



WEST COVINA

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

1717 W. MERCED AVENUE WEST COVINA, CA 91790 626.939.4600 WCUSD.ORG

NEWS RELEASE

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West Covina Unified Dual Language Instructor Named an L.A. County Teacher of the Year

WEST COVINA, CA – When Orangewood Elementary School kindergarten teacher Karla Toledo was 7 years old, she proclaimed to her father that she was destined to be a teacher.

The 2018-19 West Covina Unified Teacher of the Year prepped for the role by playing “Escuelita” with her friends, always taking the role of the teacher, instructing them on math and language arts and giving spelling tests.

Toledo, a Spanish Dual Language Immersion instructor in the District’s [International Baccalaureate \(IB\) Continuum](#), exceeded even her own expectations when she was recognized as one of the Los Angeles County Office of Education’s (LACOE) 16 Teachers of the Year for 2019-20.

“I am so happy to receive this recognition,” Toledo said. “I would like to thank our principal, Janet Shirley, who has been so supportive since day one. It’s a joy to come to a school with such a great environment, with such great teachers and wonderful, friendly students.”

Over the years, Toledo has drawn inspiration from her sixth-grade teacher, Chi Kim Lee, who went out of her way to make Toledo and her classmates feel special. Ever since, Toledo has aspired to bring the same level of confidence and self-esteem to her students.

Since arriving at Orangewood in 2017, Toledo has acted as a Capturing Kids’ Hearts Process Champion, starting each school year by leading her kindergartners in writing affirmations to their classmates and instilling the IB principles of inquiry, tolerance and compassion.

“Every day, my students show me something new,” Toledo said. “I love the teachable moments. Our goal is to make our students globally-minded thinkers and be able to problem-solve, be great communicators and work with a variety of different people.”

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When Toledo came to Orangewood, she was unfamiliar with International Baccalaureate. She was so impressed with the program's values she quickly enrolled her daughter at Edgewood High School so she could take advantage of the District's educational opportunities.

"Karla is simply amazing," Orangewood Principal Janet Shirley said. "She is so friendly and outgoing; her smile lights up the school. It's no surprise she has become a campus leader. I am happy and proud that her special qualities have been recognized by LACOE. This is a great moment for everyone at West Covina Unified."

PHOTO

WCUSD_TOLEDO: Orangewood Elementary kindergarten teacher Karla Toledo was honored as one of 16 Los Angeles County Teachers of the Year on Sept. 20.

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