



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eureka City Schools Board of Education 2022-2023 Employee Recognition Reception

On May 11, 2023 the Eureka City Schools Board of Education hosted an annual recognition event to honor the 2022-2023 Certificated Employees of the Year and the Apple Pin Honoree. Principals select a Certificated Employee of the Year to highlight and represent their school and out of those teachers the annual District Certificated Employee of the Year is selected.



- Zane Middle School Principal Tammi Wagner was honored as the 2022-2023 ECS Administrator of the Year.
- Emily Rico from Grant Elementary was honored as the 2022-2023 ECS Districtwide Certificated Employee of the Year.
- A Certificated Employee of the Year was recognized for each school: Kathy Warren from Alice Birney, Emily Rico from Grant, Lisa Barrera from Lafayette, Betsy Rains from Washington, Lisa Jouaneh from Winship, Hillary Sicaud from Zane, and Hilda Torres from Eureka High.
- Katy Schrum of Washington Elementary was honored with the Apple Pin Award.

The following is additional information highlighting each of these deserving award recipients.

Principal Tammi Wagner - Zane Middle School - ECS Administrator of the Year

This is Tammi Wagner's 28th year with Eureka City Schools. She started as an elementary teacher in 1995-1996 and worked her way up to being Principal of Lafayette Elementary School in July 2017. After three years at Lafayette she transitioned to become the Principal of Zane Middle School, where she is today.

Wagner is a fierce leader who supports and advocates for students and staff. She has been an Elementary Classroom Teacher, Intervention Teacher, Instructional Coach, and has mentored student teachers and new teachers through induction.



ECS Superintendent Fred Van Vleck says, *"I am especially proud we are recognizing one of our own homegrown employees as the Eureka City Schools Administrator of the Year. I have had the privilege of working with Tammi Wagner for the past 11 years of her nearly 30-year career in Eureka City Schools. As the Superintendent, I have worked with her as a teacher, an instructional coach, an elementary principal, and most recently as the principal of Zane Middle School."*



When I think of a model administrator who always puts what is best for students first, Tammi Wagner quickly comes to mind."

Wagner has provided years of service and dedication to her students and to Eureka City Schools. We are proud to announce her as the ECS Administrator of the Year.

Emily Rico - Grant Elementary - ECS Certificated Employee of the Year

Emily Rico is a Grant Elementary School role model known for student, family, staff, and community collaboration and engagement.

Ms. Rico has created a classroom with high, but attainable expectations, where she focuses on the individual learner. She is always thinking about how she can create exciting lessons and activities for her students. She is able to push her students to do their best and strive to never give up.

"I have never heard Emily complain, even on the most trying of days. She is not afraid to ask for help and is always open for feedback to improve her craft. She has a true passion for teaching and this is evident every time I enter her classroom. She helps make Grant a great place to be," said Grant Principal, Rachel Brakeman.



Ms. Rico currently serves as the Grant site PBIS facilitator, on the site PBIS team, Leadership team, and Collaboration team; supports PTA and site events; and is Grant's Eureka Teachers Association Representative. Rico helps shape Grant's positive school climate and is a role model



on implementing PBIS practices. She creates expectation station schedules and puts the script packets together for all teachers. She has created a monthly survey that teachers take to help drive the decisions of Grant's PBIS and Leadership teams. Another valuable role that Rico plays is that of a mentor teacher for her grade level colleague - a first year teacher in the induction program. Rico is a supportive mentor who is helping curate a future teacher leader.

A Grant colleague says, "Ms. Rico always shows compassion for her students and staff. She has a calming and fun demeanor that brings serenity to her classroom. She brings joy to her students and you can see them light up to answer questions and pose questions of curiosity on the subjects she teaches."

Kathy Warren - Alice Birney Elementary

Kathy Warren started her teaching career at Alice Birney in 2007 and has mastered her craft around the Science of Reading. Over the course of her tenure, Warren has created a comprehensive reading program that includes systematic routines to ensure all students grow. 100% of her students have grown in their Basic Phonic Skills Tests; some exceeding grade level already. Last year, Warren helped Principal Kristin Sobilo launch a 1st-5th grade school spelling bee - celebrating a commitment to student literacy.

