

**For Immediate Release
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Fullerton School District's Sheila Hebert Honored with Award of Distinction by OCDE



FSD's Sheila Hebert standing with her Award of Distinction at the 2024 OCDE annual Interpreter and Translators Conference.

(Fullerton, CA) - Fullerton School District's (FSD) Spanish language Interpreter/Translator, Sheila Hebert, was recently recognized by the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) with a 2024 Award of Distinction. This honor translates to Hebert's notable excellence and impact in ensuring language access for FSD's Spanish-speaking students, families, staff, and community members.

OCDE's Award of Distinction program aims to highlight the skills and dedication of the county's professional interpreters and translators, promote the importance of their work, and encourage ongoing professional growth.

Hebert's award-winning services include interpreting for events, such as parent-teacher conferences, district-wide workshops, and Board of Trustee meetings, and translating important information for students and families, including event flyers for parent workshops, district-wide student opportunities, and community services and resources for families.

“Sheila’s work is essential to ensuring every family feels heard and supported,” said Leonel Talavera, President of the Fullerton School District Board of Trustees. “Beyond being great at her job, Sheila pours her heart and care into all she does, and we are so lucky to have her on our team.”

Hebert has dedicated her life’s work to interpreting and translating for Spanish-speaking audiences for more than 30 years, beginning her career in her home country of Venezuela. For over 23 years, Hebert has shared her vast knowledge and expertise with FSD and its community.

“I love the challenge of always learning new things because you are not just a mouthpiece in this role; you need to learn and care about what you are interpreting,” shared Hebert when reflecting on her favorite part of the job.



Proud son Jonathan Hebert (left) was in attendance to celebrate his mother’s award and recognition.

“Above all, my goal is to make a difference for our kids and our families, empower and help our parents, and provide quality service,” said Hebert, who noted that she is zealous in preserving the integrity of the Spanish language.

Hebert was honored by OCDE at its eighth annual Interpreters and Translators Conference, held in Costa Mesa from Oct. 3 to Oct. 5. Themed “Bridging Communities through Language Access, Education, and Artificial Intelligence (AI),” the conference brought together language access advocates from across the county’s nearly 30 school districts to explore new developments in the TK to 12 educational system, including responsible AI integration and skill development.

“Interpreters and translators play a crucial role in facilitating communication between school staff and families, which is vital for student success and engagement,” said Natalie Abarca, a Language Services Program Specialist with OCDE’s Educational Services division.

Abarca’s work has been instrumental in creating a countywide support system for language services professionals. She has led the way with training opportunities and professional networking to support students and families across the county.

“Recognizing these individuals serves as inspiration for others in the field, reinforcing the significance of multilingualism and cultural competence in education,” underscored Abarca on the importance of this awards program.

To learn more about OCDE’s Language Services Award of Distinction Program, visit ocde.us, and for additional information about the Fullerton School District’s award-winning TK through eighth-grade schools and programs, call (714) 447-7400 or visit www.fullertonsd.org.

The Fullerton School District (FSD) is located in northern Orange County, California, and serves over 11,400 students in transitional kindergarten (TK) through eighth grade. FSD is home to 15 elementary schools, two TK through eighth-grade schools, three junior high schools, and a distance learning and home school program. FSD features unique programs for students, including a Dual Language Academy for Spanish and Korean languages; a Performance Academy Sports Program that offers a traditional in-person learning experience with time for advanced athletic training integrated into the school day; and robust before, after, and summer school programs. The mission of the Fullerton School District is to work collaboratively with the community to provide an innovative, high-quality educational experience for all students in a safe learning environment. FSD’s motto, “Great Schools - Successful Kids,” signifies that all FSD students will be given the tools and instruction to achieve academic excellence, hone interpersonal skills, and develop technological expertise to contribute as productive citizens in a democratic society.

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