



# 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**

April 13, 2026

**CONTACT:** Nancy Yeang

(909) 204-6012

## State Sen. Eloise Reyes Recognizes Fontana Unified Citizenship Teacher as a 2026 Woman of Distinction

**FONTANA, CA** – State Sen. Eloise Reyes recognized Fontana Adult School citizenship teacher Lynnette Browning as a Woman of Distinction during the 10th annual Woman of the Year event on April 10 for her passion in helping immigrants prepare for their naturalization interview and becoming United States citizens.

As Fontana Adult School’s citizenship teacher since 2018, Browning has seen extraordinary results. During the 2023-24 school year, 53 students passed their U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) exam to become citizens. The number rose to 57 during the 2024-25 school year. Thus far in the 2025-26 school year, 19 students have become citizens, with three students waiting to take their oaths and more than 65 students waiting for a USCIS appointment date.

“My passion is teaching. I want to be able to help everyone, especially our wonderful, hard-working community members who yearn to become U.S. citizens,” Browning said. “To be recognized by Sen. Reyes is a tremendous honor, not just for me, but for the hundreds of new U.S. citizens who are now pursuing the American dream in Fontana.”

After a more than 40-year career as a K-12 teacher, administrator, and adult school teacher, Browning retired in June 2021 and began volunteering in Fontana Unified and Cucamonga School District classrooms. After a six-month hiatus, Browning returned to teach citizenship at Fontana Adult School. With a success rate at that time of zero to six students gaining citizenship each school year, Browning knew there was more that could help her students succeed.

Working with a Fontana Adult School Career Technical Education computer teacher, Browning developed a spreadsheet to create lessons for the class, while also using a “sticky-note” board to track students’ progress through the appointment date, interview, and exam process. Employing a variety of sensory learning modalities, including audio, visual, and kinesthetic, Browning found a winning formula.

Browning’s passion and encouragement for providing residents a pathway to citizenship are encapsulated by two of her former students, Gabriel Gonzalez and his wife, Angelica Esquivel, who both took their citizenship oath on the same day in December 2025.

“I came to the adult school to take a computer class, and then I heard about the citizenship class,” Esquivel said. “Mrs. Browning pushed me and made me take it seriously. She is an amazing person who teaches with her heart. She is so deserving of this award, and she has inspired me to stay in school and study English.”

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Gonzalez said he appreciated the time Browning took to clarify the exam process, such as explaining how to answer interview questions, why it is important to pronounce words correctly, when it is okay to ask officers to repeat a question, and why having solid English skills helps build confidence beyond the citizenship test.

“Thank you, Mrs. Browning, for supporting us and giving us lots of great advice,” Gonzalez said. “She is this way with every student. She encourages us to go back to school and to continue taking English lessons. Now that I have become a citizen, I am looking to start a new career, which is very exciting. We couldn’t have done it without Mrs. Browning.”

The success and demand of Browning’s citizenship class prompted an expansion of the course. She is now employing a “high-flex” model classroom to allow both in-person and online students to participate and provide greater flexibility, in addition to opening a second citizenship class.

“These students want to be citizens so much,” Browning said. “But there is so much more to it besides passing the test. I ask my students, what are your next steps? Where will you take your skills? What is your plan? The best moments, besides the citizenship ceremony, are when my alums come back and share their experiences with the current students.”

The recognition from Sen. Reyes is one of a series of awards that Browning has received for her citizenship class efforts. In June 2025, Browning received the Promising Practice Award from the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) for using data to drive instruction. In September 2025, she also earned the California Adult Education Program (CAEP) award for Model Classroom.

“Lynnette Browning is a community treasure. She puts her heart and soul into everything she does,” Fontana Adult School principal Cynthia Gleason said. “Whether she is teaching citizenship or English as a Second Language, helping students receive their GED, or even starting a class for paraprofessionals, Lynnette is serving this community with respect and dignity. She is so deserving of this award.”

#### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**WOMANOFDISTINCTION1:** State Sen. Eloise Reyes recognized Fontana Adult School citizenship teacher Lynnette Browning as a Woman of Distinction during the 10th annual Woman of the Year event on April 10 for her passion in helping immigrants prepare for their naturalization interview and becoming United States citizens.

**WOMANOFDISTINCTION2:** The success of Browning’s citizenship class prompted her to provide a “high-flex” model classroom for both in-person and online students to participate as well as opening a second citizenship class.

**WOMANOFDISTINCTION3:** Browning also received the Promising Practice Award in 2025 from the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems for using data to drive instruction.

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