#### Madera County

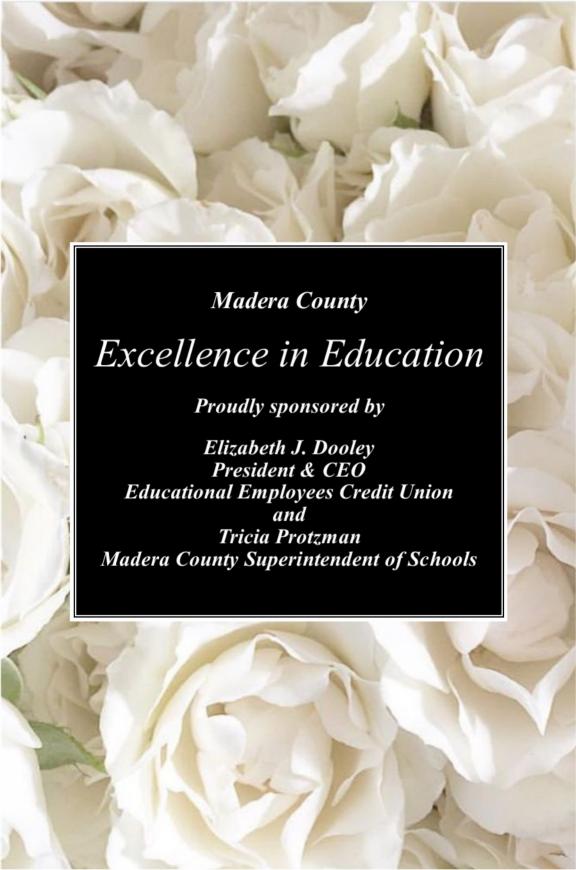
## Excellence in Education

**Awards** 



September 25, 2025
Madera County Superintendent of Schools
Conference Center







Tricia Protzman
Madera County Superintendent of Schools
Welcome to the nineteenth annual Excellence
in Education celebration. We honor the
extraordinary educators, administrators, and
employees whose unwavering dedication and
exceptional service have left a lasting impact
on the children and families in our schools.
These individuals do not just fulfill their roles.

they go above and beyond, elevating the educational experience for everyone around them. This year's honorees are the driving force behind student success, often working without fanfare, yet shaping lives in extraordinary and lasting ways. We proudly spotlight their accomplishments, celebrate the inspiration they bring to their students, and recognize the powerful difference they make every single day.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Educational Employees Credit Union Board of Directors, President Beth Dooley, and the EECU staff for their partnership and commitment to education. EECU is the sole sponsor of this special occasion. We are grateful for their continued support in recognizing the outstanding contributions of educators.



Elizabeth J. Dooley
President & CEO
Educational Employees Credit Union
EECU is proud to sponsor the Madera County
Excellence in Education awards program.
Since 2007, EECU has partnered with the
Madera County Superintendent of Schools to
honor outstanding individuals who
demonstrate exemplary commitment to their

work. We extend our sincere congratulations to all of this year's nominees, finalists, and winners. It is our privilege to celebrate the hard-working teachers, administrators, and school employees who make a difference in their schools and their communities every day. We appreciate and respect their dedication to educating their students and preparing them for a brighter future.

# Program

Welcome Dr. Cecilia A. Massetti Master of Ceremonies

Flag Salute

National Anthem Priscilla Huerta

2024 Honorees 2025 Nominees and Finalists

Greetings Tricia Protzman Madera County Superintendent of Schools

> Elizabeth J. Dooley EECU President & CEO

Presentation of Awards Dr. Cecilia A. Massetti

## School Employee of the Year



Danielle Willeke Special Day Class Instructional Assistant Chowchilla Elementary School District

Danielle's career with Chowchilla Elementary School District began in 2006. as an instructional assistant. Having raised a child with special needs. Danielle identifies with the students she serves and finds ways to help them succeed in education. Her ability to develop strong relationships with her students and their families. allows her to support student growth. When there is a need, she fills it. When students are not reaching their full potential, she pushes them to achieve more. "Can't" is not a word in Danielle's vocabulary. Every child is capable and she wants them to see that within

themselves. Danielle's passion for children with special needs started at home with her eldest son. "Countless, professionals told me that he would likely never graduate high school, never go to college, never drive a car, or ever have a job. This absolutely devastated me," stated Danielle, who saw potential in her son that others did not. She pushed her son and never let him give up on himself. He went on to accomplish the very things others said he could not. Danielle sees in her students what she saw in her son and she champions for them every day. Danielle is an active member of the community, having coached T-ball and participated on multiple school site councils. She regularly provides her local animal shelter with supplies and has fostered many animals while they find their permanent homes. Her love for children and her community have made a lasting impression.

