

## **EXEMPLARY STAFF VISION AWARDS - August 2024**

The recipients were selected for their work in 2023-2024 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**

#### ***Kathie Jussen – SDC 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher***

Kathie is an amazing SDC teacher. She serves the needs of her students individually, structures her classroom in such a way that each and every student is supported at their appropriate level, and she collaborates with her team, the school psychologist and her principal. The students in Ms. Jussen's class are very lucky to have her!

#### ***Marilu Ornelas de Padilla – Food Service Worker I***

Marilu is an incredible bundle of joy! Her enthusiasm is contagious! She is truly focused and committed to serving the students in Oak Grove. She seeks out every opportunity to improve her knowledge and skillsets, knowing that this directly improves her performance and positively impacts student/customer service. Marilu attends every professional development opportunity offered her whether it be CPR/First Aid training, Food Safety and Allergy Awareness, Culinary/Knife skills, etc. She is always eager to engage in learning something new and exciting, always modeling the CORE VALUES of the District.

### **BALDWIN ELEMENTARY**

#### ***Emma Hernandez – Lead Custodian***

It is an honor to recommend Emma Hernandez for the Exemplary Staff Award. Emma is dedicated to her work and to keeping Baldwin clean and well-functioning. She is eager to please and often goes above and beyond. She takes pride in her work and models this for others. She has begun training other custodians and is an exemplary model of the Oak Grove School District's Core Values. We are so blessed to have her as a part of our Baldwin Family.

#### ***Jorge Robledo – Night Custodian***

It is an honor to recommend Jorge Robledo for the Exemplary Staff Award. Jorge is dedicated to maintaining a clean and well-functioning campus. He is eager to jump in and lend a hand and often goes above and beyond his job responsibilities. Jorge takes pride in his work and models this for others. He has begun training other custodians and is an exemplary model of the Oak Grove School District's Core Values. We are so blessed to have him as a part of our Baldwin Family.

## **BERNAL INTERMEDIATE**

### ***Tara Brown – School Counselor***

Tara is currently working on her administrative credential and received a scholarship from Partners in School Innovation. She is also the Lead Counselor for the District and mentors the other counselors on systems, practices, and protocols. She is always looking for ways to support students academically and social-emotionally. Tara participates in Bernal's classroom walkthroughs which supports our continuous improvement plan around rigor and relevance. She serves on our AVID site team to ensure our underserved students have the opportunity to apply for college. She is instrumental in gathering student voices so that they have input in school-wide decision-making.

### ***Sandy Varney – History Teacher***

Sandy has excellent organizational and classroom management skills. She excels in her relational capacity to connect with her students. Her lessons are engaging and she adjusts quickly to meet students' needs because she has keen observational skills. She promotes student choice in their activities and product so that they can display their knowledge. She is a superb communicator with students, staff, and parents. She is willing to go above and beyond to make students feel welcome and help them to be prepared for learning. Sandy holds high expectations for all of her students. Her classroom practices and procedures provide students the routines that help them thrive.

## **BUSINESS SERVICES**

### ***Annie Badar – Purchasing and Financial Technician***

Annie consistently demonstrates exceptional professionalism, a strong work ethic and a collaborative spirit. Annie's commitment to excellence, coupled with her integrity and passion for her work makes her a true asset to our team and a perfect candidate for this award.

### ***Shawna Feci – Payroll Technician***

Shawna exemplifies what it means to be an outstanding staff member. She is extremely proactive to seek on-going professional development to enhance and increase her knowledge in the areas of payroll. Her commitment to excel has made the payroll transition seamless. Additionally, her calm demeanor and positivity is contagious in the Business Department!

### ***Thuy Hoang – Accounting Technician***

Thuy consistently seeks feedback on job performance and engages in learning opportunities to enhance her accounting skillset, in order to effectively support all the schools and departments. Thuy has high level work productivity and her work produced is outstanding. Additionally, Thuy is just always cordial and willing to help team members, site secretaries, principals, and other departments.

## **CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL**

### ***Courtney Hunter-Quevedo – RSP Teacher***

Courtney exemplifies all the criteria the District looks for in an exemplary employee. Courtney is a true leader and a model for others.

### ***Sara Piazzola Hall – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade STEM Teacher***

Sara Piazzola is nominated for this award because she exemplifies every facet of each of the details described above. Sara has a positive mindset and always works to better herself for the students she serves.

