 8,000 children from birth to 22 years of age annually.

According to Apple Valley Unified School District Superintendent, Trenae Nelson, Dr. Powell is a leading educational expert in trauma informed instruction. Under his leadership, the Desert/Mountain Children's Center adopted the mission, "the relentless pursuit of whatever works in the life of a child." She asserts this is evident in everything he dedicates his time and energy to, even in retirement.

"His knowledge of the impact of trauma to the learning process in our youngest students, inspires change to systems in support of learning…he has been instrumental in supporting the high desert districts in developing wellness frameworks and supporting our work on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support," shared Nelson.

Nelson documented how Dr. Powell has improved the quality of education in San Bernardino County and beyond by training public educators to understand and adapt instruction to support the child who has experienced trauma.

Nelson stated, "Dr. Powell models what taking risks to improve educational opportunities for students is, and we follow his leadership by taking risks to do whatever it takes to support our students' wellness as a conduit to learning in the Apple Valley Unified School District."

San Bernardino County

Distinguished Service Award

2023 Recipient



Dr. Sandra Rodriguez

Assistant Superintendent, Student Services
San Bernardino City Unified School District

With 24 years of service to her San Bernardino community, Dr. Sandra Rodriguez has an extraordinary commitment to improving student achievement.

At San Bernardino City Unified, she has served as teacher, vice principal, principal, director, assistant superintendent, and most recently, an administrator-in-charge.

In 2022, in collaboration with the Loma Linda Community Health Education Workers and the Community Action Partnership, over 15,000 food boxes and 40,000 diapers were distributed to families in need because of her actions. She collaborated with local providers to ensure that full wrap-around services were made available. Nearly 85 percent of the recipients were children under 18 years of age and 99 percent were below the poverty line.

Dr. Rodriguez also created Operation Student Recovery 1000 (OSR 1000), a carefully crafted student attendance recovery plan, which deploys district personnel to over 1,000 homes of chronically absent students in one day.

This annual "all hands on deck" approach has consistently yielded a thousand chronically absent students returning to school on the same or the next day.

Other hallmarks of her efforts include leading the COVID-19 response for the district and re-opening schools, designing "corner classrooms" for students during distance learning, creating and overseeing the TK12 Virtual Academy and expanding before and after school programming to all campuses.

According to Secondary Multilingual Director, Tex Acosta of San Bernardino City Unified School District, Dr. Rodriguez has inspired and educated countless students and community members about the benefits of serving in the community she has grown up in. Her skills as a teacher, principal and assistant superintendent have enabled her to organize and motivate individuals to have a lasting effect on our community and the surrounding region.

Thank you!

We thank the nominators for their effort in recognizing and spotlighting individuals/organizations who are making positive contributions in educating our youth in San Bernardino County. We also thank this year's judging panels for their time and effort assessing the competitive nomination entries.

Mission Statement

The mission of the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools is to transform lives through education.

Working in collaboration with school districts, families, our community partners and other agencies, we provide leadership, advocacy and services to ensure equitable, innovative and inspiring educational practices. This endeavor is essential to the quality of life and economic vitality of our communities.

Click on the link to view event photos
https://bit.ly/3KjwTDZ
or scan the QR code.

Photos will be available in 48 hours.

Transforming lives through education

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