



# Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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## PRESS RELEASE

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## Fontana Unified Afterschool Program Manager Receives Expanded Learning Innovative Leadership Award from State

**FONTANA, CA** – When Yubleni Cazares came to the Fontana Unified After School Education and Safety (ASES) program as project manager in 2018, she immediately realized the potential of the program to provide crucial academic and socio-emotional support to more than 2,000 students across the District. Under the guidance of Cazares, ASES has developed into a model program that continues to grow.

For her success in developing activities and enrichment classes that resonate with students, the California Department of Education (CDE) has honored Cazares with its Expanded Learning Innovative Leadership Award. Cazares was presented with the award during the California Afterschool Network's annual Lights On Afterschool ceremony, held Oct. 17. Cazares represents CDE Region 10, which includes San Bernardino, Riverside, Inyo and Mono counties.

"I am so honored to receive this award. Thank you to the CDE for recognizing Fontana's ASES program," Cazares said. "I love my job. Every day I get a chance to make a difference in a young child's life. I want to share this award with my amazing program staff. Without their hard work and dedication we wouldn't be able to achieve our goals. I would also like to thank our partners for their continuing support."

The ASES program is available at 37 FUSD elementary and middle schools, giving scores of students an opportunity to learn critical life skills. ASES offers homework assistance in a variety of subjects, including English and STEM, physical fitness, a nutritious supper, and enrichment activities that include art and robotics.

District partners include the City of Fontana, the Boys & Girls Club of Fontana, and FUSD teachers, administrators, and classified staff. ASES is funded primarily through the CDE and includes Expanded Learning Opportunity Program (ELOP) funding that became available at the beginning of 2022.

With the addition of ELOP funding, ASES is working on expanding its services, with new lessons and activities including music, language, video production and gaming. At Fontana Middle School, ASES students are honing their culinary skills in a cooking class. ASES also gives students access to new experiences, including field trips to the Discovery Cube museum and Knott's Berry Farm.

"The impact that these lessons and field trips have on the students is powerful. Many students don't get the opportunity to have these experiences. ASES is helping broaden their horizons," Cazares said. "We have worked hard to bring our partners and volunteers into the schools and make them a part of the campus culture. I am proud that everyone is working so hard together for our kids."

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The ability of an afterschool program to change the trajectory of a struggling student became evident to Cazares when she witnessed the transformation of a student who was failing in math prior to joining ASES. Within one semester of receiving afterschool assistance, the same student not only passed the class, but received an A.

The ASES program has also been a boon to parents and families throughout the District, who have found ASES workers to be respectful of their participation and always willing to listen.

“Congratulations to Yubleni Cazares, who exemplifies the Fontana Unified mission of empowering all students and putting them on the path to success,” Interim Superintendent Juan M. López said. “Yubleni has helped shape Fontana Unified’s afterschool program into one of the best in California, and one that can be a model for any school district.”

**PHOTO CAPTION:**

**FUSD\_CAZARES:** Fontana Unified After School Education and Safety program project manager Yubleni Cazares has been honored by the California Department of Education with its Expanded Learning Innovative Leadership Award.

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