## **DAVIS INTERMEDIATE**

### ***Gus Kambeitz – Band and Music Teacher***

Mr. Kambeitz runs an amazing band and music program at Davis. He is constantly looking at ways to grow the program and get more instruments in the students' hands. He invites all students to play and encourages even those who might not have any experience to try. He brings enthusiastic energy to the electives program and is able to guide students to showcase their talents through various band performances. He collaborates with the community and created unique fundraising opportunities for Davis with live shows. He has good relations with other music leaders in the community who have offered to work with our students and helps to recruit our students to choir and band when moving into high school. Mr. Kambeitz supports all of our school events and functions and even helps run our dances. Overall, he is an exemplary staff member!

### ***Thinley Shrestha – Math Teacher***

Mrs. Shrestha is a dedicated math teacher who is always striving for ways to best teach and serve her students. This past year she voluntarily chose to loop with her students so that she would have her 7th grade students for an additional year as 8th graders. She developed strong relationships with them and encouraged them to do their best in math. She piloted new math curriculum with them but also provided weekly math tutoring after school through our homework center. Mrs. Shrestha is a strong supporter of all of our school activities and programs. You can find her cheering on students at their afterschool sports games and/or band performances. She has tremendous school spirit and positive collaboration with staff! Overall, Mrs. Shrestha is an exemplary staff member!

## **DEL ROBLE ELEMENTARY**

### ***Beyanira Bautista – TWBI 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher***

Maestra Bautista seeks out ongoing professional development programs that reflect current research and exemplary practices, and successfully implements new learnings, and serves as a support to others. She consistently seeks feedback about her job performance; engages in peer coaching activities with colleagues and training that supports reflection and self/peer evaluation. She represented OGSD exceptionally well and got out of her comfort zone and presented at the CAFE conference this past year. During her short time with us, she has supported her colleagues and has stepped into leadership roles.

### ***Olivier Castañeda – TWBI 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher***

Maestra Castañeda seeks out ongoing professional development programs that reflect current research and exemplary practices, and successfully implements new learnings, and serves as a support to others. She consistently seeks feedback about her job performance; engages in peer coaching activities with colleagues and training that supports reflection and self/peer evaluation. She got out of her comfort zone and presented at the CAFE conference this past year. She has followed through with all of her professional development and training commitments and can be counted on for any support needed.

## **EDENVALE ELEMENTARY**

### ***Rebecca DeSagun – TK Teacher***

Mrs. DeSagun is an outstanding teacher who consistently goes above and beyond for both students and staff at Edenvale Elementary. For the past two years, she has also mentored student teachers who have all since been hired in OGSD. Mrs. DeSagun is also Teacher in Charge and has made relationships with students in all grade levels. Edenvale is lucky to have her!

## **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

### ***Teresa Flores – Bilingual Administrative Secretary***

Teresa provides excellent service to our parent community, supporting the needs of families while maintaining equitable and systemic practices. Her attention to detail and communication skills are assets to the department. Teresa is a team player and seeks to collaborate on how to improve processes for better outcomes for students. She is a valued member of the ESD support team!

## **FROST ELEMENTARY**

### ***Lori Coye – Speech and Language Pathologist***

Lori is a tremendous speech teacher. Her interactions with students and parents are exemplary. She is one of the top professionals that I have encountered.

### ***Binh Do – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher***

Mr. DO IS A LEADER at Frost. He facilitates professional development and stands out with data analysis and reflection. His communication for science camp and promotion is clear and detailed. He is beloved by parents and students while elevating academic rigor.

## **HAYES ELEMENTARY**

### ***Christine Canny Valle – School Psychologist***

Hayes has been honored to have had Christine Valle as our school psychologist for the past two and a half years. She has been an unwavering advocate for our students' mental health and emotional wellbeing. Christine has offered guidance on managing classroom dynamics, addressing behavioral challenges, and creating inclusive learning environments. She has the necessary skills and intuition to identify and address the needs of students. Her collaborative spirit has fostered a sense of community and partnership, ensuring that everyone feels supported and empowered. Christine is a role model of quality performance. Her reports are precise and she is adept at presenting information to families in a compassionate and easy to understand way. Hayes thanks Christine for her unwavering dedication, her boundless compassion, and her exceptional contributions to our school community.

