



Irvine Unified School District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three top IUSD educators surprised with Teacher of the Year honors *Honorees from Irvine will be formally recognized at an awards dinner in April*

IRVINE, Calif. – The Exchange Club of Irvine, in cooperation with the Irvine Teachers Association (ITA) and the Irvine Unified School District (IUSD), has selected a trio of top educators to receive Teacher of the Year honors for 2009-10.

Connie Fritsch, a second-grade teacher at Northwood Elementary School, was named the Elementary Teacher of the Year; Kris Linville, a teacher at Sierra Vista Middle School, was named Middle School Teacher of the Year; and Jeanne Jelnick, an English teacher at University High School, was selected as this year's High School Teacher of the Year.

All three were surprised with the news by ITA leaders, district staff and IUSD Board of Education members Gavin Huntley-Fenner, Sue Kuwabara and Sharon Wallin on Wednesday, Feb. 10. The honorees will be formally recognized at the annual Excellence in Teaching Awards Dinner on Friday, April 23 at the Irvine Marriott.

"These outstanding teachers represent the best the Irvine Unified School District has to offer," said Superintendent of Schools Gwen Gross. "Connie Fritsch, Kris Linville and Jeanne Jelnick are making a profound difference in the lives of students, and they're doing so with passion, creativity and an unparalleled commitment to their chosen professions. Our district is incredibly fortunate to have men and women of this caliber working in our classrooms each and every day."

Now in its 24th year, the Teacher of the Year program annually recognizes star instructors at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

About this year's winners

As a founding member of the Northwood Elementary staff, Mrs. Fritsch continuously implements new ideas and strategies to increase her effectiveness in the classroom, and she has been an early adopter of technology to support teaching and learning. Not only is she beloved by her students, she has generously shared her knowledge and expertise with colleagues. Throughout her career, Fritsch has trained numerous student-teachers and served as a mentor to new educators through the

BOARD OF EDUCATION

GAVIN HUNTLEY-FENNER, Ph.D. / SUE KUWABARA / CAROLYN McINERNEY / MICHAEL PARHAM / SHARON WALLIN

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LISA HOWELL, *Assistant Superintendent, Business Services* / CASSIE PARHAM, *Assistant Superintendent, Education Services* / TERRY WALKER, *Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources*

IUSD ... providing the highest quality educational experience we can envision.

Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program. Colleagues say her enthusiasm for teaching and her desire to help others are infectious.

Whether it's a unit on golf, photography or web design, Mr. Linville challenges his students with hands-on experiences that reward and promote creativity. Direct instruction, group work, guided practice and metacognition are commonplace in Linville's classes, and he consistently uses data, student feedback and reflection to hone his instruction. Linville is a champion of technology use in the classroom, empowering staff across the district to use the latest innovations and tools to improve their own instructional methods and classroom management strategies. He also serves as the lead technology trainer for the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program.

University High's Mrs. Jelnick utilizes a raft of teaching strategies that are integrated seamlessly, ensuring students understand the content. Having achieved success at every level of high school English, she's also emerged as a mentor to her fellow educators, establishing a monthly forum for those new to the teaching profession. Jelnick has consistently gone above and beyond to take a leadership role at Uni, including assisting with the development of ninth-grade "houses" that include English, science and world history. This year, she also served as coordinator of her school's accrediting process, devoting countless hours to oversee the required steps and complete the comprehensive report.

Selecting Teachers of the Year

Nominations for Teacher of the Year were submitted by district employees, and candidates were later interviewed by committees made up of teachers, principals, district administrators and Exchange Club members.

The committees ultimately narrowed the field to the final three using the following criteria: Evidence of a wide range of instructional strategies used effectively; commitment to the teaching profession; and demonstration of Irvine teachers' values of integrity, empowerment, learning, collaboration and trust.

Fritsch, Linville and Jelnick will later be submitted as nominees for Orange County Teacher of the Year. Last year, Sierra Vista science teacher Kathy Marvin was recognized at the local, county and state levels.

Teachers of Promise

In addition to the Teachers of the Year, the Exchange Club, ITA and IUSD also annually recognize Teachers of Promise. These are first- or second-year instructors who demonstrate professional curiosity and an unbridled enthusiasm for teaching.

This year's Teachers of Promise, also announced Wednesday, are: Megan Mulhaupt, a special education teacher at Meadow Park Elementary School; Parastoo "Paris" Shahabi, a kindergarten teacher at Northwood Elementary; Tristen Holton, a sixth-grade teacher at University Park Elementary; and Karla Covarrubias, who teaches world languages at University High.

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