

# AU Connect

ANAHEIM UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPRING 2014

## They're our Teachers of the Year

It is with great pride that we present our 2014 Teachers of the Year. These stellar educators exemplify excellence and dedication, and represent the great teaching that takes place every day in classrooms across the District.

From among the initial group of 19 top educators, three were selected to advance to the Orange

County Teacher of the Year competition: Ms. Janelle Frese of Gilbert High School; Ms. Juanis Garcia of Western High School; and Ms. Alicia Lopez of Sycamore Junior High School.

We hope you enjoy learning about these amazing educators, and share our pride in them and their work on behalf of student learning and success.

### Janelle Frese Gilbert High School

Janelle Frese teaches English at Gilbert High School. She is a passionate, innovative, creative, and powerful supporter of at-risk students.

She started in the AUHSD in 1990 as a junior high English teacher and high school softball coach. After seven years, she joined the Gilbert staff as an English teacher and department chair. Her passion for at-risk teenagers who are credit deficient was sparked by her past experience as a conflict management teacher and coach in the Los Angeles County Department of Education probation schools.

She has designed programs and opened doors for success over the past 27 years, through a variety of student activities. One such activity is "The HOPEFULS," a theater elective designed for continuation students and the severely handicapped student population next door to her high school. Students from both



schools have worked together and performed musicals and artistic productions over several years.

Additionally, Ms. Frese organizes the "Hearts and Souls" student publication, an annual end-of-the year collection of poetry, essays, artwork, and music lyrics published by her newspaper media class. "The Gladiator Times" is the current, student-led, newspaper at Gilbert. Ms. Frese is also an author and published her own book, "Oh Chaplain, My Chaplain", a biography of a WW II Navy chaplain, in 2005.

Ms. Frese has created programs for inside and outside the school day, as motivation tools to keep at-risk teenagers in school. She is a board member of "CUT Studios," which stands for "Children's Unlimited Talent." This positive, motivational, after-school activity provides musically talented teens with the opportunity to receive private tutoring by professionals, if they attend and do well in school. The outcome is a free recording session of their singing, instrumental, or song-writing talents. She also teaches an APEX class. APEX is an online, computer-based, credit-recovery program covering all graduation requirement courses.

It is through her positive programs and influence that these at-risk students find success that would not have been possible without her tireless efforts. She provides hope for those seeking success and a high school diploma.

## Juanis Garcia Western High School

Juanis Garcia began her career in the District at Orangeview Junior High School and now teaches English language arts at Western High School. She is

dedicated to the success of all students, even those not in her classes. She has taken on some of the most difficult students and is relentless in making sure that those students rise to the standards that are expected of them. One colleague wrote, "This teacher believes that the fairest thing to do for these kids is to hold them to high standards and to nag them until they quit seeing failure as one of their options." She often calls the homes of those students and "checks in" with them on a regular basis. She works closely with administration to follow up with interventions. She is a member of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Committee, and is actively involved in the GEAR-UP organization to help students become first-generation college students.

Often, Ms. Garcia asks her students to take the time to introduce themselves to the principal and other key



individuals on campus, to raise awareness of the resources and people available to help them become successful. She recently invited Principal Daniel Lunt to her 9th grade intervention classes to talk about their options if they have failed a course their first semester.

Parents of students in her classes often express their gratitude, for the time she takes to contact them and for the help she gives them when completing assignments and re-teaching key concepts.

Over the past year, Ms. Garcia worked with another teacher to organize an event designed to bring industry and higher education representatives to 9th grade students to talk about career and education opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics at Western's First Annual STEAM Conference. Students were excited about the presentations and were exposed to career and education possibilities that they might not have otherwise known. She and her colleagues worked collaboratively with GEAR-UP and Cal State Fullerton to make this event a success.

Students and her colleagues know that she is "tough" when it comes to expectations but that she also cares. She maintains a positive attitude even though she is often found working well into the evening hours contacting parents, meeting with students, or adjusting lessons to help students succeed. She has also been the girls' varsity soccer coach and helped to motivate these students to do their very best. It's only recently that she has given up coaching sports to dedicate more time to her students and her intervention efforts.

Additionally, she has worked with Western's psychology teacher to organize a mentor program in which current juniors are being trained to become mentors in their senior year to underclassmen.

As a colleague commented, "I have seldom seen as dedicated and hard-working a teacher as Juanis."

As a member of the site Leadership Team, she has the unique ability to work with teachers from all subject areas and her positive attitude has made it possible for many to see what can be done for students.

Students, parents, and colleagues alike recommend Ms. Garcia as not only a candidate for AUHSD Teacher of the Year, but for Educator/Mentor/Role Model of the Year!

## Alicia Lopez Sycamore Junior High School

Alicia Lopez teaches math at Sycamore Junior High School. She is an exemplary teacher because she believes that all students can learn at high levels

and she commits herself to making that happen. She has worked with all levels of students and has guided them to success. She has worked with sheltered students with limited English and academic backgrounds to help them progress. Her



instructional skill, along with her evident caring for students, leaves a lasting impression. Students continue to seek her out years after to thank her for everything she has done for them.

