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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Recognizes First Graduating Class of New Teachers**

**[Sonora, CA, 4/22/26]** Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools (TCSOS) is proud to announce the first graduating class of the Teacher Residency Tuolumne program. This initiative was created to address local demands of the statewide teacher shortage. The program is a direct reflection of TCSOS's commitment to training and retaining teachers in Tuolumne County, and supporting local schools in their efforts to fill vacancies.

Through a partnership with Teachers College of San Joaquin and local districts, each resident spent a full academic year working with a mentor teacher, combining hands-on classroom experience with credential coursework.

County Superintendent Zack Abernathy said, "I am proud of this program and the collaboration with the local school districts to support Tuolumne County students. I am excited to see these graduates begin their career in our community, and commend them for their commitment and passion for education. I would also like to thank the mentor teachers for their ongoing support of these new teachers."

The first graduating class of Teacher Residency Tuolumne is:

- Gracie Smith, graduated June 2025
- Karina Herrera, graduated December 2025
- Angelica Lunsford, graduated December 2025
- Michael Rouse, graduated December 2025

The program is supported by grant funding from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, which provides \$40,000 to each resident student to offset tuition and living expenses during the residency year. Each graduate will leave the program with their preliminary credential, fully prepared for the reality of teaching in either general education or special education classrooms.

Shawn Posey, Superintendent of Curtis Creek School District, said, "Beyond the excellent instructional preparation, this program fully prepares teachers to know our students and understand the needs of our student body. I am excited to continue having our graduate work on

our campus as a full-time special education teacher, and I am confident she will be an amazing addition to our team.”

TCSOS looks forward to continued success from the Teacher Residency Tuolumne program. In June 2026, TCSOS expects to welcome 11 new teachers from the program’s second full year. They will begin their careers as credentialed educators in our local schools in the 2026-2027 school year.

For more information about Teacher Residency Tuolumne, visit: [www.tcsos.us/trt](http://www.tcsos.us/trt).