### ***Rohan Kamath – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher***

Rohan Kamath attended the Restorative Practice Training at the very beginning of the 23-24 school year. It changed how he viewed the SEL of his students and how he did business in the classroom. Every day began with a proactive circle and he taught math in a circle formation as well. The classroom climate was calm and supportive. He encouraged other staff members to sign up for the training and on one of our AB Days held a Restorative Practice mini-camp. As our OGEA representative he met with me monthly to discuss the general vibe of the campus. I appreciated his initiative in these meetings and valued his ability to see things from multiple perspectives. Rohan is a reflective educator and always seeks to be a problem solver. I value his input as a thought partner and an exemplar of our District's Core Values.

## **HERMAN INTERMEDIATE AND THE ADVENTURE PROGRAM**

### ***Jennifer Lu – Science Teacher***

Jen is an exemplary model of the District Core Values. She focuses on student learning at all times and creates innovative ways to engage students in science. She is an amazing teammate who supports her colleagues with shared responsibility. She is committed to quality performance where her strong work ethic shows. She is creative, innovative and takes initiative when things need to get done. She is amazing at providing an inclusive environment for all students where they feel respected and valued. Her integrity is unparalleled - she can always be counted on for honest interactions. Jen is a highly respected member of the Herman community!

### ***Heidi Mayer – SDC Language Arts Teacher***

The Herman community has the privilege of working with Ms. Mayer for the past 2 years. She has brought back an improved vision of PBIS with a lot of excitement and renewed enthusiasm, including creating a student store! She is currently planning with a new partner to implement our first co-teaching model classroom to foster a more inclusive environment for our students with IEPs. She has made strong gains academically with her SAI language arts and reading students, but most importantly, she instills confidence in her students and helps them believe in themselves. Her ability to build strong relationships with her students lays the foundation for them to work hard and be successful. She is an excellent listener, so students and colleagues go to her often for support. She takes on student teachers where she serves as a coach and mentor and seeks out ongoing professional development that reflect current research and exemplary practices. Heidi is a strong advocate for our students with disabilities and our LGBTQAI+ students and interacts with all students respectfully and with a growth mindset. She is an exemplary model of the District Core Values.

### **INDIGO PROGRAM**

#### ***Kalasea Fernandez – 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher***

Kalasea has an exemplary command of ABAR education. Her students feel seen, heard, and validated in her class. Because of her classroom climate and exemplary instruction Kalasea 's students are kind, supportive, and achieving at high levels.

### **LEDESMA ELEMENTARY**

#### ***Sandy Santos – Kindergarten Teacher***

Sandy Santos is an exemplary kindergarten teacher, who regularly seeks out professional learning opportunities as well as academic programs to support some of our youngest students. This year she researched and was instrumental in bringing an online program called Math Shelf to serve as a supplement that challenges and differentiates math concepts for kindergartners. She is also in discussions to serve as a mentor teacher for a new staff member. Sandy is a strong teacher leader and we are proud to recognize her with the Vision Award!

### **OAK RIDGE ELEMENTARY**

#### ***Stacy Dolan – Kindergarten Teacher***

Stacy's passion in educating our youngest students embodies the District's Core Values. She is constantly seeking professional development to learn new strategies to keep up with the unique dynamics and previous experiences of each class she has taught. She is always evolving as a teacher given the fact that she has taught for 27 years. Stacy is never stagnant and wants to stay up to date with current practices. As a new teacher mentor, she is constantly providing her expertise in the field around student engagement, classroom management, and building strong relationships with students and the community. Her strong collaboration skills across all grade levels makes her a leader within the school. It's without hesitation to award Stacy Dolan the Exemplary Staff Vision Award.

## **PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY**

### ***Phuong Nguyen – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher***

Phuong Nguyen, a 2nd grade teacher, is a deserving nominee for the Vision Award -Exemplary Staff. Phuong actively engages in professional development, dedicating not only work hours but also her personal time to enhance her teaching skills. Phuong consistently updates herself on educational technology, integrating it into her daily lessons to improve teaching effectiveness and enrich her curriculum. She generously shares her knowledge with fellow teachers and goes the extra mile by staying late and after school to prepare excellent lesson plans enriched with hands-on activities. Her commitment to continuous learning and excellence in teaching makes her a standout candidate for this award.

