



Press Release

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MUSD Superintendent of Education Contreras Smith Honored with Distinguished Educator Award by Cal State L.A.

MONTEBELLO, Calif. – Susanna Contreras Smith, Montebello Unified's Superintendent of Education, was honored with the prestigious Distinguished Educator Award at the 25th Annual Distinguished Educator Award Dinner at California State University, Los Angeles on Nov. 14. Held at the University's Golden Eagle Ballroom, the event recognizes educational leaders who have made major contributions in local community education.

"On behalf of the MUSD Board, we congratulate our Superintendent of Education Susanna Contreras Smith for this significant award," said Montebello Unified Board of Education President David Vela. "Susanna truly exemplifies what it means to be a collaborative, results-driven leader, and her extensive years of service as an educator bring a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to help students succeed both inside and outside of the classroom."

A native of East Los Angeles, Contreras Smith's 40-year career in education spans diverse roles in teaching and administration at both the K-12 and community college levels. She formerly worked for 12 years at the El Rancho Unified School District, serving as Director of Curriculum and Instruction before being promoted to Assistant Superintendent of Education. She began serving Montebello Unified in 2012.

Having earned her bachelor's degree, teaching credential, master's degree and administrative credential from Cal State L.A., Contreras Smith is well known for collaborating with all District stakeholders to continue the District's mission to ensure every MUSD student is college- and career-ready.

In addition, she is active within the local community and serves on the executive board of The Whole Child, a non-profit organization that provides a complete range of counseling and intensive therapeutic treatment to children experiencing developmental, psychological, behavioral, social and family issues.

"Education has been my life-long passion, and doing everything I can to ensure that all students thrive, academically and personally, has been at the heart of my professional career," said Contreras Smith. "I am so honored to receive this award at my alma mater and am so proud to be part of a community and District that cares so much about providing a quality education to our youth."

Hosted by the Friends of the Charter College of Education, the funds raised from the event support student scholarships and faculty development within the organization. Other honorees at the awards ceremony include Dr. Susan Kumar, Director of the Center for Autism and Related Services, and Mr. Ken Fong and Mrs. Ei Akikko Fong, Parent Advocates for the Inclusive Education of Charter College of Education (CCOE) who are being recognized with Distinguished Community Service Awards. Dr. Diane Fazzi, Associate Dean of CCOE, received the Distinguished Service Award.

"We are extremely grateful for all that Superintendent Contreras Smith has done to make a lasting difference in the lives of all our students and for her contributions to our community," said Montebello Unified Board of Education Vice President Benjamin Cardenas. "It is no wonder that her dedication to the well-being and development of our students has been acknowledged and appreciated with this wonderful award."

The Friends of the Charter College of Education is a group of alumni, educators and community members who support scholarships for students in Cal State L.A.'s teacher-preparation and school administrator programs and other activities.

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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.