

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
June 13, 2017

CONTACT: Jahmal Corner
Valerie Martinez
(909) 445-1001

Ada S. Nelson Elementary Third-grade Educator Named Los Nietos Teacher of the Year

Whittier, CA – Sonia De Anda, a 20-year teacher at Nelson Elementary School, has been named Los Nietos School District's 2017 Teacher of the Year. She was named for her use of data to support her instruction, for implementing new classroom technology and boosting English learner achievement.

De Anda, who was named Teacher of the Year during a May 30 District teacher luncheon, was commended for her helpful attitude, her students' exemplary state test scores and her round-the-clock dedication to her third-grade class – often working nights and weekends to come up with ways to provide additional support to her students.

Nelson Elementary Principal Marla Duncan said one of De Anda's notable achievements was how she uses new technology, such as a website she built to provide additional learning opportunities for her students. De Anda's website provides students with fun ways to practice coursework with applications that include XtraMath, a library of eBooks, Whoo's Reading for tracking reading-level progress and IXL for math and language arts help. She has also shared her website creation with other teachers, who have implemented similar learning tools for their students.

"Sonia shows amazing consistency in the classroom and she is always open for introducing new ways for improving instruction," Duncan said. "It's those characteristics that make her a very effective educator – she's always willing to adjust her instruction to support her students and to help them learn."

Duncan also praised De Anda for using data to support student learning and to provide support for her English learner students. De Anda uses small group instruction to address the individual learning needs in her class, and she draws on her experience as a native Spanish speaker to target her instruction to the needs of her English Learner students. It is that additional attention to vocabulary, writing and reading that insures that all students in her class will be successful.

"Sonia once told me how she was an English learner and her parents only spoke Spanish, so they could not help her with her homework," Duncan said. "She said when she came to the District she decided she was going to provide all the extra help to her students that she wished her teachers could have given her."

De Anda's efforts have translated into improved language arts and math state test scores for her third grade team and in the last eight years, she has earned several commendations for her students' achievement.

- MORE -

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De Anda started her Nelson Elementary career as a second-grade teacher in 1997. She taught second and third-grade combination classes for a few years before settling into her current role as a third-grade teacher. She has also has taught fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade summer school classes.

De Anda said being named Teacher of the Year is an honor, but more importantly it shows that her use of data, her work with English learners and providing online math and language arts help for her students really works. It is not only fun for them, but it helps them learn and gives their parents an opportunity to connect to what is happening in the classroom.

“This award shows that what I’m doing in the classroom is working because my work benefits students and they’re actually learning” De Anda said. “That’s my greatest satisfaction – knowing that the students are learning.”

De Anda is now in the running to become one of Los Angeles County’s Teachers of the Year, who will be announced during a banquet ceremony at the Hilton Universal City on Sept. 29.

“Sonia De Anda is an all-around exceptional educator,” LNSD Superintendent Jonathan Vasquez said. “We are proud to have her represent our District as Teacher of the Year because she exudes an amazing level of enthusiasm for education and shows a strong willingness to adjust to the needs of her students.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

061317_LOSNIETOS_TEACHEROFYEAR: Ada S. Nelson third-grade teacher Sonia De Anda was named the Los Nietos School District’s 2017 Teacher of the Year during a District teacher luncheon on May 30.

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