Recently, she took on a whole new challenge in the classroom by working in the Dual Language Academy. She has taught mathematics in Spanish for the past three years. This endeavor required her to plan instruction in a much different way. She had to develop mathematical skills as well as language proficiency in her students. All of the instructional materials had to be translated into Spanish. She continues to rise to the occasion as the District implements Common Core standards. Ms. Lopez has taken on this dramatic shift with zeal, working to shift her curriculum once again. She is constantly challenging her students and working with colleagues to determine the best way to incorporate the new standards.

Ms. Lopez has an impact outside of the classroom as well. She has been an integral part of numerous after school programs. She is the engine behind Sycamore's Academics First Program. This program allows students and teachers to address assignments missed by students so they can continue to be successful in the program. She has also had a hand in organizing school-wide, re-teaching after school, which is called Power Hour.

Sycamore Junior High School prides itself on being a parent friendly school and Ms. Lopez contributes to this by organizing parent meetings and facilitating training for parents. She is constantly in contact with the parents and families of her students. She meets with and talks to parents whose children are in after school programs, and works closely with other staff to increase parent involvement.

Her impact on Sycamore is significant, but she has broadened her involvement by being selected as a teacher fellow for the Transforming Academic and Cultural Identidad Through Biliteracy grant. This research grant, in partnership with Cal State Fullerton and Discovery Science Center, will develop bilingual curriculum and a parent involvement model for Sycamore, as well as the Anaheim Union High School District.

Ms. Lopez epitomizes the caring, skill, and dedication that make teaching a noble profession.

## Lisa Newman Anaheim High School

Lisa Newman has spent her entire 16-year career in the Anaheim Union High School District, teaching human anatomy.



Ms. Newman selflessly serves students and staff without needing or wanting recognition. And while she is truly a great teacher, what sets Ms. Newman apart is her vast involvement in the life of her campus and the greater community. For example, as coordinator of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, Ms. Newman is responsible for writing the "RROCKS" lessons, and is the "RROCKS" ambassador. RROCKS is Anaheim High School's character program; the acronym stands for Respect, Responsibility, Optimism, Community-minded, Kind, and Safe. Ms. Newman writes the character lessons, which are taught every month and help students reflect on their behavior and focus on a different trait each month. She is always finding

ways to encourage students and staff to embody the character traits.

In addition to her PBIS involvement, Ms. Newman has served for a number of years on the Professional Learning Committee, Discipline Committee, School Site Council, Emergency Preparedness Committee, and Superintendent's Advisory Council. She served as a focus group leader for assessment and accountability and as a member of the writing team during the school's accreditation process. She was the Anaheim High School liaison to the UCI Mentoring Program, which is affiliated with the UCI Center for Future Health Professionals. She advised the Tobacco Use Prevention Education program, plus the following campus organizations: International Club, LBK dance group, TKO dance group, Colonists to the Rescue, National Honor Society, Key Club, and Sophomore Class Club.

And, as if that isn't enough, Ms. Newman pours her energy into community service projects, including Wish Upon a Star and Baskets of Love, which are holiday donation programs geared toward providing clothing, toys, and school supplies to homeless children at HIS House and the Anaheim Interfaith Shelter. She organizes Haircuts for the Holidays, a donation program for those who have lost their hair to illness, and for 12 years was involved with Paint Your Heart Out Anaheim, whose volunteers refurbish the homes of low to moderate-income seniors and disabled homeowners.

She gives so much to the Colony and has received little recognition for her dedication. Her heart is always in the right place trying to make Anaheim High School better for students, staff, and the community.

## Annette McCall Ball Junior High School

as part of Ball Junior High School's leadership team and professional development team.

Without a doubt, Annette McCall is an outstanding music teacher. Like any great teacher, she also serves as a role model to her peers, taking on leadership duties as part of Ball Junior High School's leadership team and professional development team. Anyone who has the pleasure of knowing Ms. McCall can attest to the fact that her compassion and commitment toward students, parents, and staff has enabled her to sustain a fantastic choir program. The performances and

Without a doubt, Annette McCall is an outstanding music teacher. Like any great teacher, she also serves as a role model to her peers, taking on leadership duties as part of Ball Junior High School's leadership team and professional development team.



productions she puts on are second to none! In fact, the quality of her student performances can often be compared to those at the high school level.

There is no doubt that Ms. McCall holds every student to high expectations. As a result of her uplifting personality and her commitment to her students, the choir program is thriving. Even with the fiscal challenges over the past several years and a decline in enrollment at Ball, the choir program has never been stronger.

Walking into her classroom, it is wonderful to see so many students actively participating and enjoying themselves. She provides a quality experience for students and the greater Ball Junior High School community on a daily basis.

Numerous traits and qualities come to mind when thinking of a potential candidate for Teacher of the Year--professionalism, dedication, inspiration, compassion, and school involvement are just a few. Without hesitation, it is safe to say that Ms. McCall fits the bill of Teacher of the Year!

