



# Bonita Unified

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

### NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## Bonita Unified School District Recognizes 2021-22 Employees of the Year

**SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE** – Bonita Unified School District recognized their 2021-22 Classified, Certificated and Management Employees of the Year during the Board of Education meeting on April 6, honoring them for their dedication to helping Bonita Unified students live their purpose.

La Verne Heights Elementary School secretary Tanya Bartholomew was named District Classified Employee of the Year, recognizing her key efforts in creating a school environment that promotes students' holistic growth. Bartholomew has worked in education since 2010 and joined Bonita Unified in 2013, where she worked her way up from a substitute clerical and teacher to a permanent, full-time employee in 2016.

"There's no mountain too high for Tanya. If someone is in need, she'll make sure those needs are met," Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Kevin Lee said. "She gets up every day to make sure that every child is cared for, and understands the importance of personal connection and the social emotional needs of students to ensure the best student learning."

The District named Grace Miller Elementary School preschool teacher Antonio Garza as Certificated Employee of the Year, describing him as a kind, groundbreaking individual who meets students' developmental, social-emotional and academic needs. Prior to joining the Grace Miller Elementary staff in 2017, Garza taught child development and special education courses at Cal State Los Angeles, Pasadena City College and Hacienda La Puente Unified School District. He was also recognized as a Los Angeles County Universal Preschool Teacher of the Year in 2012-13.

"When we showed up to his classroom to surprise him, he was on his knees in kneepads working with a four-year-old student," Lee said, recalling his surprise visit with Garza for his employee of the year recognition. "This instance exemplifies how much he cares for our students and why he is this year's Certificated Employee of the Year."

Finally, Bonita Unified recognized Mark Rodgers as 2021-22 Management Employee of the Year. Known as the District's "COVID King," Rodgers helped lead Bonita Unified through the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure safe learning environments for students – overseeing safety protocols, testing, contact tracing, quarantine procedures and more.

Since 2000, Rodgers has served in a variety of roles for Bonita Unified – most notably as assistant principal and principal of Ramona Middle School, as Senior Director of Curriculum of Instruction and in his current role as Senior Director of Student Services.

"Mark is a true advocate for students who leads with his purpose and heart," Bonita Unified Superintendent Carl Coles said. "He's an analytical thinker whose methodical systems make all of our jobs easier, and we wouldn't want anyone without these qualities leading our Student Services Division and our District."

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Bartholomew, Garza and Rodgers celebrated their Employee of the Year distinctions with their friends and family during the April 6 recognition and were presented with a certificate for their outstanding service to the Bonita Unified community.

“Congratulations to all of Bonita Unified’s Certificated, Classified and Management Employees of the Year,” Board of Education President Derek Bahmanou said. “We are so proud to recognize each of them for their skills and dedication to helping our students find a sense of belonging and achieve their full potential.”

#### PHOTO CAPTIONS

**BUSD\_EOY1:** Bonita Unified recognized La Verne Heights Elementary School secretary Tanya Bartholomew as the District’s 2021-22 Classified Staff Member of the Year.

**BUSD\_EOY2:** Grace Miller Elementary School preschool teacher Tony Garza was named Bonita Unified’s 2021-22 Certificated Employee of the Year.

**BUSD\_EOY3:** Bonita Unified’s Director of Student Services Mark Rodgers was honored as the Management Employee of the Year.

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