



# PRESS RELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

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### **Poway Unified Announces the Selection of Three District Teachers of the Year**

***Ana Collins, Shantel Raquel, and Katie Wu Receive District Honors***

The Poway Unified School District is proud to announce Ana Collins, Shantel Raquel, and Katie Wu as the three 2018 District Teachers of the Year. These teachers received surprise visits at their schools this morning.

A committee of District and site representatives selected the three PUSD Teachers of the Year based on criteria which included: innovations inside the classroom, contributions to their schools and the District, and commitment to their students.

The San Diego County Office of Education also sponsors a Teacher of the Year Recognition Program, honoring teachers from all of San Diego County. All three PUSD Teachers of the Year will be submitted for consideration for County Teacher of the Year.

"Teaching is a profession of both the heart and mind," said Superintendent Dr. Marian Kim-Phelps. "These teachers are 'all-in' when it comes to making a difference in our students' lives. They recognize it's not just academics, but meeting students' social, emotional, and mental health needs that contributes to our students' overall success. I congratulate them on this honor, and I am thrilled they are representing #TeamPUSD."



**Ana Collins**, Valley Elementary School

Ana, a 14-year special education educator, is a resource specialist for TK-5<sup>th</sup> grades at Valley Elementary School, PUSD's only Spanish immersion program. As a bilingual instructor, Ana has not only been able to identify learning disabilities in Valley's bilingual student population, but also developed and adapted special education materials to serve Spanish-speaking students as well as those receiving academic instruction in Spanish. This represented a significant change as these student groups were previously only able to access services in English. Her work in this area has led to significant growth and improvement in students' confidence and test scores. Ana also uses her language skills to serve as both an educator and advocate for her bilingual students and their families in PUSD.

Ana is a PUSD parent and member of the community. She is not only a soccer mom, but a baseball mom, swim mom, Boy Scouts mom, and ice hockey mom! Her involvement in community teams and PTA sponsored events has allowed her to engage with Valley students and families outside of the school day. As a result, Ana is better able to understand and engage with her students in the school setting. That rapport has built trust with the families she serves.

Ana is a strong believer in education and being a lifetime learner, not just at school but wherever life takes you. Growing up in Spain, Ana acquired a strong appreciation for language and culture both at home and abroad. Her mom was a teacher, and even though Ana initially did not pursue teaching, she fell in love with the field as an afterschool volunteer.



**Shantel Raquel**, Del Sur Elementary School

Shantel has been a teacher for 18 years and is currently teaching a first and second grade combination class at Del Sur Elementary School. Shantel has a special gift of connecting with even the shyest or hardest to reach children, and she uses that gift for her students' success. Shantel employs an eclectic teaching approach so she can customize what is needed for each one of her students, and she

spends hours researching and planning the best strategies to reach them. Ironically, Shantel also wants every child to make mistakes in her classroom because she strongly believes that those mistakes help them learn and develop grit. Shantel strives to ensure her classroom will always serve as a safe place to fall and get back up again. Her goal is to develop global citizens who will continue to do good work far beyond elementary school and PUSD.

Shantel is known for her enthusiasm and collaborative spirit; she served as her school's liaison for PUSD's new literacy adoption and mentors student teachers year after year. Shantel is also the first to volunteer or to try something new to benefit students and families. From her school's Literacy Night to the PTA Reflections program to community service projects, she believes it is her responsibility to impact students and people beyond her classroom walls. She has applied rigor, relevance, and relationships to influence her teaching, taking her instruction to new levels and raising the expectations and meeting the core need of every student.

Shantel feels her greatest accomplishments in education are the relationships she has made and continues to foster with her students, both present and past. She is a past recipient of PUSD's Excellence in Special Education Award and is proud of her impact on the whole child.



**Katie Wu**, Westview High School

Katie has been teaching for 10 years – all of them with the Poway Unified School District. She is currently an English teacher at Westview High School. Katie considers teaching to be similar to gardening, where she plants seeds in students' minds; some seeds may sprout right away while other seeds may take months or years after the student graduates before the ideas she has cultivated begin to germinate.

Katie says that her upbringing lacked parental support for education, and she struggled as a low-income, first-generation immigrant who was not a native English speaker. She fondly remembers receiving Christmas gifts through an "Adopt A Family" program, inspiring a lifetime focus on social justice. As a frequent community service volunteer, she feels like she is paying it forward for those who need the same kind of assistance her family

once did. Her past struggles also helped her to connect with her students when she began teaching English Prep, AVID, and Academic Success. She feels compassion for students, noting that some of their struggles resonated with her struggles. She also never forgot the support of her teachers that allowed her to blossom and develop into a person who is passionate about working with students.

Katie has witnessed firsthand how students need social, emotional and mental health support more so than ever. She says many of her students have built up walls and barriers to learning because they are used to being passed over, labeled as uninterested or unable to learn, and given up on at school and at home. It is because of them that Katie has shifted her teaching to start with social and emotional support. She believes that it is crucial to create a safe and cooperative learning environment for her students before they can be ready to learn. She started a writing center at Westview where skilled writing students can tutor their peers.

Katie was the first in her family to attend college – having earned a full-ride scholarship and graduating magna cum laude from the University of San Diego. She is also a past recipient of the Crystal Apple Award for Teaching, nominated by a former student.

## **2018 Poway Unified Teachers of the Year**

This is a list of all PUSD 2018 school site Teachers of the Year. All of these finalists are outstanding candidates, representative of the high caliber of professionalism and commitment that is characteristic of Poway Unified School District teachers.

| <b>Name</b>       | <b>Site</b>                      |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Lisa Flanagan     | Abraxas                          |
| Lauren LeMaster   | Adobe Bluffs                     |
| Abbie Davis       | Alternative Programs             |
| Natalie Vozely    | Bernardo Heights                 |
| Danielle Reyes    | Black Mountain                   |
| Mary Martineau    | Career Technical Adult Education |
| Cynthia Chambers  | Chaparral                        |
| Lisa Charbonneau  | Creekside                        |
| Keri Welty        | Deer Canyon                      |
| Jennifer Mitchell | Del Norte                        |
| Shantel Raquel    | Del Sur                          |

Chris Koreerat  
Jana McGurrell  
Karen Kajita  
Paul Green  
Joie Nolasco  
Laura Esparza  
Becky Scioscia  
Shaun Allshouse  
Michael Engebrits  
Kristan Abboud  
Melanie Sharoff  
Jordan McKee  
Karen Kravchak  
Betty Herman  
Kellie Du  
Sally Brown  
Cathleen Bartel  
Nicole Stowell  
Norma Carter  
Heather de Anda  
Suzanne McKibbin  
Ana Collins  
Katie Wu  
Katie Romero  
Karin Bayro

Garden Road  
Highland Ranch  
Los Penasquitos  
Meadowbrook  
Mesa Verde  
Midland  
Monterey Ridge  
Morning Creek  
Mt. Carmel  
Oak Valley  
Pomerado  
Poway High  
Rancho Bernardo  
Rolling Hills  
Shoal Creek  
Stone Ranch  
Sundance  
Sunset Hills  
Tierra Bonita  
Turtleback  
Twin Peaks  
Valley  
Westview  
Westwood  
Willow Grove