## Marcus Weiss Brookhurst Junior High School

Now teaching foundational math, Marcus Weiss has been teaching at all levels of mathematics at Brookhurst Junior High School for over 12 years. He served as department head for many years and is a constant support for his colleagues. He supports his fellow math teachers by helping with testing schedules, emergency substitute plans, computer lab responsibilities, and with a ready ear when times are frustrating. He is a great listener.



Mr. Weiss also supports fellow staff members by volunteering for duties, supporting their events, being quick to cover a class if needed, and in general having a positive attitude.

Above all, Mr. Weiss is a great teacher! He will explain a problem or concept many times over until a student understands it. He will use different techniques for explaining how to solve an equation, which in math is very beneficial! He will help any student, whether they are in his class or not. He has run the homework lab for many years, always volunteering to help. He shows his students that school is about fun, as well as learning, by volunteering to do activities. He is the first one in line to organize a lunchtime event, help decorate for Red Ribbon Week, and dress up for spirit days, showing that it is OK to be silly. His students respect him, admire him, and most importantly, learn a lot from his teaching.

In the past, Mr. Weiss has been an ASB facilitator, a chaperone/coordinator for East Coast trips, and a chaperone for local drama and sporting trips. He has been creative in coming up with fun math activities for Open House and Back to School Night. He has helped with master scheduling and bell schedules.

For many, many years, Mr. Weiss also has volunteered to help with registration dates during summer. He is currently a pentathlon coach, homework lab volunteer, and Lesson Design Specialist. He very rarely says no!

Mr. Weiss has a positive outlook on life and his job. He does not take his responsibility as a teacher lightly; he pushes himself as a professional to make math interesting and easy to understand. The students admire him and so does the staff. Brookhurst Junior High School would be a different place without Marcus Weiss.

## Erin Doherty Cypress High School

Erin Doherty runs the gamut in her teaching assignments, which include special education, biology, and AP environmental science classes. Her versatility is but one of the many reasons she has been a great teacher throughout her 15 years in the AUHSD.

In addition to her versatility, Ms. Doherty exhibits great moral character reflecting her high professionalism and personal standards, which help her to achieve her goals and continue to develop her craft.

Ms. Doherty came to Cypress High School as a resource specialist-special education teacher, implementing differentiated instructional strategies that helped develop each of her student's academic and behavioral abilities. She incorporates updated computer programs for students to use for their presentations (i.e. Prezi, PowerPoint, video, a cell analogy project, pig dissection). By providing various forms of research-based learning, Ms. Doherty shows she believes ALL her students can learn when given effective teaching strategies and tools.



Because of her success, she moved to a position of a general education biology teacher where she taught both general education and collaborative, special-education inclusion classes. Her creativity and attention to detail created a highly effective educational environment that brought both academic and personal success to each of her students.

Ms. Doherty challenges her students to help them think outside the box and more critically. For example, in her AP environmental science class, she had students create "eco-columns" that simulated ecosystems using plastic bottles, sand, water plants, fish, snails, pond water, grass seeds, insects, decomposition materials like worms, and habitat sticks with spiders, in an effort to learn about ecosystems in the real world.

Students were required to make observations including pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen content of the aquatic chamber, turbidity, plant growth, decomposition rate, and fish status. This was an extremely effective lab that not only benefited her AP class, but also her biology classes, regarding what is happening throughout our ecosystem and what we can do to preserve these systems.

Ms. Doherty continues to work with community-learning programs and has taken her students on various field trips to integrate and support the standards being taught in the classroom with real-life experiences. For instance, in her earth science classes, she became involved in a grant sponsored by the Ocean Institute in Dana Point, where the focus is on teaching students about global warming and the effects global warming is having on our environment and oceans. The program focuses on how significant amounts of carbon affect the earth and the oceans. Scientists from the institute first came to her classroom and reviewed global warming effects with students. They performed various labs with the students so they could be prepared for their community experience. Students then went on a daylong field trip where they completed various hands-on labs on land and sea. Many of her students had never been beyond where they live, nor had they ever experienced being on a boat and seeing the various sea life in their original habitats. The students evaluated the excursion as outstanding.

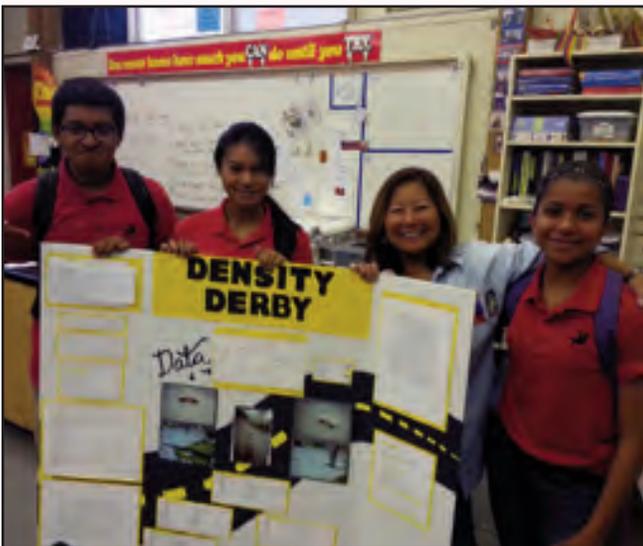
Additionally, Ms. Doherty continues to seek out new and innovative ways to incorporate community resources into her classroom instruction. For example, she worked with the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve to design curriculum for her students when she took them there on field trips.

