



PRESS RELEASE

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Poway Unified Announces the Selection of Three District Teachers of the Year *Dena Glynn, Courtney Jennings, and Paul Messerle* Receive Honors for the 2015-16 School Year

The Poway Unified School District is proud to announce Dena Glynn, Courtney Jennings and Paul Messerle as the three District Teachers of the Year for the 2015-16 school year. These teachers received surprise announcements at their sites this morning.

Dena Glynn

4th/5th Grade, Tierra Bonita Elementary School

For as long as she can remember, Dena Glynn has wanted to be a teacher. Coming home from school in kindergarten, she spent afternoons playing school with an imaginary class in her bedroom. Throughout high school, Dena “worked” for her fourth grade teacher grading papers for three dollars a week. Dena’s father renovated their family’s barn loft during her high school years and for five summers, Dena taught multi-aged groups of neighbors, friends, and relatives in this “one room schoolhouse.”

Alfie Kohn, an education disruptor, said, “...the fact is that kids learn to make decisions from making decisions, not from following directions.” When entering Dena’s classroom today, visitors are struck by the multitude of options for students. From students choosing where to sit, to selecting the best tools to show their learning, Dena’s classroom is a place where technology is seamlessly integrated within the activities. iPads allow her to facilitate knowledge, teach life skills, and interweave content standards with active learning.

Mrs. Glynn builds a strong classroom community, living by one rule: “Experiment. Fail. Learn. Repeat.” After nineteen years of teaching first through fifth grades in Poway Unified, Dena believes in creating an environment where students take risks, make mistakes, and ultimately, claim ownership of their learning. Mrs. Glynn considers herself and her students part of a global community of learners. Her students blog about their experiences, comment to each other and share with their peers in other states and countries. According to Dena, “This community helps my students grow, pushes their thinking, and helps impact others near and far. Social media is their bridge.”

Dena has led District Student and Teacher “EdCamps” - participant-driven professional development where attendees share information and best practices through a chosen format. Her first Student EdCamp was a Genius Hour project where students began by researching a topic of their choice, then writing and creating a way to share the learning with others. Then their classmates chose the topics they wanted to learn about and shared their knowledge as well. During this process, and others like it, Dena observes all students are able to shine – with their passions driving their successes.

Her message to the community is the power of collectiveness and collaboration in education. "The power of crowdsourcing and leveraging learning through technology helps to create an environment where students feel empowered and have a voice in their own education."

Courtney Jennings

2nd Grade, Shoal Creek Elementary School

In addition to her role as teacher in Poway Unified for the last ten years, Courtney Jennings has also served in the role of mayor of "Jenningsville." Students enter her classroom on the first day of school each year and become citizens of Jenningsville, where they hold a job and an important place and purpose in the town. Students receive a wage every day for attending to their assigned "work". Monies earned are saved and can be spent at the "Jennings' Store" every two weeks.

In Jenningsville, students learn the value of community. Courtney explains, "When students feel connected to a school and to their peers, they are willing and better equipped to stand up to peer pressure, support and lift up their friends, encourage others, and get involved."

Courtney's emphasis on community involvement goes far beyond her own classroom. This year she has worked with members of PTA and Shoal Creek's Principal, Libby Keller, to begin a monthly Character Counts Classroom Education Program where she collects books and lessons for all grades. Students have the opportunity to submit examples of how their peers exemplify the month's trait. At the end of the month, the acknowledgments are shared and each classroom teacher selects a nominee to be honored at the Principal's Character Breakfast.

In addition to the Character Counts Classroom Education Program, Courtney formed a new student and family volunteer program called, "Otter Outreach" where students and families are given two service opportunities each month. These projects have included collecting, boxing and sorting food for "Feed America", making cards and holiday cookies for homeless citizens, playing BINGO with residents of retirement/assisted living communities, and serving dinner to the homeless.

Courtney has also served as director of the school's Variety Show and has developed a series of Family Book Club Nights where families learn students' reading standards and goals, so they are better equipped to support students in their learning at home.

All of these many projects illustrate Courtney's determination to "create a heart of service" in her students, school and community.

Paul Messerle

9th – 12th Art, Rancho Bernardo High School

Inspired by his own impactful college professor, Paul Messerle strives to integrate education into the personal lives of each of his students.

