San Bernardino County **School Boards Association**
together with the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools

2021 Spring Awards

a celebration of excellence for
Education Medal of Honor and Distinguished Service Award Recipients



Distinguished Service Award

Souvenir Program
April 26, 2021

San Bernardino County **School Boards Association**

Spring Meeting Agenda

April 26, 2021 | 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Entertainment provided by
The Chordettes, Sultana High School, Hesperia Unified School District

Call to Order	Mary Sandoval, SBCSBA President *Board Member, Fontana Unified School District*
Pledge of Allegiance	Yermo School *Silver Valley Unified School District*
Presentation of Colors	Army Corps JROTC *Oak Hills High School, Hesperia Unified School District*
National Anthem	Select Choral Ensemble *Oak Hills High School, Hesperia Unified School District*
Words of Inspiration	James O'Neil, SBCSBA Area E Director *Board Member, Redlands Unified School District*
SBCSBA President's Report	Mary Sandoval, SBCSBA President *Board Member, Fontana Unified School District*
CSBA Director's Report	Karen Gray, CSBA Region 16 Director *Board Member, Silver Valley Unified School District*
County Superintendent's Report	Ted Alejandre *San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools*

2021 Education Medal of Honor and Distinguished Service Awards

Recognition of Recipients	Mary Sandoval and Ted Alejandre

San Bernardino County

Education Medal of Honor

2021 Award Recipients

Volunteer in Action/Community Volunteer

Sourin Vanhnarath

Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District

Volunteer in Action/Service Group

Ronald C. Heredia, Ed.D.

San Bernardino City Unified School District

Partners in Education/Small Business or Franchise

Tessa Schutz

Mountain Desert Career Pathways JPA

Partners in Education/Corporation or Government Agency

Stephen Tyrrell

Mountain Desert Career Pathways JPA

Excellence in Education/Education Professional

Treg Painter

San Bernardino City Unified School District

Excellence in Education/Student Alumni

Tiffany Hampton

Colton Joint Unified School District

San Bernardino County

Distinguished Service Award

2021 Recipients

Edgar Montes

Board Member

Rialto Unified School District

Chuck Christie, Ph.D.

Board Member (Retired)

Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District



San Bernardino County

Education Medal of Honor

2021 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 a notable educator. Twenty-three individuals and organizations were nominated this year. Six designees receive the San Bernardino County Education Medal of Honor.

San Bernardino County

Education Medal of Honor

2021 Award Recipients

Volunteer in Action/Community Volunteer

Sourin Vanhnarath



For his efforts in helping Valley Elementary School in the Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District transform the school's unsightly landscape into a community treasure, Sourin Vanhnarath is the 2021 recipient of the Education Medal of Honor, Volunteer in Action/Community Volunteer.

Vanhnarath is an assistant manager for The Home Depot, who knows how doers get more done. While dropping off his child at school, Vanhnarath noticed faculty members working on a portion of the school's landscape and asked Principal Miller about the plans for the area.

According to Miller, who nominated Vanhnarath, the barren patch of dirt was slated to be a shared community garden to provide students with hands on experience on the science and benefits of cultivating plants. She explained the problem was that with little to no funding the project was dependent on voluntary donations from the community.

The conversation planted a seed that grew into a partnership courtesy of a Community Impact Grant program through The Home Depot Foundation. The program offers grant awards to non-profit organizations to complete landscaping or construction projects.

With guidance from Vanhnarath, Principal Miller was able to secure over $30,000 in grants from The Home Depot Foundation.

Since then, Vanhnarath has devoted countless hours and expertise to Valley Elementary staff, students and parent volunteers as they have collectively worked to create a beautiful space for students and the community.

Judges recognized Vanhnarath's eagerness and steadfast dedication to help his community and named him a worthy recipient of the award.

San Bernardino County

Education Medal of Honor

2021 Award Recipients

Volunteer in Action/Service Group

Ronald C. Heredia, Ed.D.



For his passion and commitment to lifting up students in the Inland Empire region through the work of the Inland Empire Future Leaders Program, Dr. Ronald Heredia is recognized as the recipient of the Education Medal of Honor Volunteer in Action/Service Group award.

The Inland Empire covers San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. As chairman of the Board of Directors of the Inland Empire Future Leaders Program, Dr. Ronald C. Heredia knows the vast amount of student potential located across the region.

Years ago, as a student in the Colton Joint Unified School District, he was selected to attend the Inland Empire Future Leaders Program annual conference. The event ignited his passion for servant leadership and empowerment.

The program provides promising 9th and 10th grade students with access to intensive workshops and activities designed to inspire self-confidence, academic success and crucial lifelong leadership skills.

With the guiding principles of familia, pride, and leadership, the Inland Empire Future Leaders Program works to empower local youth to strive for great things.

Since its inception in 1984, over 4,500 students, the majority from San Bernardino County, have gone through the leadership training program.

Post-participation surveys of these students reveal that 99 percent of program participants graduate high school and 90 percent go on to higher education. Inland Empire Future Leaders Program has always been, and continues to be, a 100 percent volunteer program.