Ms. Doherty is also known for being an effective peer leader. As the "thinking maps trainer," she has effortlessly trained a large number of teachers on how to incorporate those strategies into their curriculum and instruction. Teachers who attended the trainings said her presentation was above average and that it was a beneficial strategy that they would use in their instruction. She is helping to develop the campus organic garden, which will be an educational, project-based exploratory program focusing on research and activities that address the needs of special education, biology, environmental science, culinary, floral arranging, and adaptive PE students. Additionally, she serves on the technology committee, and is working with a team to develop Common Core practices to be implemented in the classroom.

The examples described above are only a few of the many different research-based instructional strategies, lessons, and activities Ms. Doherty implements on a daily basis to ensure that ALL her students are getting the BEST possible education from her.

As you can see, Erin Doherty is an exemplary educator who inspires students and colleagues to go beyond standard expectations, and because of that she is a wonderful asset to Cypress High School and the Anaheim Union High School District.

## Dee Dee Mann Dale Junior High School



Dee Dee Mann has been making science come alive in her classroom for the past 18 years. She teaches in a creative fashion so that her students understand the concepts.

Additionally, she is available at lunch and after school for students who need extra help.

Dale Junior High School students speak fondly of Ms. Mann and how much they enjoy being in her class. They appreciate her unwavering dedication to finding the best in her students, whatever their level of achievement.

Ms. Mann works tirelessly with a creative force that is admirable. She assesses her lessons from year-to-year to understand where she can make improvements, and then adds to the lessons to create something new. She definitely LOVES teaching science and she shares that love with her students so they love science, too!

## Ryan Loch Hope School

Ryan Loch is a key member of Hope School's leadership team, and his vision and innovation have been instrumental in successfully implementing key District initiatives.

For example, Mr. Loch is co-chairing a Professional Learning Community (PLC) that has become a model for all PLCs at Hope School and in the moderate-severe disability programs at the comprehensive sites.

The PLC developed a system for identifying essential knowledge and skills for student learning called "goal maps." This is critical for curriculum and instruction at Hope School

since there is no state approved curriculum for moderate-severe disability students. From the goal maps, Mr. Loch developed "units of studies," which included all essential components of lesson design (content objectives, language objectives, formative assessment, common assessments, instructional adjustments, and a system for re-teaching). The units of study are driving cutting-edge curriculum and instruction.

Mr. Loch has successfully taken key District initiatives, embraced them, and applied them to teaching students with moderate-severe disabilities. He has met this challenge with creativity, innovation, vision, and leadership. Many would agree that teaching students with moderate-severe disabilities is the most difficult teaching task of all.



In addition to leading the way in developing curriculum and instruction in the classroom, Mr. Loch has gone above and beyond by embedding 21st century learning and technology. He has effectively used technology in the classroom to facilitate communication with minimally communicative students. The District's chief technology officer, Erik Greenwood, has said on a number of occasions that Hope School is leading the way with using technology in the classroom. The implementation of technology in the classroom is directly related to Mr. Loch's innovation and leadership.

Lastly, Mr. Loch has been a key contributor regarding professional development for other teachers and instructional assistants at Hope School and for moderate-severe disabled students at comprehensive sites. He is leading other teachers in developing curriculum and lesson plans, and is a model for implementing lesson design initiatives. He also is in the process of developing a collaboration system for all moderate-severe teachers using Google Apps. The system will allow all teachers to collaborate on developing lessons, sharing lessons, problem-solving methods, etc. He currently is piloting the system with other teachers, and it is user-friendly, efficient, and a model of effective collaboration.

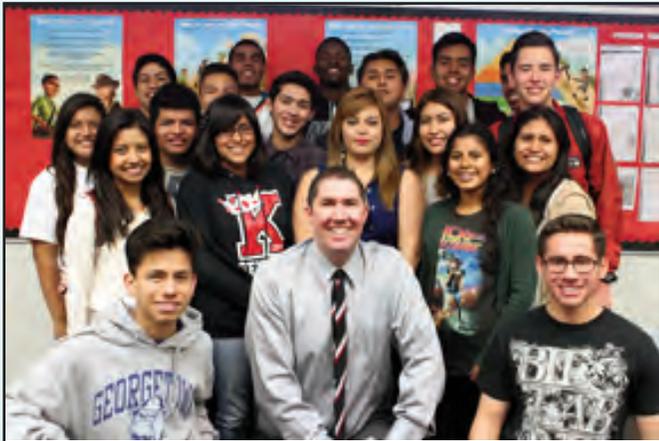
Without hesitation, Hope School nominates Mr. Ryan Loch as Teacher of the Year.