Sobilo says, *“Her teaching produces results. Students learn to read, and the joy on their faces is evident when you enter her classroom. Her commitment to students is inspirational.”*



Alice Birney Colleague Toni Smart says *“Kathy is devoted to making sure her students have a strong foundation for future success as literate citizens. She is an excellent teacher because she has high expectations of academics and behavior for all of her students and their families. She brings consistent and loving leadership.”*



Kathy is also committed to the Alice Birney community and creates a sense of community in her classroom. Each year the school celebrates families through its Multicultural Fair and Kathy has led this huge event over the past 15 years. Every year she spends hours preparing for the “Evening With Santa” event where she takes more than 300 photos,

with each family receiving a photo. She has presented before the Eureka City Council with her students and honors our police force each year by having her students thank an officer. Kathy also jumped on board with Alice Birney’s Taiwan partners, and built a care package that was sent to another first grade class in Chiayi City, Taiwan.

Lisa Barrera - Lafayette Elementary

Lisa Barrera is a familiar and welcoming face on the Lafayette campus, as she has taught kindergarten for more than 20 years.

Principal Quincy Brownfield has worked with Mrs. Barrera for over 10 years -- as a colleague and as her administrator.

She says, "Mrs. Barrera helps children (and parents) transition into elementary school with ease and compassion. Her support both in academics and social emotional learning over the course of a school year is an impressive feat. She truly embodies what it takes to expertly mentor our youngest learners at Lafayette Elementary. Her calm demeanor, fun-loving attitude and supreme knowledge of curriculum and developmental milestones have all made such a great impact on our students."



Mrs. Barrera is truly invested in making school an engaging and enriching experience for all. Not only does Mrs. Barrera strive for excellence in the planning and delivery of her content, she also strives to promote excellence across the Lafayette campus. In addition to sitting on the Lafayette Leadership team, she is active in the PTA.



Mrs. Barrera is also a lifelong learner and often participates in professional development opportunities, collaborates with other District educators, shares her expertise with various stakeholder groups and committees, and serves as a mentor to student teachers through Cal Poly Humboldt.

Brownfield adds *"Her unwavering enthusiasm, her well-versed knowledge of early learning pedagogy, and her mastery of making school fun, all combine to make her classroom a magical and supportive place to be."*

Betsy Rains - Washington Elementary

Betsy Rains has been a strong educator in Humboldt County for 20 years. She has participated in 2 Gilder Lehrman seminars, the Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute, and Teaching American History classes. Rains has been a lead teacher in Eureka City Schools - building our current pacing guides and mentoring student teachers and new teachers through their induction.

Among many other amazing qualities, Betsy is an outstanding teacher; a teacher who integrates social science throughout her daily teaching.

She is a fearless leader in the district and delivers highly effective instruction. Betsy Rains is the lead teacher for Washington Schools Instructional team.

Principal Teri Silvers and Mrs. Rains routinely communicate about best practices in teaching and how to support ECS staff and students in reaching desired outcomes. Rains represents the full spectrum of skills in a leader and uses data, experience, and her intuition, while recognizing the needs of the population with which she is working - to continually help move Washington Elementary forward in a positive direction.

Silvers says, "With charisma and research based tools, she creates positive school behavior systems and culture. She communicates eloquently to all stakeholders, both classified and certificated. She has been able to have fierce conversations around student achievement and how teachers better their practice. Betsy is a steadfast implementer of district initiatives and a reflective learner. She has had strong improvement in her students' academic performances, her students made exceptional growth in IXL this year, and she helped Washington implement the program. She fosters networks with her community and utilizes these connections effectively to support students. She has taken responsibility to work with our two new fifth grade teachers, helping to guide them in their new careers. I am honored to present Betsy Rains as Washington's Teacher of the Year."



Lisa Jouaneh - Winship Middle School

Lisa Jouaneh is known throughout the Winship campus as an outstanding performing arts teacher who possesses a unique blend of qualities.

Jouaneh is an engaging educator, and has a talent for organizing and teaching a variety of performing arts programs; including choir, band, orchestra, and drama. She spends countless hours of extra time working with students to help them hone their musical and dramatic skills. She also plays a vital role in facilitating these programs' engaging and well-attended performances - which allows students to showcase their talents to the community.



Students from Ms. J's class said:

"She is the kindest teacher I know. She is the best teacher and she cares about everyone."



"Her class has really opened doors for me. I want to be an actress in the future and now I have some experience."

"Ms. J is kind, fun, and caring. Keep working hard Ms. J, you're a great teacher and you made the school year the best it could have been."

