

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

November 3, 2026
Tulare County Office of Education
Jim Vidak Education Center

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

in partnership with

EECU
Smarter banking

Welcome

Tulare County Office of Education

Congratulations Excellence in Education winners, finalists, and nominees! You are role models to the children and young adults you serve, and inspirations to everyone around you.

Thank you, Tulare County school districts, for participating in this awards program and for nominating these outstanding individuals.

We extend our appreciation to Educational Employees Credit Union (EECU), its board of directors, and President/CEO Elizabeth Dooley for co-hosting this wonderful breakfast event and for their support of education in Tulare County. EECU is a true partner in education.

Tim A. Hire
Tulare County Superintendent of Schools

Tulare County Board of Education
Tony Rodriguez, President
Mike Waters, Vice President
Judy Coble · Tom Link · Ruben Macareno
Felipe Martinez · Chris Reed

Cohosted by: **EECU**

For 30 years, EECU has proudly co-sponsored the Excellence in Education Awards event celebrating outstanding teachers, administrators/managers, and school employees in Tulare County.

We applaud the dedicated individuals who play a vital role in guiding our children toward a future full of unlimited possibilities.

It is our pleasure to congratulate all of the honorees on this well-deserved recognition of their commitment to their students, schools, and communities.

Elizabeth J. Dooley
President/Chief Executive Officer
Educational Employees Credit Union

Board of Directors
Lisa Cutt, Chair
Derek Scharton, Vice Chair
David A. Roberts, Treasurer
Darcy Williams , Secretary
Walter A. Franzell · Ali Nekumanesh · Phil Neufeld
Mike Snell · Brad Stevens

Program

Welcome	**Chris Meyer** Assistant Superintendent District Support Services
Breakfast	*Breakfast generously sponsored by EECU*
Tribute to Our Country	**Calvary Sears, 10th Grade, Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center** *National Anthem*
Entertainment	**Eleanor Ray, 9th Grade, Redwood High School, Visalia** singing selection from *How to Train Your Dragon JR*
Introductions	**Chris Meyer**
Recognition of Selection Committee	**Brent Calvin, Ed.D., Awards Host** President, College of the Sequoias
Awards Presentation	**Brent Calvin, Ed.D.**
Closing Remarks	**Chris Meyer**

2026 Selection Committee

Lynne Ashbeck, Senior VP, Chief Community Impact Officer, Valley Children's

Martha Flores, Retired Educator and Former Mayor, City of Porterville

Leigh Mosconi, Area Director, Special Olympics Northern California

Jenna Rodriguez, President & CEO, Visalia Chanber of Commerce

Terri Rufert, Retired Superintendent, Sundale Union School District

Valarie Seita, Librarian, Tulare County Office of Education

Donnette Silva Carter, CEO, Tulare Chanber of Commerce

Beth Wilshire, Executive Director, Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council

Sue Winters, Retired School Administrator

Liz Wynn, Vice Mayor, City of Visalia

Award Winners



Administrator/Manager of the Year
Josefina Velazquez
Principal
Kennedy Elementary School
Dinuba Unified School District



Teacher of the Year
Michael Bedoya
History/Social Science Teacher
Washington Intermediate School
(now at Dinuba Intermediate School)
Dinuba Unified School District



School Employee of the Year
Placido Flores
Academy Assistant/Job Developer
(now Behavior Intervention Specialist)
Porterville High School
Porterville Unified School District

