



Press Release

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Macy Intermediate Sixth-Grader Wins Hard Fought MUSD Spelling Bee *Sofia Lopez to Move on to Regional Competition*

MONTEBELLO – Forty-six students from across Montebello Unified gathered Feb. 25 on the Bell Gardens Intermediate School stage to vie for the title as MUSD’s top speller during the District’s ninth annual competition.

After more than two hours and 17 rounds of competition, Sofia Lopez – a sixth-grader from Macy Intermediate – won after she spelled both “adolescent” and “civilization” correctly. She will represent Montebello Unified in a regional competition on March 30 that will feature competitors from across Los Angeles County.

Kenna Tagawa, a fifth-grade student from Washington Elementary, came in second, after correctly spelling three consecutive words in the last round.

“Our District Spelling Bee works to increase students’ vocabulary, enhances their confidence and affords them the opportunity to practice public speaking – making each student stronger,” MUSD Board of Education President Benjamin Cárdenas said. “Congratulations to all of our participants and good luck to Sofia, who will no doubt represent Montebello Unified well.”

Every student who participated in the Spelling Bee was awarded with a medal; the first- and second-place winners received trophies. Sofia received gift cards worth \$50 from Costco and \$25 from Clearman’s Restaurant. Kenna received gift cards worth \$25 from Costco and \$25 from Clearman’s Restaurant, as well as two tickets to AMC movie theaters.

Each school in Montebello Unified held its own Spelling Bee competition earlier in school year; the top two finishers went on to the District-wide competition.

“Each student exemplified dedication and bravery – it took a lot of hard work and preparation to get to this point,” Superintendent Susanna Contreras Smith said. “I am so proud of each student that participated in this year’s Montebello Unified Spelling Bee.”

The popular event is put on annually by the District’s Deputy Superintendent’s Office, under the direction of Silvia Krespan, the District’s coordinator of student and parent support services.

This year's judges included Director of Accountability & Support Lorraine Verduzco; Bell Gardens High School Special Education Teacher Dolores Gonzalez; Technology Integration Program Specialist Stephen Bartlett; and Bell Gardens intermediate School Assistant Director of CTE/ROP Richard P. Espinoza.

Janet Romo, teacher at Washington School, was this year's Spell Master.

Photo Captions:

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Montebello Unified School District is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone's efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District's number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at www.montebello.k12.ca.us.