Principal Kristi Puzs says, "Ms. J exudes joy in her teaching. It is her dedication to teaching and her passion for music and the performing arts that inspires her students to reach their full

potential. She leads by example, modeling excellence in her skills and her interpersonal relationships. She is also known for her collaborative approach; working well with students, parents, and educators to create a supportive and enriching environment at Winship."

Hillary Sicaud - Zane Middle School

In only three years of teaching, Ms. Sicaud has shown tremendous growth as a teacher. She is skilled at building relationships with all students and delivering standards based instruction to her students through the use of district adopted curriculum.

Not only is she an effective 6th grade teacher, Ms. Sicaud has been instrumental in reviving AVID at Zane. She has participated in AVID training and successfully implemented AVID strategies into her classroom. She teaches an AVID section on the 6th grade elective wheel so that all students transitioning to middle school are explicitly taught management and organizational skills that will support them the rest of their school careers and beyond.

She is also a leader and currently serves on the School Site Council, the Zane WEL Team, Teacher Collaboration Team, and the PBIS Team.

This past year was the inaugural role of the WEL teams in Eureka City Schools. Ms. Sicaud willingly joined that team and has been a vital part of examining data, reflecting on practices, and presenting solution-oriented ideas for improving student achievement, as well as climate, for Zane students and staff. Sicaud has also worked strategically, diligently, and collaboratively on the Teacher Collaboration Team to support the focus of student achievement.



Principal Tammi Wagner says *“I’ve had the honor and privilege of watching Ms. Sicaud grow from her student teacher apprentice at Lafayette - to a skilled professional making great strides at improving student achievement through her work in the classroom and as a teacher leader on the Zane campus. Her ability to reflect, engage in challenging work and conversations, all while staying true to her inner moral compass is commendable. Her commitment to education is inspiring and I look*

forward to seeing the incredible impact Ms. Sicaud will make on future generations.”

Hilda Torres - Eureka High School

Hilda Torres is a Spanish Teacher from Eureka High's World Languages Department.

Torres started at Eureka City Schools in 1993 and worked at Zane and Winship Middle Schools prior to her tenure at EHS.

EHS Principal Rob Standish says,
"When I first met

Hilda Torres 10 years ago at EHS as a new administrator and teacher observer, I instantly thought her class was a model classroom. Language acquisition is tough, and Hilda is always looking to learn and find ways to reach students, and she does. If you want to see students in action - go any day of the year to Hilda Torres' classroom. You will see kids working, speaking, listening, sharing and growing with both the Spanish language and the culture. It is such a joy to see."

Torres has high expectations of her students and provides them with a substantial amount of support to ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn another language. She is known for her unwavering commitment to seeing her students succeed and genuine care for all students. She is aware and perceptive, often inquiring about additional support for students whom she sees struggle. She models professionalism, respect, and responsibility everyday to the students in her classes.

Torres sends examples of student work to share with EHS staff and continually shares her work toward learning objectives and success criteria. She is a consummate professional.

In addition, every school year Eureka High School offers its students an opportunity to receive their California Seal of Biliteracy. The seal recognizes students who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. Many of these students have taken four years of a world language or speak their own heritage language in addition to English and are assessed to receive their Seal of Biliteracy. Eureka High School students earned 43 Seals of Biliteracy this year in 7 World Languages, with 34 being in Spanish.



Katy Schrum - Washington Elementary School - ECS Apple Pin Award

Katy Schrum is a retired teacher who has volunteered at Washington Elementary for the past few years. She is known to go above-and-beyond in helping to create a positive school environment at Washington and her volunteerism has taken many forms.

Referred to by many students as "Grammy Music," she helps with a variety of classes to lead and assist with art projects and music.



"Her positive energy is uplifting as she navigates the school site to assist in classrooms, or to gather items that need preparation - copies, cutting, collating, you name it. She has volunteered to help our social committee, and



comes into the staffroom to decorate and supply goodies with each season and holiday. She also provides incentives and prizes for staff meetings. She is an asset to our school and is most deserving of this recognition," said Washington Principal, Teri Silvers.

Since 1992, more than 300 individuals have been awarded the Apple Pin by the Eureka City Schools Governing Board. This award of gratitude recognizes those who have gone above-and-beyond to make a difference in the lives of

ECS students and staff. They have been parent and community volunteers, good neighbors, Student Board Representatives, various employees with different classifications and many more.

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Congratulations to all of the 2022-2023 Eureka City Schools Employee Award Winners!