Finalists

Administrator/Manager of the Year



Vivian Hamilton
Tulare Joint Union High School District



Ken Spencer
Lindsay Unified School District

Teacher of the Year



Roxana Flores
Woodville Union School District



Jordan Lapadula
Tulare Joint Union High School District

School Employee of the Year



Florencio Guerra, Jr.
Lindsay Unified School District



Maria Elena Lopez
Monson-Sultana Joint Union School District

Nominees

Administrator/Manager of the Year

Annette M. Borges, Tulare City School District
Juan Jose Cadena, Jr., Earlimart School District *(now at College of the Seqouias)*
Jonathon Dodson, Porterville Unified School District
Santos Galeana, Monson-Sultana Joint Union School District
Brittney Guerrero, Visalia Unified School District
Clint Jones, Earlimart School District
Megan Marquez, Woodlake Unified School District
Ashley McMillan, Burton School District
Eduardo Ochoa, Farmersville Unified School District
Heather Pilgrim, Oak Valley Union School District
Rick Rodriguez, Woodlake Unified School District
Angela Ruiz-Alvarez, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District

Teacher of the Year

Mia Adkins, Tulare County Office of Education
Kimberly Canterbury, Valley Life Charter Schools
Melanie De Roma, Earlimart School District
Christina Flynn, The Academies Charter Management Organization
Nancy Garcia, Oak Valley Union School District
Nandina Godfrey, Woodlake Unified School District
Stacy Gonzales, Visalia Unified School District
Grace Hernandez, Lindsay Unified School District
John Marroquin, Pixley Union School District
Carol Montag, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District
Shelly Noble, Porterville Unified School District
Mayra Ortega, Monson-Sultana Joint Union School District
Michelle Perryman, Tulare City School District
Maryann Tavares, Earlimart School District
Georgina Torres, Porterville Unified School District
Beatrice Tripp, Farmersville Unified School District

Nominees

School Employee of the Year

Armando Aleman Vargas, Visalia Unified School District
Reagan Clark, The Academies Charter Management Organization
Sharon Gamboa, Earlimart School District
Andrew Gamez, Tulare Joint Union High School District
Tanya Gutierrez, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District
Leticia J. Mendoza, Dinuba Unified School District
Brenda Persall, Woodlake Unified School District
Leticia Romero, Pixley Union School District
Tanya Serpa, Tulare City School District
Arturo Solis, Farmersville Unified School District
Mireya Torres-Sanchez, Oak Valley Union School District
Oscar Zamora, Earlimart School District

About the Artist





Graduation Day
by Clement Renzi

Clement Renzi, creator of the sculpture given to the Excellence in Education winners, passed away in 2009. Mr. Renzi was a native Visalian who resided in Fresno. He graduated from Visalia High School and attended College of the Sequoias, the University of California, Berkeley and art schools in Berkeley, New York, London, and Vienna. Mr. Renzi was commissioned by the Educational Employees Credit Union to create the sculpture, Graduation Day, which now stands in front of the Tulare County Office of Education administration building. This morning, nominees, finalists and winners receive a limited-edition print of Graduation Day. In addition, each award winner is presented with a small, bronze sculpture, The Graduate, created by the famous artist.

Describing Clement Renzi's work, Joyce Aiken, Professor Emeritus of Art at California State University, Fresno wrote: "Renzi was a major factor in the renaissance of public art in this area." He will be remembered through his sculptures, which can be seen at public and corporate buildings around the Central Valley.

Past Winners

Scan to view past recipients or visit tcoe.org/awards/past

Additonal Thanks

Brent Calvin, Ed.D., Awards Host
2026 Excellence in Education Awards Selection Committee
Annabel Prindle, Community Relations Officer, and
Nicole Franzen, Marketing Coordinator, EECU
Tulare County Office of Education staff members Craig Alameda, Jaime Burnitzki, Zoty Briceño, Nayirah Dosu, Annette Eickelberg, Jennifer Fisher, Lili Flores, Kathleen Green-Martins, Juan Harris, Rob Herman, Jeff Lemos, Freddy Reyes, and Paula Terrill
Entertainment, sound, and video production by
Tulare County Office of Education, Stage and Space Collaborative
Craig Alameda, Conan Palmer, and Bethany Rader

Floral table arrangements are given to winners, finalists, and nominees



EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

Celebrating Those *Who Make a Difference* in Our Schools