## Thomas Gorrell Katella High School

Thomas Gorrell has taught at Katella High school for 11 years. In 2003, Mr. Gorrell transferred from Sycamore Junior High School and started teaching

Advancement Via Individual Determination classes as well as social science classes, in addition to serving as testing coordinator. He currently teaches government and economics to seniors.

His classes are filled with a diverse student population, which he embraces wholeheartedly. Throughout his time at Katella, he has co-taught several economics classes with colleagues in the special education department, and has helped mainstream countless students with disabilities. He also is the founding teacher of the BROS student organization, which organizes educational field trips, participates in community service projects, and promotes and educates students about the value of higher education and ways to pay for it.



Mr. Gorrell also has a long history and love for all athletics, but specifically basketball. For nine years, Mr. Gorrell was the head basketball coach at Katella, winning its first league championship in many years. Mr. Gorrell made himself accessible to not only players, but parents and staff, too.

Mr. Gorrell has a huge heart and goes above and beyond his formal duties as a teacher. He can regularly be found in his classroom before school, during lunch, or after school tutoring students with homework or listening to their issues or problems.

Mr. Gorrell also can be found on the Katella morning video announcements sharing information about upcoming BROS meetings, or building school spirit by getting students to attend that week's athletic events. Mr. Gorrell has helped numerous students make the right choices and choose a path that will lead them to college or a successful career. Students know that they can count on Mr. Gorrell to help them through difficult situations because he always has their best interests at the core of any advice he shares.

It is because of Mr. Gorrell's tireless service to Katella High School and the Anaheim Union High School District that he is the 2013-2014 Teacher of the Year.

## Sean Pfeiffer Kennedy High School

Walking into Sean Pfeiffer's classroom immediately answers the question of what a teacher's classroom should look like. Visitors are struck by the level of student engagement. Sitting in small groups, students are passionately discussing the text, as Mr. Pfeiffer effortlessly moves from group to group, monitoring discussion and sparking new areas for inquiry.

Improving literacy skills is the impetus behind his instruction, but for Mr. Pfeiffer, literacy does not merely mean understanding the theme of Hamlet. It means teaching students how to discern the purposes of all genres and all forms of media. He teaches students to read their world. Fostering critical thinking skills through inquiry-based instruction is at the heart of his teaching strategies.



Part of Mr. Pfeiffer's success is due to his genuine care for his students' well being. To ensure their success, he meets with students before, during, after school, and on weekends. He is not only dedicated to their academic success but also interested in developing their character. As part of his senior English class, students are required to complete a community service project. While this requirement may not seem unique, what is unique is that Mr. Pfeiffer participates in his students' activities, acting not just as a teacher but as a role model for them. His commitment to his students' character development is exemplary.

Mr. Pfeiffer is a department chair's dream, always offering to teach any grade level. In addition to teaching all grade levels, he has taught English language development and special-education inclusion classes. This diverse background

has made him a well-rounded teacher, who is able to effectively teach students at all levels of ability. He has been instrumental in fostering growth in the department, as he is the one in meetings who is unafraid to question teachers' approaches and offer alternatives to enhance the quality of instruction for all students. He has been instrumental in many of his colleagues' professional growth.

Mr. Pfeiffer's self-deprecating, engaging manner makes him an effective teacher leader and a favorite of many, who feel fortunate to work with him.

## Jeff Cornelius Lexington Junior High School

Lexington Junior High School is honored to present Jeff Cornelius as its 2013-2014 Teacher of the Year. Mr. Cornelius has been a tremendous asset to the campus.

Not only does he motivate the students in his classes, he works to keep the staff energized and connected as well. He believes that school is more than a place to learn academic subjects; he believes that it is about personal relationships and learning to be a member of a community. He also follows this philosophy in his personal life by volunteering and working for a variety of community agencies.



Mr. Cornelius graduated from Cal State Long Beach with a degree in health science and a minor in biology. He has been teaching 7th grade science for 15 years and is the activities director for the Associated Student Body (ASB). As activities director, Mr. Cornelius organizes a group of students whose purpose is to infuse the campus with school spirit. He encourages ASB students to cover the campus with posters for sporting events, in addition to planning "dress-up days" and noontime activities. Mr. Cornelius works with the students to coordinate the school dances and assemblies, oversees the student store, DJ's the lunchtime music, and directs the 8th grade promotion ceremony and party. He also serves as the emcee for "Lexington Idol," where he runs the show as host Ryan Seacrest. He also manages a school-wide recycling program where the proceeds go to those in need.

Because of his amazing work as Lexington's activities director, he received the prestigious 2013 Activities Director of the Year award at the California Association of Directors of Activities Conference.