Having had the opportunity to teach a variety of art-related subjects, including AP Art History, ROP Animation, Design in Mixed Media, CTE Computer Graphic Arts, and 3D Animation during his nineteen-year tenure at Rancho Bernardo High School, Paul feels his greatest accomplishments are seeing his students thrive in their personal and professional lives post-graduation, and having them come back to share those experiences with current students. Biographies of former students line his classroom walls.

According to Mr. Messerle, "Seeing so many of my students going on to work in the arts, museum, education, entertainment, and gaming industries truly validates my work. Their visits back to my

classroom inspire all of my students, no matter what their career interests, showing them that anything is possible with a determined mind and a dedicated mentor.”

Mr. Messerle’s classroom environment is engaging and visually dynamic. Art reproductions, graphic design, popular culture, college and career walls, and flags from the countries he has visited remind students of the global culture to which they all belong. “I want my students to feel safe, in an atmosphere that allows them to take risks and create freely,” says Paul. “It is my hope that each of my students develops a sense of authenticity and is able to operate on the frequency of their personal truth.”

Within the RBHS community, Mr. Messerle currently serves on the School Site Council and is an advisor for the Anime Club, and a co-advisor to the GSA club, which provides a safe, supportive and encouraging environment where LGBTQ students build self-esteem within a community of their peers. Paul has Chaired the Visual Arts Department Chair for five years, and has served on the School Improvement Program, Professional Growth, and Technology Committees.

This past year Paul held a solo Halloween-themed exhibition of over 30 of his own poster illustrations that were sold to raise money for the acquisition of a 3D printer for the RBHS 3D Animation and Computer Graphics Lab. He continues to dedicate his time and talents to this project, with over half of the needed funds already raised this school year.

In all he does, Paul Messerle fosters a culture of sensitivity and inclusiveness, combining methodologies of identification, reflection and integration as part of the process that transforms his pupils into authentic, articulate and informative writers and supported, reflective, and self-empowered individuals.

This is a list of all PUSD 2015-2016 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.

Name	Site	Grade/Subject
Theresa Abueg	Willow Grove Elementary School	2nd Grade
Hala Bushra	Creekside Elementary School	5th Grade
David Carmichael	Bernardo Heights Middle School	8th Grade Science
Jebette Caterina	Abraxas High School	High School English
Megan Clark	Stone Ranch Elementary School	1st Grade
Hilary Cuevas-Balanon	Del Sur Elementary School	4th Grade
Debbie Cunningham	Turtleback Elementary School	3rd Grade
Scott Currie	Mt. Carmel High School	English
Erik Elderson	Pomerado Elementary School	5th Grade
Christina Glady	Chaparral Elementary School	1st/2nd Multiage
Dena Glynn	Tierra Bonita Elementary School	4th/ 5th Grade
Gail Graves	Deer Canyon Elementary School	K/1st
Nicole Hanley	Morning Creek Elementary School	5th Grade
Christine Hatch	Sundance Elementary School	3rd Grade
Courtney Jennings	Shoal Creek Elementary School	2nd Grade
Kelly Kangas	Mesa Verde Middle School	8th Grade Humanities & Yearbook
Jennifer Kitelinger	Del Norte High School	9-12/Instrumental Music
Katie Krumenacker	Adobe Bluffs Elementary School	4th Grade
Helen Leigh	Westwood Elementary School	3rd Grade
Naomi Lesberg	Adult and Alternative Education	Art Teacher
Sue Martin	Garden Road Elementary School	Preschool Teacher
Mary Martineau	Poway High School	9-12 Agriculture
Mikki Matautia	Twin Peaks Middle School	6th Grade Social Studies, AVID Coordinator & Elective Teacher
Paul Messerle	Rancho Bernardo High School	9-12 Art
Nancy Moiseve	Midland Elementary School	2nd Grade
Nam Ngo	Sunset Hills Elementary School	5th Grade
Efren Pantaleon	Valley Elementary School	4th Grade
Shannon Parker	Westview High School	9-12 ASB & Dance
Michael Peck	Black Mountain Middle School	6-8 Special Ed Resource Specialist
Dan Romanowski	Monterey Ridge Elementary School	3rd Grade
Patrick Sheehan	Oak Valley Middle School	Physical Education
Teri Thomas	Highland Ranch Elementary	4th Grade
Diane Weigel	Meadowbrook Middle School	7th/ 8th Physical Education
Arlene Yamane	Los Penasquitos Elementary School	K-5 RSP

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