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TUOLUMNE COUNTY HONORS LOCAL EDUCATORS AT 2025 EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARDS



Recognizing 17 Outstanding Educators for Their Impact on Students, Schools, and the Tuolumne County Community

April 23, 2025 — Jamestown, California

The Tuolumne County Board of Education and the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office proudly hosted the **2025 Excellence in Teaching Awards** on Tuesday, April 22, honoring 17 outstanding educators from across the county for their passion, innovation, and unwavering commitment to student success.

The event took place at the newly opened **Chicken Ranch Casino Conference Event Center**, where teachers, families, school leaders, and community members gathered for an evening of celebration. Emceed by Superintendent **Zack Abernathy**, the event featured video tributes for each honoree, highlighting the lasting impact these educators have made in classrooms and communities throughout Tuolumne County.

"Teachers are the heart of our community," said Superintendent Abernathy. "The impact they have on children lasts far beyond the classroom—shaping lives, inspiring dreams, and building the future of Tuolumne County."

The evening's highest honor, the **Career Achievement in Education Award**, was presented to **Liz Burr** of Curtis Creek Elementary School. Burr, who has served in the district for over 30 years as a teacher, principal, and literacy leader, was recognized for her extraordinary dedication and lasting contributions to early literacy and student growth.

*"Liz Burr has served Curtis Creek students with incredible dedication, heart, and vision," said **Shawn Posey**, Superintendent of Curtis Creek School District. "Her legacy will continue to benefit children for generations to come."*

In addition to Burr, 16 other educators were honored, representing schools from across the region, including Belleview, Columbia, Gold Rush Charter, Summerville High, and ATCAA–Head Start. Each honoree was selected by their district or school site for exemplifying excellence in teaching, leadership, and student advocacy.

2025 Excellence in Teaching Award Recipients

- Faviola Garcia – ATCAA–Head Start
- Amber Claunch – Belleview Elementary
- Steven Baptista – Big Oak Flat Groveland
- Michael Torok – Columbia College
- Mary Bickley – Columbia Elementary
- Beth McIlroy – Curtis Creek Elementary
- Kim Geiger – Gold Rush Charter
- Katherine Rivas – Jamestown Elementary
- Donovan Walker – Sierra Conservation Center
- Ron Jannuzzi – Sonora Elementary
- Brian Miller – Sonora High
- Kelly Lillie – Soulsbyville Elementary
- Julie Neher – Summerville Elementary
- Kelley Kerns – Summerville High
- Nicole Scott – TCSOS County Schools
- Amber Brennan – Twain Harte Elementary

Photos from the event, including a full group of honorees and Liz Burr delivering remarks, are attached for publication.

For more information about the Excellence in Teaching Awards or to learn more about the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools, please visit www.tcsos.us.

Media Contact:

Brian Thomas
Division Director II, Innovation
Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools
bthomas@tcsos.us
209.536.2066