Last year, Mr. Cornelius volunteered to teach a collaboration class for the students in the autism focus special day class. As such, he works closely with the autism focus teacher to modify assignments, make the material accessible to students with disabilities, and include them as a part of the general education class. He keeps high expectations for all of his students and does not treat the special education students any differently. They are just a part of his class, and as such, they are accepted as a part of the campus community. His class is always fun and engaging for all of his students and his enthusiasm makes them all want to keep coming back for more.

Mr. Cornelius has an abundance of energy. Not only does he work full time as a science teacher, he works evenings and weekends as a stage manager and entertainment director for the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim and the Anaheim Ducks. This follows an 18-year career at Disneyland as a production stage manager. While most people would think that these three positions would cement him solidly in the community of Orange County, he does even more with his spare time. Mr. Cornelius coaches baseball in Fullerton and also is the vice president of Golden Hill Little League. He sits on the Council for the Orange and Riverside County California Association of Directors of Activities Area Board.

At Lexington, he coaches tennis, volleyball, and football after school. Mr. Cornelius also volunteers with fundraising and donation drives for the Assistance League of Anaheim, which provides shelter, food, and clothing for Anaheim's women in despair. As if that is not enough, he always makes sure to help local families at Christmas by fundraising and purchasing gifts. He also portrays Santa Claus at a variety of functions where he brings cheer to hundreds of children. He doesn't reserve his good works for the Christmas season, however, as everyone on campus knows that if they see a student in need, they can go to him and he will do his best to meet that need. Over the years, he has found ways to provide shoes, clothing, supplies, and materials for the underprivileged and those who need assistance.

Mr. Cornelius makes Lexington Junior High School a better, more interesting, friendlier place to work. He often leads staff meetings with team building activities. No one will ever forget the photo scavenger hunt around Cypress. This involved more than 40 staff members and teachers traveling around the community taking group pictures at random businesses. It was the best staff development day ever!

## Jason Smith Loara High School

Jason Smith is constantly reevaluating his lessons and striving to make his teaching more relevant, more engaging, and more empowering—he truly strives to help his students become reasoned judgment makers and independent seekers of knowledge.

Jason's content knowledge is second to none; as a result, his students are in the best possible hands when it comes to learning about U.S. history, and he consistently brings out the best in them. This is true of all of his classes, and his ability to reach and inspire lower performing students is remarkable. Through a combination of humor, compassion, and impressive pedagogy, Mr. Smith finds a way to inspire them all. None of this happens by accident, though, because he meticulously plans each of his lessons, matching them to his students' schema, interests, and backgrounds, and by adapting the lessons to ensure they align with Common Core and literacy standards. It is, therefore, not surprising that many Loara High



School students will tell you that Mr. Smith's class was the most impactful and enjoyable of any course they took during their four years of high school.

As a department chair, many of his colleagues look to Mr. Smith for guidance. He gives straight answers built on his best judgments and a sense of compassion. Although he is the head of his department, he does everything he can to let his colleagues know that they are his peers and equals. He is open to hearing new ideas and concepts and is willing to admit his own weaknesses as a teacher. He participates in student clubs and takes time to learn new pedagogy at conferences during the school year and over the summer break.

He is known as one of the strongest and most effective teachers on campus, one whom many teachers wish to emulate. Student and substitute teachers alike all know who he is and want to learn from him. He has also participated as a support provider for some of our own teachers, who continue to rave about the guidance he has provided them.

Furthermore, Mr. Smith has served many times as a master teacher, and many of his student teachers have gone on to become successful teachers themselves. Ultimately, Jason Smith is dedicated to making his colleagues the best they can be through his support and willingness to learn alongside each of them. Whether it is through the application of the latest technology, incorporating television, music, and film into his lessons, or learning new methods for better imparting concepts, he is open minded and eager to learn. Moreover, he is a fearless pioneer of cutting edge pedagogy. He demonstrates this time and again as he modifies lessons and his curricula to test new approaches, and he gladly shares these approaches with his colleagues. Mr. Smith absorbs all professional development from the perspective of better serving his students. He is an adherent of data-driven decision-making and an adept innovator who gladly works outside the box.

Mr. Smith does everything asked of him as an educator and goes many steps beyond when it comes to serving his students and connecting with them. He constantly listens to popular music, watches the latest movies, plays the current video games, and is observant enough to identify with students' interests, both on and off campus. He makes every effort to attend their extracurricular events and to discuss their interests with them. This allows him to build powerful rapport with his students, and these relationships augment his instruction and help him to build their confidence as scholars and participants in his classes. His students' respect and admiration motivate them to give their best efforts, as they seek his respect and admiration.

Mr. Smith is the adviser for the academic decathlon and the Bible Club on campus. He organizes movie days with students to teach them more about history and life, and he motivates them to see content-rich films they might otherwise overlook. For example, he organized a student viewing of "12 Years a Slave," and facilitated a rich discussion afterward. He also attends sporting events, gallery walks, plays, and recitals to show his support for his students.

It is hardly surprising that Loara students know who Mr. Smith is long before they enter his classroom, and they often actively request placement in his classes because they know that they will learn a great deal and enjoy themselves in the process.

