



Fontana Unified School District

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 22, 2019

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Fontana Unified Educator Celebrated as 2019 Bilingual Educator of the Year

FONTANA, CA – Dolores Huerta International Academy (DHIA) teacher Malena Peterson has been named the California Association for Bilingual Education's (CABE) 2019 Teacher of the Year, honoring her advocacy for bilingualism and her outstanding dedication to her students.

"Being named CABE's 2019 Teacher of the Year is a huge honor to receive from my colleagues and peers in bilingual education," Peterson said. "It fuels my passion to continue enhancing my skills as a bilingual educator, to be a role model for my scholars and highlight the kinds of worthwhile contributions that being bilingual provides to the community."

This is Peterson's second year as a third-grade dual-language immersion (DLI) teacher at DHIA. She began her career in 1999, became a certified bilingual teacher in 2008, and helped found a dual-language immersion charter school in San Bernardino before joining Fontana Unified.

"What I love most about being a bilingual educator is instilling in my scholars the knowledge that speaking more than one language is a huge asset, and not only in their careers," Peterson said. "It is valuable to seek better communication and understanding between different peoples and cultures."

Fontana Unified continues to expand its dual-language immersion instruction as part of its mission to provide an educational experience that prepares students for college and careers. The District recently announced that Redwood Elementary will join DHIA in offering Spanish DLI instruction in 2019-20.

"Bilingual students also develop a cultural sensitivity that allows them to have global compassion," Peterson said. "Being bilingual breeds tolerance and acceptance of differing perspectives, and enhances one's ability to think critically, solve problems and multi-task."

Peterson will be honored during the annual CABE conference in Long Beach March 20-23. As the CABE Teacher of the Year, Peterson is also the California nominee for the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) 2020 Teacher of the Year.

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_CABE_TEACHER: Dolores Huerta International Academy teacher Malena Peterson, at right, was named California Association for Bilingual Education's (CABE) 2019 Teacher of the Year.

OUR MISSION: The mission of the Fontana Unified School District is to graduate all students prepared to succeed in a changing world. Fontana Unified School District celebrates learning through the development of the whole child. Our commitment to excellence provides quality education, in depth, for all students.