### ***Alejandra Pareigis – Kindergarten Teacher***

I am nominating Alejandra Pareigis for the Vision Award-Exemplary Staff. As a kindergarten teacher at Parkview, Alejandra not only excels in her role as an educator but also serves as the school's tech person, showcasing deep knowledge and readiness to assist other staff with educational technology. Her endless positivity towards students creates a vibrant and engaging learning environment. Alejandra's innovative approach to teaching keeps her young students physically active throughout the day, integrating activities like dancing to music while they spell high-frequency words. Her dedication to enriching the educational experience through technology and active learning sets her apart as an outstanding candidate for this award.

## **SAKAMOTO ELEMENTARY**

### ***Carrie Cassara – 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher***

Carrie has seamlessly brought together two grades. Her teaching acumen is AMAZING! Ms. Cassara creates a very warm and inviting classroom environment. Her students thrive and are ever more brought into a space of curiosity and joy. She is an AMAZING educator!

## **SANTA TERESA ELEMENTARY**

### ***Ignacio Ruiz – Lead Custodian***

Ignacio Ruiz is an amazing Lead Custodian that goes above and beyond to support Santa Teresa Elementary. His positive, can-do attitude is infectious, and he cares deeply about ensuring our school is safe and clean for our students and staff. With Ignacio, you can always count on him completing his tasks effectively and consistently. He supports the school in so many ways, from translating to moving hundreds of chairs at a moment's notice. Ignacio Ruiz is an outstanding team member that is very deserving of the Exemplary Staff Vision Award.

### ***Cheryl Snyder – School Secretary***

Cheryl Snyder is an invaluable OGSD team member that strives to support not only the Santa Teresa Elementary staff, but so many other employees throughout the District. She makes all those that work with her or are part of the Santa Teresa community feel welcomed and heard. Cheryl cares deeply about ensuring Santa Teresa runs efficiently and effectively, and always puts the best interest of students at the top of her priorities. She has an extensive knowledge of all District operations and seeks out ways to improve the system. Cheryl has been a gift to Santa Teresa and is an outstanding candidate for the Exemplary Staff Vision Award.

## **STEAM at Stipe**

### ***Laurie Loforti – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher***

Mrs. Loforti is a veteran teacher who continually incorporates new learning into her teaching. During the past four years that STEAM@Stipe has developed its focus on STEAM learning, Mrs. Loforti has worked in close partnership with our STEAM Coach, Michelle Link. This year she attended the CA STEAM Symposium and immediately implemented new ideas. Mrs. Loforti is always open to feedback and continues to learn and grow as an educator. In addition, she is invested in the wider school community, and is an excellent role model for others. Mrs. Loforti most certainly exemplifies the OGSD Core Values and is an incredible asset to our team!

## **TAYLOR ELEMENTARY**

### ***Jennifer Ancheta Garcia – English Learner Teacher Partner***

Ms. Ancheta Garcia is an English Language Teacher Partner at Taylor and Frost/Indigo. Ms. Ancheta provides professional development for our teachers to support our multilingual learners. She has done at least two professional development opportunities: Integrated and Designated ELD. She follows up with teachers by providing coaching sessions or demonstrating ELD lessons that teachers can start implementing.

Ms. Ancheta comes into this position with a wealth of knowledge, and our students and staff can benefit from it. With Taylor implementing SEAL for 2024-25, Ms. Ancheta's skills and expertise will be able to lead this initiative with credibility and partnership.

### ***Rigoberto Jaral Ruela – Night Custodian***

Rigoberto Jaral Ruela consistently goes above and beyond to ensure our school is clean and well-maintained. Every evening, he meticulously cleans classrooms, hallways, and common areas, leaving them spotless and ready for the next day. His attention to detail is evident in every corner of our main building and portables. Mr. Rigo is always willing to lend a helping hand during special events. He assists with setting up and breaking down for after-school activities or night events, ensuring that everything runs seamlessly. His flexibility and readiness to support these events, even beyond his regular duties, highlight his commitment to our school community.

What truly sets Mr. Rigo apart is his unwavering positive attitude. He greets everyone with a warm smile and a kind word, no matter how late it is or how demanding his tasks may be. His cheerful demeanor and willingness help to create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for both staff and students.

Mr. Rigo exemplifies dedication and excellence in his role as our night school custodian. His hard work, attention to detail, and positive attitude make a significant impact on our school, ensuring a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for all. Taylor is incredibly grateful for his contributions and proud to have him as a valued member of our school community.