



Fontana Unified School District

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PRESS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Educator Named a 2019 San Bernardino County Teacher of the Year

FONTANA, CA – Shadow Hills Elementary third-grade teacher Theresa Pearce starts each school day with a series of creative exercises: a warm-up song accompanied on piano, a brief art activity and a “weird but true fact.”

The exercises are the cornerstone of Pearce’s fun approach to learning, which has earned her recognition as a 2019 San Bernardino County Teacher of the Year.

“When I was in second grade, I had a teacher who played the piano in class and I thought it was the coolest thing,” Pearce said. “It was an experience that stuck with me and inspired me as a teacher. I was excited to bring a piano into my own classroom and continue the tradition, because I believe that teaching is all about creating experiences that make learning memorable for students.”

Pearce is one of four teachers in the county to be honored this year. The teachers were nominated by their individual districts and reviewed and selected by a county panel. This year’s honorees will also compete in the California Teacher of the Year event, which will announce its recipients later this year.

Over her 19 years with Fontana Unified, Pearce has gained a reputation for creating lasting educational experiences for her students. In addition to her creative morning exercises, Pearce transforms traditional lessons into engaging activities by adding movement and exploring topics that interest her students.

“I had one student that really loved rocks, so I found a way to integrate that into what we were learning,” Pearce said. “That student was able to discover a love of science and learn how an interest in rocks could lead to educational and professional opportunities he had never thought of.”

Pearce’s dedication to students extends across campus, where she coaches a creative problem-solving team, finds hands-on opportunities to promote community involvement and brings guest speakers to discuss college and career readiness.

Under her guidance, Shadow Hills’ Odyssey of the Mind team – which engages fourth- and fifth-grade students in a creative problem-solving program – took third place in the Inland Empire competition and advanced to the state competition in 2017-18.

Pearce and her fellow honorees will be recognized by the County Board of Education on Oct. 9 at the Roy C Hill Education Center in San Bernardino.

“Theresa Pearce exemplifies the endless dedication that our teachers show to improving instruction and ensuring every student receives an outstanding education,” FUSD Superintendent Randal S. Bassett said. “We are proud to honor her as our 2017-18 Teacher of the Year and congratulate her on her well-deserved recognition by San Bernardino County.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_TOY_PEARCE: Shadow Hills Elementary teacher Theresa Pearce encourages learning in the classroom through hands-on projects. Pearce was named one of four San Bernardino County Teachers of the Year for 2019.

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