Heredia was nominated for the award by Dr. Tom M. Rivera on behalf of San Bernardino City Unified School District.

San Bernardino County
Education Medal of Honor
2021 Award Recipients

Partners in Education/Small Business or Franchise

Tessa Schutz



Tessa Schutz's willingness to assist the High Desert region economically, educationally and culturally made her a stand out for an Education Medal of Honor in the category of Partners in Education/Small Business or Franchise.

Schutz, in partnership with Mountain Desert Career Pathways Joint Powers Authority, assists with bridging the skills gap between education and business to build a sustainable culture of high-quality local talent ready to enter the workforce.

Through her broadcasting and media production company, Kranbox, Schutz is tuned-in to her community and diligently works to strengthen connections between local educators and students.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Schultz was able to offer work-based learning to High Desert students through a virtual internship program.

Local students looking to explore a career in broadcasting and media were given the opportunity to participate in a number of media production roles to broaden their skill sets and develop important interpersonal skills.

Those students continue to receive support and guidance today from Schutz and her team.

By providing growth opportunities to students and cultivating lasting relationships, Schutz is helping transform the High Desert's economic landscape and preparing students to be successful within the 21st century workforce.

Schultz was nominated by Jessica Swift, a K-12 pathway coordinator and curriculum specialist. Swift stated, "As a local high school graduate, community member, and business owner Tessa is the ultimate definition of a partner in education."

San Bernardino County

Education Medal of Honor

2021 Award Recipients

Partners in Education/Corporation or Government Agency

Stephen Tyrrell



For his ongoing transformative work in the region and with students, Stephen Tyrrell has earned the Education Medal of Honor, Partners in Education/Corporation or Government Agency.

Tyrrell makes good use of his experience in manufacturing as maintenance manager at Mitsubishi Cement Corporation in Lucerne Valley. His position has allowed him to forge active and lasting connections between K-14 students and industry partners.

Aligning students' talents with local industry needs is the driving force behind Tyrrell's expansive collaborative work with the Mountain Desert Economic Partnership.

In Stephen Tyrrell's eyes, successful career pathways are built on strong foundations. For more than five years, he has had an incredible impact upon career pathway alignment at both the K-12 and community college level across the High Desert.

As the chair for the High Desert Manufacturer's Council, he regularly brings industries, K-14 education, government, and community partners together to discuss training needs and ways to close skills gaps.

Nominator and Director of the Mountain Desert Career Pathways Matt Wells said, "His drive to foster these connections and tighten alignment for the benefit of local students seeking significant career options is clear. By giving local industry a pool of highly qualified and competitive talent, we can help provide our region a viable and thriving economy."

According to Wells, a key facet of this work is that Tyrrell links with area high schools to create pre-apprenticeship opportunities so students can transition smoothly from the K-12 system to postsecondary training before ultimately securing significant careers.

San Bernardino County
Education Medal of Honor
2021 Award Recipients

Excellence in Education/Education Professional

Treg Painter



Known among his colleagues as an innovative, empathetic and passionate educational leader, Treg Painter is the 2021 Education Medal of Honor, Excellence in Education/Education Professional award recipient.

As a math teacher at Curtis Middle School in the San Bernardino City Unified School District, Painter's strong desire to improve student learning thoroughly embodies the motto of his district—make hope happen.

He has built a positive classroom environment with 100 percent participation through distance learning. He has leveraged classroom technology to keep students engaged and nearly doubled the pass rate on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress in math.

Many of his colleagues agree that Treg cultivates a positive classroom environment. His dedication to supporting his fellow teachers is a crucial part of his educational philosophy.

"We are so lucky to have this passionate and committed teacher in our ranks, and I am excited to see what he decides to do next," said program specialist Morgan Pellettera.

Painter serves as the mathematics department chair, administrative designee, teacher induction program mentor and demonstration teacher.

He also participates in Noyce Fellowship Project, a partnership with California State University, San Bernardino. The fellowship project is designed for math and science undergraduate students to ensure that they are prepared for the classroom environment.

Painter has the technical knowledge and expertise to use data as a tool to improve instructional delivery to elevate equitable student outcomes. He uses these tools to collaboratively design and lead high-performing education systems within the district.

San Bernardino County

Education Medal of Honor

2021 Award Recipients

Excellence in Education/Student Alumni

Tiffany Hampton



Dedicated to ensuring equitable learning opportunities for students and fostering a positive campus and district culture are just some of the many reasons Tiffany Hampton is a recipient of the 2021 Education Medal of Honor, Excellence in Education/Student Alumni.

Hampton believes in the success of all students and consistently lets them know she cares as principal of Slover Mountain High School in the Colton Joint Unified School District, the district she graduated from nearly 20 years ago.

In her role as principal, she promotes success with expectations for student achievement and attendance. Hampton has adeptly used technology to continue as many normal activities as possible to keep her students engaged.