## Carrie Saleman Magnolia High School

Carrie Saleman is one of the most hard-working and dedicated people at Magnolia High School. She goes above and beyond her duties as an educator to make sure all her students can become as successful as possible.



She consistently takes the time to pre-plan, collaborate, and provide various new ideas for her special education classes. As a resource specialist, she employs countless new strategies and resources to make the content accessible to all students in the classroom, both general education students and special education students.

Ms. Saleman continuously monitors, intervenes, and understands the needs of all students. She works hard to keep lessons and instruction fresh and creative, and encourages the students to think critically and use their imaginations.

Ms. Saleman is fortunate to work with two of the best content specialists, Sheri Rothwell and Greg Senglaub. Together, these partnerships exemplify what co-teaching should be in the classroom. She supports her students within the classroom, but also makes time to show her support to other students by attending school dances, plays, and a variety of sporting events.

Ms. Saleman's passion for her job can be seen in the fact that many students see her as their "other mom," because they know she cares about them and their future.

## Mary Jurenka Orangeview Junior High School

Mary Jurenka is an innovative teacher who is always searching for ways to improve as a professional. If you're ever on campus after 6 p.m. and you walk by the west parking lot, there is a 90 percent chance you will see Ms. Jurenka's van in the parking lot—in fact there are times when she's on campus until 9 p.m.!

Ms. Jurenka started at Orangeview 12 years ago. Over the years, she has worked hard to improve the achievement of her students in English, reading, and drama. She works diligently to improve her teaching on a yearly basis. As a member of the

English department, she always participates in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process and contributes without hesitation. Ms. Jurenka is always willing to go above and beyond to help a colleague and the entire PLC team in general.

Ms. Jurenka is also the drama teacher and goes to great lengths to create sets, costumes, and fantastic productions. She is also the adviser for the Drama Club and the Anime Club.

Additionally, Ms. Jurenka is one of Orangeview's "Kagan Queens." (Kagan is a cooperative-learning instructional strategy.) She is always looking for ways to perfect her craft, and attending as many Kagan workshops as possible is one way she works to improve the classroom environment and cooperative learning among her students. On many occasions, Ms. Jurenka has attended these workshops on the weekend.

As a colleague, Ms. Jurenka is very kind and generous. She has a pleasant personality and gets along well with all staff members. She listens to others when they have concerns and is always there to lend a hand when a colleague needs support. Ms. Jurenka also supports all of her students. She creates a positive and structured learning environment. She uses a good balance of structure and flexibility to assist her students to be successful. Ms. Jurenka is able to interact and support all students regardless of ability or behavioral levels. She constantly searches for ways to ensure success.

Ms. Jurenka maintains Accelerated Reader records for everyone on campus by tallying the number of minutes students spend reading. This is a huge undertaking; she spends many hours coordinating this process. She also serves on the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Committee and collaborates with the team to improve the campus and the experience of students. She has shared many great ideas to ensure that the PBIS program is a huge success. She has also worked with students who compete District-wide in the Words Out Loud Spelling Bee and Oral Interpretation Contest. She volunteers her time after school to prepare the students and attends the event to show them support.

Orangeview is very fortunate to have Mary Jurenka on the campus. She is a shining star at the best junior high school in America!



## Dan Cullinane Oxford Academy

Dan Cullinane has spent his entire 30-year career in the Anaheim Union High School District, and has been teaching AP and honors chemistry classes at Oxford Academy since its opening. He has been the consummate professional throughout his long career, and it's wonderful to see him being recognized by his peers as Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Cullinane is acknowledged by many as one of the best teachers around. He began his teaching career at Loara High School as a science teacher and quickly proved that he was no ordinary classroom teacher. Those who have had the privilege of seeing him at work are impressed by his passion for student success and energy. Year in and year out, he has one of the highest success rates with student grades, test scores, and AP pass rates. It is more difficult to earn a D or an F in his classes than it is to earn an A or a B. Mr. Cullinane's students often say, "I want to earn an A or a B in his class because I don't want to let him down." Failure is truly not an option in his classes.

Oxford has been successful in developing a school culture rooted in college and career readiness, and Mr. Cullinane has been a big part of developing that culture. Through his work with the Health Occupations Students of America, Mr. Cullinane has helped to mentor and shape the future of a great number of future health care professionals.

His work with students doesn't stop in the classroom. He serves as Oxford's official photographer, taking photos of students and staff that he displays all over campus. He is also a teacher leader, serving as the team leader for chemistry and co-department chair for science. He also articulates with the junior high school science teachers on campus to ensure a seamless transition to their high school classes.

As you can tell, Mr. Cullinane is a remarkable example of intelligence, passion, energy, and commitment to student learning.

He has balanced being demanding, rigorous, and supportive, all while being admired by his students. This is something many teachers never achieve.



## Steve Little Savanna High School

It is an honor for Savanna High School to select Steve Little as Teacher of the Year. He is an outstanding teacher, mentor, coach, and teacher leader.

