



Fontana Unified School District

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NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Educator Earns National Leadership Award for Excellence, Impact in Dance

FONTANA, CA – For more than 20 years, A.B. Miller High School’s Director of Dance and Fontana Unified’s Dance Collaborative Lead teacher Nicole Robinson has built a legacy of dedication and passion for her students and the art form and discipline of dance.

Robinson’s excellence in creating and leading impactful programs and curricula at A.B. Miller and the greater community led to the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) honoring her with its 2024 Outstanding Leadership Award for PK-12 Education. She will be recognized for receiving the national honor during a virtual awards ceremony at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 5.

“This is the work I have always been doing, whether I got an award for it or not, but what is special about these types of awards is they help the people around you, who aren’t as familiar with the discipline and notice what someone is doing for their community and the long-term impact,” said Robinson, who has taught dance at A.B. Miller for 22 years. “Being honored on a national level for my work in Fontana Unified School District and beyond is an incredible accolade.”

NDEO honorees are chosen not only for inspiring and cultivating a vision and leadership in others but also for demonstrating leadership on local, state, regional, national, and international levels. In addition, NDEO national award recipients receive a plaque for their achievement and are invited to serve as panelists during a session at the NDEO National Conference, which will be held in Bellevue, Wash. from Sunday, Sept. 29 to Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Robinson has been a long-time advocate for equitable and accessible dance education opportunities for all students in Fontana Unified. She not only expanded and enhanced A.B. Miller’s dance program, which was founded in 1995, but helped form the District’s Dance Collaborative and Conservatory of Dance.

The Dance Collaborative is a TK-12 District initiative that provides students the opportunities to experience dance throughout the school day the same way they would take math and English language arts classes.

A.B. Miller’s Conservatory of Dance provides specialized education and work-based project learning in dance and serves as a concluding point for the Dance Collaborative. Beginning in elementary school, students train with the end goal of being part of the capstone course at A.B. Miller.

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The A.B. Miller Dance program instructs more than 200 students over six courses a year. Between 15 and 25 students are trained in the Conservatory program each year, with admission granted after an audition process.

Founded in 2012, the Conservatory is one of the only culminating, career technical education (CTE) pathway programs in the Inland Empire as it exists now, Robinson said. With a 100% college matriculation rate, Conservatory graduates have gone on to become professional dancers with the Inland Pacific Ballet in Claremont, Intersect Dance Theater in Riverside, and Shen Wei Dance Arts in New York, and gone on to pursue dance-related careers in physical therapy, nutrition, and education.

Robinson's impact on the world of dance extends beyond Fontana Unified. She also serves as the content manager for the Connected Arts Networks, leads professional development for teachers, has earned multiple teaching awards, and served several leadership roles for various arts and dance organizations, including a stint as president of the California Dance Education Association.

"Nicole Robinson has inspired countless students to grow a passion for dance while providing them the guidance, encouragement, and confidence to challenge themselves at each stage of their education, both here in Fontana and across the state of California," Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "She plays a key role in ensuring Fontana Unified students have a well-rounded education that promotes personal, academic, and artistic growth."

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_ROBINSON1: Fontana Unified School District's Dance Collaborative lead teacher and A.B. Miller High School's Director of Dance Nicole Robinson was recognized for her excellence in creating and leading impactful programs and curricula by the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), honoring her with its 2024 Outstanding Leadership Award for PK-12 Education.

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