



# El Monte Union High School District

*Community Committed to College and Career*

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **El Monte High School Alumna Recognized as 2019-20 District Teacher of the Year**

**EL MONTE** – When Sonia Lamas was a junior at El Monte High School in the early 1990s, she made a bold prediction to her math teacher that she would one day return and take his place in the classroom. She came close to fulfilling her promise when she was hired as a math teacher at the Lion campus just a few short years later.

While she didn't displace her former mentor, Lamas, a precalculus and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) teacher, has made a considerable impact at her alma mater and its students over the course of 20 years.

Her enthusiastic presence in the classroom and willingness to make time for every student has culminated in Lamas being recognized as El Monte Union's 2019-20 Teacher of the Year.

"This is an honor that I share with all of the teachers who helped me to achieve my dream of going to college," said Lamas, a lifelong El Monte resident. "As a kid from the neighborhood, I am just trying to give back to the community. I want to be a role model for my students."

While math remains her passion, Lamas' contributions to the AVID college readiness program have resonated throughout the school, in particular with first-generation college students preparing for the SAT.

SAT prep is a weekly component of Lamas' AVID classes, with students concentrating on different subject areas and strategies, like time management, and taking practice tests.

"To score well on the SAT, students need to be able to check their work, go back and correct what they missed and learn from their mistakes," Lamas said. The AVID SAT prep has been so successful that El Monte now offers all students a six-week SAT workshop. In 2019, 100 non-AVID juniors took the workshop.

For the 2019-20 school year, Lamas and her AVID cohort will add a reading component that focuses on student well-being to help alleviate the pressures and anxieties of being a first-generation college-goer.

Lamas – whose three children graduated from El Monte High – received the school's 2019 Humanitarian Award for her volunteer efforts, including serving as adviser of the school's MEChA and Laurels clubs and filling in as tennis team mom for two years.

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“Sonia Lamas brings so much energy and devotion to her students and has demonstrated admirable leadership skills that resonate with our students and her peers,” Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. “I am ecstatic that she has been recognized as El Monte Union’s Teacher of the Year. Her generosity and willingness to help a student or colleague in need is an inspiration to us all.”

**PHOTO CAPTION:**

**082619\_EMUHSO\_LAMAS:** El Monte High School math and AVID teacher Sonia Lamas has been recognized as El Monte Union School District’s 2019-20 Teacher of the Year for her enthusiastic presence in the classroom and willingness to make time for every student.

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*The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.*