



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 16, 2024

CONTACT: Lauren Creiman, (909) 833-9853

Bonita Unified Recognizes Dedicated Personnel with 2024 Employee of the Year Awards

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE - Bonita Unified School District celebrated its 2024 Certificated, Classified, and Management Employees of the Year during the April 10 Board of Education meeting, recognizing their dedication to supporting student success.

The recognition by the Board was the second in a three-part celebration for the Employees of the Year, who were first surprised with the announcement – complete with flowers and banners – at their respective sites in mid-March. During the meeting, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Dr. Kevin Lee introduced each employee with a heartfelt speech that featured insights from the nominations submitted by their peers and superiors.

La Verne Heights Elementary School first-grade teacher Elizabeth Quezada was honored as the Certificated Employee of the Year for her innovative teaching practices and drive to see students succeed. Quezada, who has taught at La Verne Heights for the last 16 years, was praised for devoting time to tutoring students, ensuring they each reach their full potential; working in focus groups to share information, resources and learning strategies throughout the District; and advocating for specialized training in K-12 campuses.

“Ms. Quezada goes above and beyond her everyday role to passionately advocate for staff and students across the District,” Lee said. “Her creative instructional methods and additional commitment to literacy have enriched the learning experience for her students.”

Melissa Romanek, a buyer in the District’s purchasing department, was recognized as the Classified Employee of the Year for her exemplary service and commitment to meeting the needs of the community. The selection committee noted that Romanek has played an instrumental role in improving processes, increasing employees’ understanding of the purchasing system, and expediting the receipt of purchases – all directly impacting students’ learning outcomes.

“Ms. Romanek’s impact has been felt by any person who buys items to support our students and staff,” Lee said. “Colleagues say that her attitude is always upbeat, friendly and approachable. I, too, have experienced these traits in her.”

MORE



BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

Director of Nutrition Services Edna McKenna was recognized as the Management Employee of the Year for her outstanding leadership in Bonita Unified. McKenna, who manages a team of 61 employees with minimal turnover, has led efforts to increase meal participation rates and ensure all students have access to nutritious meals at school. Under McKenna's leadership, the Nutrition Services department is on track to serve 1.5 million meals by the end of the 2023-24 school year.

"School nutrition plays a critical role in student learning and overall academic performance," Lee said. "The numbers tell the story – breakfast participation is up more than 25%, lunch participation is skyrocketing, two new quick cafes have been opened – all under the collaborative leadership of Ms. McKenna, who fosters a culture of shared vision, trust, and mutual respect."

The celebrations for Romanek, McKenna, and Quezada will culminate with the District's annual employee celebration on April 23.

"At Bonita Unified, every one of our employees is committed to preparing our 10,000 students to live their purpose. We are proud to honor Melissa Romanek, Edna McKenna, and Elizabeth Quezada for going above and beyond in these efforts," Superintendent Matt Wien said. "Their dedication inspires us all to strive for excellence and make a positive difference in the lives of our students and community."

PHOTO:

BUSD_2024_EOY: Bonita Unified's 2024 Employees of the Year are, from left to right, Nutrition Services Director Edna McKenna, Management Employee of the Year; La Verne Heights Elementary teacher Elizabeth Quezada; Certificated Employee of the Year; and Classified Employee of the Year Melissa Romanek, Buyer II in the purchasing department.

###

**BOARD OF
EDUCATION**

Greg Palatto, President
Chris Ann Horsley, Vice President

Derek Bahmanou, Clerk
Glenn Creiman, Member

Jim Elliot, Member
Matt Wien, Superintendent