



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **SMMUSD Proudly Recognizes 17 National Board Certified Teachers at Board Meeting**

***Santa Monica, Calif.*** – The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District honored 17 teachers on Feb. 19 who have received certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for the 2014–15 academic year.

"It is absolutely amazing for a school district of our size to have so many new and renewed teachers reach certification level," Sandra Lyon, superintendent, said. "Our teachers' commitment to continued and higher level learning advances the quality of instruction our students receive and strengthens our community as a whole."

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is recognized as the gold standard in teacher certification. It is a voluntary professional development opportunity that allows teachers to reflect on their own practice. It was developed by teachers, with teachers, for teachers, and is a symbol of professional teaching excellence.

Certification consists of analysis of teachers' work based on the following four components: written assessments of content knowledge, reflection on student work samples, video and analysis of teaching practice and documented impact and accomplishments as a teaching professional.

Currently, SMMUSD reports that 13 percent of the teaching staff is certified by the National Board, greatly exceeding the statewide total of 2 percent, while LAUSD posts 6 percent of its teachers as National Board Certified.

SMMUSD's freshly certified group of teachers brings the District's total number of certification recipients to 73 out of a teaching staff of 543. Eight District teachers received certification for the first time, while nine completed renewal certification.

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First-time recipients and their associated certifications are:

- Nathaniel Acker, Santa Monica High School (Social Studies - History: Adolescence and Young Adulthood)
- Ursula Caise, Franklin Elementary School (Generalist: Early Childhood)
- Hayde Cervantes, McKinley Elementary School (Generalist: Middle Childhood)
- Guadalupe Mireles, Santa Monica High School (World Languages: Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood)
- Sheryl Murdock, John L. Webster Elementary (Generalist: Early Childhood)
- Kate Song, Santa Monica High School (Science: Adolescence and Young Adulthood)
- Christina Staroschak, Santa Monica High School (Science: Adolescence and Young Adulthood)
- Brian Tickler, Santa Monica High School (History: Adolescence and Young Adult Level in Social Studies)

Renewal recipients and their associated certifications are:

- Amy Bisson, Santa Monica High School (Social Studies – History: Young Adulthood Social Studies)
- Sharon Hart, Lincoln Middle School (English Language Arts: Early Adolescence)
- Cynthia Sue Johnson, Point Dume Marine Science (Generalist: Early Childhood)
- Adrienne Karyadi, Santa Monica High School (Social Studies – History: Adolescence and Young Adulthood)
- Chon Lee, Santa Monica High School (English Language Arts: Adolescence and Young Adulthood)
- Jill Matthews, Juan Cabrillo Elementary (Generalist: Middle Childhood)
- Erica Suzanne Ross, John L. Webster Elementary (Social Studies – History: Adolescence and Young Adulthood)
- Susan Scheer, Juan Cabrillo Elementary (Generalist: Early Childhood)
- Cyndie Weinstock, Juan Cabrillo Elementary (Generalist: Early Childhood)

Many school systems use National Board standards as the basis for teacher and school counselor professional development, with 25 specialty areas available to teachers for certification organized via discipline and developmental level.

**Photo Caption:**

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District honored 17 teachers, nine are pictured here with SMMUSD Board members Oscar de la Torre, Dr. Jose Escarce, Craig Foster, Laurie Lieberman, Ralph Mechur and Dr. Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein, Santa Monica High School student Board member Alaleh Mokhtari, and Superintendent Sandra Lyon on Feb. 19 who have received certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for the 2014–15 academic year.

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*As a community of learners, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District works together in a nurturing environment to help students be visionary, versatile thinkers; resourceful, life-long learners; effective, multilingual communicators and global citizens.*