



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

9680 Citrus Avenue | Fontana, CA 92335 | Phone: (909) 357-5000 | www.fusd.net

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 9, 2022

CONTACT: Lauren Creiman

(909) 833-9853

Fontana Unified Administrator, Educators Recognized by UC Davis for Innovative C-STEM Instruction

FONTANA, CA – Fontana Unified School District educators have been honored by the UC Davis C-STEM Center for the fourth year in a row, recognizing the District's excellence in implementing an innovative curriculum to close achievement gaps, boost social-emotional wellness and help students discover a love for mathematics.

Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Dr. Monica Makiewicz was named a 2022 C-STEM Administrator of the Year during the center's annual conference, held Oct. 21. Elementary school teachers Greg Bradshaw, Monica Reyes and Heather Williams were also named 2022 C-STEM Teachers of the Year for their excellence in supporting student achievement through C-STEM (computing, science, technology, engineering and math) instruction.

"Fontana Unified is committed to building its partnership with the UC Davis C-STEM Center and providing students with intervention and instruction that not only teaches math, but gets students excited about the subject and how it can be applied to the world around them," Makiewicz said. "C-STEM has really helped our students gain confidence in the classroom after the pandemic. When I go into the classroom, I see high-level engagement, I see students who are communicating clearly and working together, and above all I see resiliency. Our students are willing to take on challenging concepts and looking for opportunities to grow."

In 2018 Fontana Unified introduced C-STEM into its middle school curriculum, as both an intervention measure and a pathway, and made it available to elementary school teachers at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. C-STEM is currently available at 23 FUSD elementary schools, five middle schools and one high school.

Using RoboBlockly coding software, elementary students work with a grid, loading blocks of code onto a workspace, a trial-and-error process that allows students to see immediately if they have made the right choice. Math problems are incorporated into the coding blocks so students can reinforce their math skills while also gaining knowledge on how to code robots. Students are challenged to code their robot to solve problems or create a robot that has a purpose.

Bradshaw is a longtime Fontana Unified educator who has spent 21 of his 24 years in education in the District. As a fourth- and fifth-grade science enrichment teacher in his second year of teaching the C-STEM robotics lab at Citrus and Poplar elementary schools, Bradshaw has found that C-STEM has helped students engage in their studies, develop their confidence and consider different points of view.

– more –

“C-STEM is helping our students become better collaborators, and I have seen their problem-solving skills improve and their imagination grow,” Bradshaw said. “They feel safe to take risks and to take a chance with something new. It’s really rewarding to see them develop these skills that will benefit them in all aspects of their future.”

Like Bradshaw, Reyes and Williams are also longtime Fontana Unified educators; Reyes has taught in the District for 22 years, and Williams is in her 19th year as a Fontana Unified teacher. Both embraced the opportunity to bolster instruction with C-STEM when it was made available to elementary schools last year, introducing fourth-graders at Oleander Elementary to the C-STEM Robotics Lab.

This year, both Reyes and Williams are teaching the C-STEM Robotics Lab to their third-grade classes, during which students participate in bi-weekly RoboBlockly lessons, working both independently and collaboratively to solve personalized coding problems and create projects. Reyes and Williams also meet after school biweekly with a math intervention group using the same curriculum.

“We have noticed that our students are highly engaged and enthusiastic about learning robotics,” Reyes said. “Their level of self-confidence as mathematicians has risen, as well as their abilities to persevere and problem solve. We have also seen growth in the language development of our multilanguage learners, as many of the activities require collaboration with classmates. Most importantly, since the activities are not necessarily language based, there is no barrier to their participation.”

Makiewicz, Bradshaw, Reyes and Williams join a cadre of Fontana Unified educators and administrators honored by the UC Davis C-STEM Center, including North Tamarind Elementary teacher Janice Taylor (2021 C-STEM Teacher of the Year), Elementary Instructor Coordinator Dr. Honey Sacro Swem (2021 C-STEM Administrator of the Year), Coordinator of Secondary Mathematics Kristen Sandler (2020 C-STEM Administrator of the Year), Fontana Middle School math teacher Yesenia Escobar (2020 C-STEM Teacher of the Year), and Southridge Tech Middle School science teacher Pamela Matea (2019 C-STEM Teacher of the Year).

The District will present Bradshaw, Reyes and Williams with certificates in December to celebrate their recognition as C-STEM Educators of the Year.

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_CSTEM_2022: Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Dr. Monica Makiewicz was named a 2022 C-STEM Administrator of the Year. She is joined by elementary school teachers Greg Bradshaw, Monica Reyes and Heather Williams, who were named 2022 C-STEM Teachers of the Year.

###