## School Employee Nominees



Lupe Ayala Custodial Supervisor Madera Unified School District



Larisa Durr High School Secretary III Yosemite Unified School District



Johnny Gutierrez Bus Driver Golden Valley Unified School District



Yvonne Horton School Office Manager Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District



Laura Rodriguez
Senior Human
Resources Analyst
Madera County
Superintendent of Schools



Steven Valenzuela Lead Groundskeeper Chawanakee Unified School District



Jeanette Walls Accounting/Human Resource Specialist Chowchilla Union High School District

## Administrator of the Year



Kristin McKenna Director of College and Career Readiness Madera Unified School District

Kristin began her career with Madera Unified School District (MUSD) in 2009, as an agriculture teacher, where she contributed to expanding student opportunities in agriculture by developing a new Plant Science pathway and engaging industry partners. In 2015, she promoted to Coordinator of College and Career Readiness, where her leadership strengthened Career **Technical Education (CTE)** programs districtwide. She oversaw the revision and University of California A-G approval of 17 CTE courses, initiated dual enrollment opportunities at MUSD, and

developed a districtwide 6th Grade Career Exploration curriculum. Kristin was promoted to Director of College and Career Readiness in 2017, where her strategic vision led to the launch of the Madera Technical Exploration Center and the implementation of CTE programs across all middle schools. She has secured and managed over \$10 million in CTE grants, significantly expanding access to high-quality programs and workforce-aligned learning experiences. Under her leadership, dual enrollment grew from three to 50 sections, elementary summer CTE camps were introduced, and the Graduate Profile was developed to define student success beyond academics. Through her visionary leadership, Kristin has redefined what college and career readiness looks like in Madera Unified, building sustainable systems that have opened doors for thousands of students to access meaningful postsecondary opportunities and lifelong success.

#### Administrator Nominees



Jessica Chacon District Lead Counselor Chawanakee Unified School District



Jennifer David School Psychologist Chowchilla Elementary School District



Kristi Forshee Assistant Principal Golden Valley Unified School District



Melinda Gresham Principal Yosemite Unified School District



Bailey Markley Speech Language Pathologist Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District



Kristen Maxfield
Director, Human
Resources
Madera County
Superintendent of Schools



Ryan Stockton Principal Chowchilla Union High School District

## Teacher of the Year



Kristin Sheehan Teacher Madera Unified School District

Kristin has been an agricultural instructor and FFA advisor at Madera South High School for 19 years and has 25 years of teaching experience overall. She has been honored with numerous awards and recognitions, as have the students she has taught throughout the years. A life long learner, Kristin is passionate about broadening her own skills and passing on her knowledge to the teachers of the future. She has served as a master teacher to well over 20 incoming educators. With the world becoming more urban, Kristin has developed

new programs to help maintain a focus on agriculture education and provide hands on opportunities. When she saw students struggling to afford their own animals for FFA, she created programs that not only made the animals affordable, but in some cases helped students earn income. Kristin is heavily involved in the community and encourages her students to stay active in everything from the environment and animals to helping humanity. Her students say it best, "You have truly impacted me. I'll always carry your words of wisdom." "You have helped me navigate my way to becoming a vet." "You have gone above and beyond for me."

Kristin's unwavering dedication, innovative spirit, and deep compassion have left an indelible mark not only on the field of agricultural education, but on the countless lives she has touched. Her ability to inspire, support, and empower both students and fellow educators has created a legacy that will continue to shape the future of education for years to come. Through her leadership, Kristin has proven that a great teacher doesn't just teach — she transforms lives.

#### Teacher Nominees



Shandon Allen Teacher Chawanakee Unified School District



Amy Bezzerides Teacher Golden Valley Unified School District



Gabriele Franck Teacher Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District



Shae Hall Teacher Chowchilla Elementary School District



Betty Klein Teacher Madera County Superintendent of Schools



Tom Rose Teacher Chowchilla Union High School District



Kellie Solomon Teacher Yosemite Unified School District

## Selection Committee



Chief Gino Chiaramonte, Nancy Prosperi, Karen Rawls, Mattie Mendez, Desiree Martinez, Kelly Kline, and Stell Manfredi

## Film Crew

Dennis Lingo, Bouasone Monty, Sam Pedersen Brenda Plauson, and Kim Vass

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Armida Aguilar

Aimee Beintker

Melanie Burton

Larisa Durr

Maria Elizondo

Sheri Ramos

Karen Roget

Raylene Trent

Kim Vass

Kristi Winter

# Special Thanks

Dr. Cecilia A. Massetti

Elegant Occasions

Pardini's

Photography by MJD

Priscilla Huerta

EECU Staff

MCSOS Staff

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