Hampton instills a sense of pride in her students for attending a continuation school. This helps students overcome obstacles and has led to positive results with increased graduation rates.

Inclusivity is a focus of her leadership compass and she is active with campus and district initiatives to champion equity for all students. She leads the African American Parent Advisory Committee, Black Community Coalition and has organized numerous activities and events that promote diversity.

Tiffany Hampton was recently honored with the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Region 12 Continuation/Educational Options Administrator of the Year.

“She truly cares about them and it shows in all she does,” said Colton Superintendent Dr. Frank Miranda in his nomination. “I truly believe she is an exemplary role model.”



San Bernardino County

Distinguished Service Award

2021 Recipients

The San Bernardino County Schools 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 public 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

2021 Recipient

Board Member for Rialto Unified School District

Edgar Montes



Galvanizing educators and community members to expand educational opportunities for both students and parents is why Edgar Montes is being recognized with the 2021 Distinguished Service Award.

Advocating on behalf of children comes naturally to Montes, vice president of the Rialto Unified School District Board of Education. He tirelessly seeks to transform education through parent advocacy and community engagement. Montes is a lifelong Inland Empire small business owner and philanthropist.

He was first elected to the Rialto Board of Education in 2010. He was the youngest Mexican-American school board member elected to a Rialto School Board seat.

The election in 2010 was pivotal for another reason. Taxpayers approved Measure Y, a $98 million bond with overwhelming support for improving school infrastructure. Among other projects, bond provided the long overdue construction funds for the Ronnie Lott Stadium and a new performing arts center at Eisenhower High School.

Montes supports parental advocacy efforts and was instrumental in developing the annual Parent Summit which is now in its 12th year. The Parent Summit focuses on equity and access for all students. He also led efforts to develop the Parent Institute, a centralized hub that provides resources, classes, strategies and information to empower parents and caregivers in Rialto Unified to effectively supplement instruction at home.

His advocacy also includes his proposal to improve outcomes for students with special needs through the Mindful Movement Sensory Center. This special space includes sensory activities and play stations that highlight inclusion opportunities for all students.

Montes has strong ties to his indigenous roots and shares cultural and traditional practices through dance. He established the Danza Azteca program to instill a sense of identity, belonging and pride for students from different ethnicities and backgrounds. He volunteers and financially supports cultural activities that enrich the community through authentic Aztec customs.

“The program is driven by its inclusivity and strong community values,” said Syedi Jafri, Communication/Media Services director in her nomination of Montes. “Mr. Montes is compassionate, selfless and magnanimous.”

According to Jafri, he has vastly improved the educational landscape at Rialto Unified during his tenure on the Board of Education. Montes embodies a community-driven spirit through his generosity and advocacy on behalf of students and families that will continue for years to come.

San Bernardino County

Distinguished Service Award

2021 Recipient

Board Member (Retired) for Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District

Chuck Christie, Ph.D.



Chuck Christie, Ph.D., has dedicated over 50 years of extraordinary service to public education. It is his lifetime of dedicated service that makes him a worthy recipient of the 2021 Distinguished Service Award.

Dr. Christie began his career at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) as a professor of public administration. He would go on to develop the public administration program during his 36-year tenure at the university.

While at CSUSB, he served four years as a trustee of the San Bernardino City Unified School District Board of Education. When Dr. Christie relocated to the Yucaipa area, he would go on to be elected to three, four-year terms on the School Board for Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District.

Dr. Christie also served 22 years on the San Bernardino County Committee for School District Organization. He held leadership positions on the committee for 10 years where he was instrumental in guiding the Committee through territory transfers, redistricting efforts and implementing the California Voting Rights Act which prompted election method changes from at-large to trustee areas.

“He was absolutely dedicated to supporting all of the communities in our county and going above and beyond to give his time, effort and valuable expertise to supporting the goals we have in our large county,” said Ted Alejandre. “I was fortunate to have an incredible professor in Dr. Christie who provided all of his students with detailed and focused instruction.”

Yucaipa-Calimesa school board president Mike Snellings said, “My personal experience with Dr. Christie painted him as a man with high integrity, unwavering character, and a true dedication to students and the education community. He served as a role model for me when I became a new board member, and I will forever treasure his kind spirit and insightful dialogue.”

During his 12 years on the Yucaipa-Calimesa school board he created and led initiatives such as implementing the International Baccalaureate program in the district. He also was instrumental in creating the Family Learning Center to support parents and families as well as the Linked Learning Academies to enhance learning using technology.

Dr. Christie was sought after for his expertise and served on the San Bernardino County School Boards Association as a member of the Executive Committee and on the California School Board Association’s Delegate Assembly.

Dr. Christie’s impact on public education has been immense and far-reaching and generations of students will carry his legacy of service into the future.

Thank you!

Mission Statement

The mission of San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools is to transform lives through education. Working in collaboration with school districts, other agencies, families and our community partners, we provide leadership, advocacy and services to ensure innovative, inspiring educational practices. This endeavor is essential to the quality of life and economic vitality of our communities.

Transforming lives through education

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