He is first and foremost an excellent classroom teacher, the teacher all U.S. history and AP government students want to have. He is the teacher all students talk about when they think of their favorite teachers. What is remarkable about this is that Mr. Little's classes are not easy. He is able to combine compassion and rigor. Mr. Little takes great care in ensuring all his students learn and, most importantly, enjoy learning.

He uses a variety of instructional strategies that meet all his students' learning styles. He uses storytelling to teach history. More importantly, he inspires his students to go beyond the classroom and apply what they are learning. Mr. Little makes students think critically and equips them with the knowledge they need to understand the world around them. He connects with students at all levels.



As a history teacher, he expects his students to be civic-minded and helps them understand why civic participation is essential in their lives. Furthermore, he is continuing to build his content knowledge to benefit his students by getting his master's degree in history.

Mr. Little is also well respected by his peers. He leads the Professional Learning Community for world history, and coordinates the civic education grant. He is unselfish about sharing his knowledge with other teachers and constantly motivates the entire staff to go the extra mile for students. He models what he expects, starting with dressing professionally every day. It should also be noted that Mr. Little dresses up for every single spirit day--he is the most spirited teacher on campus--often getting his students to participate. He is the first to volunteer to participate in assemblies, as well the first to volunteer to help make the school the best it can be. His positive spirit on campus is contagious.

Mr. Little's most enduring quality is his desire to motivate and inspire students. As a varsity baseball coach, he is constantly modeling sportsmanship, commitment, and hard work. As a teacher, he provides a positive, nurturing, relevant, and rigorous environment where all his students feel successful. And, they end up loving history!

Mr. Little has the utmost respect for his profession and care for his classroom. He has high expectations for himself and his students. He is an inspirational teacher, and we are proud and honored to know him.

## Jeffrey Kim South Junior High School

South Junior High School is honored to select Jeffrey Kim as the 2013-2014 Teacher of the Year. Dr. Kim started his professional career at Lexington Junior High School in 2002 and taught there until 2008. He then worked as an assistant principal at Dale Junior High School and Walker Junior High School, after which he returned to the classroom and has been doing an amazing job having a profound affect on students' lives.

Dr. Kim is one of the most innovative teachers on campus. He is a leader in and out of the classroom. He has facilitated many workshops in the social studies department as well as school-wide. His most recent workshop for teachers was centered on teaching secondary readers how to interact with increasingly complex text, which is critical to increasing rigor and relevance in the classroom. His passion for student success has been evidenced by his ability to scaffold instruction in order to have students access more complex text. He truly engages students using a mix of technology, instructional strategies, and meaningful work.



Not only is he a servant leader in his classroom, but he prides himself on being a servant leader to all staff on campus and to the community. He sparks excitement just by observing his manner of being. For instance, he has even turned the focus on the Common Core's 4 C's--critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication--into an engaging chant to motivate his students.

Dr. Kim is very active in the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program and the anti-bullying campaign at school. He always strives to learn new strategies and techniques to implement in his classes, which he ultimately shares with his peers. He is a wonderful colleague who is willing to help others, and he is currently a master teacher, using a co-teaching model with his teacher candidate.

As adviser to the Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL) program, Dr. Kim provides ample chances for kids to get involved and be of service. He also guides his PAL students in making weekly scenarios for schoolwide PBIS lessons. He comes to work with a bright outlook and contributes to the betterment of the school with his PAL class and Christian Club. Recently, his PAL program was selected as Outstanding PAL Program of the Year by the Orange County Department of Education.

Dr. Kim was recently interviewed by the journal class to pay tribute for his selection as the Teacher of the Year. He stated: "I am very thankful for a more senior faculty and staff who have welcomed me into the fold and helped me to become a contributing member of our South family and make a difference in the lives of our students. For those who know me well, they know I'm an introvert and a little shy. The South family has helped me to come out of my nest and spread my wings. I love being a South Eagle. South Junior High School students are the best students a teacher could ask for, and this is the best job in the world!"

These are just a few reasons why Dr. Kim is deserving of being named Teacher of the Year, and why South is delighted and proud to recognize him as such.

## Christy Hutchings Walker Junior High School

In the 10 years that Christy Hutchings has been a special education teacher at Walker Junior High School, she has demonstrated a true commitment

to students. In addition to teaching English, math, and study skills, she has coached four quarters a year in the intramural program, has been department chair for eight years, has participated on the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Committee, and has started an administrative credential/master's program.

Ms. Hutchings is very professional and punctual. She is also very knowledgeable, energetic, and easy to work with. She is goal oriented and motivated. She maintains positive relationships with students, staff, and parents on campus, in a way that is both caring, yet firm. She has facilitated communication about Individual Education Plan meetings and school events, and uses many different mediums to facilitate the communication.



Ms. Hutchings holds herself to high standards. She uses the latest pedagogy to serve students and staff. She is also easy to work with and prides herself on doing what is best for students, which makes staff responsive to her requests to better serve students. Ms. Hutchings also consistently demonstrates the ability to integrate technology in her classroom.

Ms. Hutchings is an effective teacher and leader, and deserves Teacher of the Year status.