Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

Countywide Excellence in Education Winners Announced

Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and School Employee of the Year selected in annual awards program

Yesterday afternoon, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire surprised the three winners named in the 29th Annual Tulare County Excellence in Education Awards program. The three winners notified were Tammy Bradford (Tulare County Administrator/Manager of the Year), Jennifer Powers (Tulare County Teacher of the Year), and Sonya Lopez (Tulare County School Employee of the Year).

Earlier this month, a selection committee of Tulare County business and education leaders met to review the nominees in each of the three categories. A total of 36 nominations were received this year from Tulare County school districts. Each nomination was reviewed and scored individually by every member of the selection committee.

"Each of these individuals is deeply creative – utilizing their resources and partnerships in the community to provide greater opportunities for the students," Hire said.

WINNERS:
Administrator/Manager of the Year
TAMMY BRADFORD
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT SPECIAL SERVICES AND SELPA DIRECTOR
Tulare County Office of Education

Tammy Bradford oversees the Tulare County Office of Education's Special Services Division, with over 800 full- and part-time employees providing classroom instruction throughout the county and numerous supplemental services. Special Services supports foster and homeless youth, children – ages 0-3 – with developmental delays, students with autism, and those needing vision, hearing, behavior, psychological, social services, and occupational/physical therapy supports. Bradford has been the division's assistant superintendent for eight years.

Nominators recognize that her empathy for the students in her programs stems from growing up with three siblings with special needs. "From the age of 10, when the oldest of my three siblings

was born, I knew that my purpose in life was to make a difference, to dedicate my time and life's work to creating opportunities for those that may otherwise see a barrier in front of them. I was determined to remove that barrier," Bradford said.

One of Bradford's supporters said, "She treats her job as a 24/7 endeavor, always making herself available to superintendents, staff and parents whenever needs arise. From handling mental health crises…to meeting kids at the bus stop to make sure they get to school when they don't want to go, Tammy is a hands-on leader, involving herself in the work that her team does day in and day out, tirelessly working to support her staff and districts in their pursuit of supporting kids."

Nominators also praised her leadership, transparency, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. Bradford has used these skills to create new programs, including the Alternative Achievement Program for students with severe behavioral needs, the Dream Center for foster and homeless youth, and the Mental Wellness Triage Grant to place additional social workers in schools throughout the county.

Teacher of the Year
JENNIFER POWERS
FIFTH GRADE TEACHER, HERITAGE ELEMENTARY u(GE)-1 RSfact BMC .c 3 (a)4 P.002 Tc 0.002