



Press Release

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Bell Gardens High School Teacher Wins \$10,000 for Expanding AVID College-Readiness Program

MONTEBELLO – Bell Gardens High School teacher Elizabeth Lowe has been named one of just five California winners of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Teacher Advocacy Award, an honor that recognizes exceptional AVID educators and comes with a \$10,000 prize for expanding the program at her school.

“AVID has created a strong culture of high achievement that has permeated throughout our entire District, and no one has been more vital to that positive change than Elizabeth,” MUSD Board President Benjamin Cardenas said. “She is more than deserving of this honor, and we could not be more proud of her.”

Lowe was honored in front of 3,000 educators on July 12 at the Sacramento Summer Institute, where winners were celebrated for showing leadership in supporting AVID’s mission to help all students become ready for college. AVID is a nonprofit, college-readiness system that works to increase the number of students who enroll in four-year colleges.

“To be recognized for this award, and stand alongside the most exceptional leaders of the AVID program, speaks to the work that we’ve done as a District in preparing students for college,” said Lowe, who teaches 11th- and 12-grade geoscience at BGHS. “It was very special to go to Sacramento and speak with people like former Sen. Gary K. Hart, who is one of the judges of this award and reminded us that aiding students is always the ultimate goal.”

Lowe coordinates the AVID program for Bell Gardens High, overseeing 650 students, seven teachers and all course sections that make up the curriculum. Many of her contributions happen behind the scenes as she supports the system’s educators and ensures there are no barriers when it comes to student success.

The Teacher Advocacy Award was established in 2013 by an anonymous donor who wanted to give back to educators in California, especially those who work with the AVID program. All recipients of the honor are nominated by colleagues and are given two years to use the funds for use in advancing their school’s AVID program.

Among Lowe’s early ideas for the money are new signs at the school promoting college and a mural to symbolize that Bell Gardens High is a burgeoning college-preparatory campus.

Lowe’s teaching and guidance practices have been recognized throughout the District, with Superintendent Susanna Contreras Smith commending Lowe’s dedication to always helping students achieve their higher education goals.

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“From classroom walk-throughs, teaching parents to understand transcripts and working with administrators on new advanced placement classes, Elizabeth has helped change the trajectory of BGHS and our District,” Contreras Smith said. “Her tireless work has helped build a strong college-readiness system which continues to impact the lives of our students within the AVID program and beyond.”

PHOTO CAPTION

080816_MUSD_AVID: Bell Gardens High geoscience teacher Elizabeth Lowe, left, accepts her certificate for the Teacher Advocacy Award from AVID’s California Division Assistant Director Gail Shenkman at the Sacramento Summer Institute on July 12. Lowe is one of five California AVID educators awarded \$10,000 for AVID implementation and growth at their schools.

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Montebello Unified School District is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone’s efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District’s number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at www.montebello.k12.ca.us.