

# SMCSBA

San Mateo County School Boards Association



*For Immediate Release*

## **2015 Kent Awards Highlight Excellence and Innovation in Schools Across San Mateo County**

**Foster City, CA – April 1, 2015** – The San Mateo County School Boards Association (SMCSBA), representing 22 school districts, the San Mateo Community College District, and the San Mateo County Office of Education, today announced the 2015 winners of the J. Russell Kent Awards.

The awards are given to outstanding and innovative programs either in the classroom or outside the classroom as well as district-wide programs. Applicants must demonstrate their programs promote student success, employ a high degree of creativity, and demonstrate transferability. Named after past San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools, J. Russell Kent, SMCSBA initiated the J. Russell Kent Award Program in the 1980-81 school year.

The 2015 Kent Award winners include programs that focus on innovation in the areas of professional development, STEM, student leadership and mentorship, school climate, and multi-subject project-based learning.

The Kent Awards ceremony will be held on **Monday, May 11th at 6pm at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Foster City, California**. Social hour, exhibit showcase, and musical performance (by the Bowditch Middle School Jazz Band) will begin at 6pm with dinner and the awards ceremony to follow at 7pm. In addition to honoring the 16 Kent Awards winners, the event will honor this year's winner of the annual Emily Garfield Preventive Counseling Award. The Emily Garfield Award was established through a grant from Youth Empowering Systems to honor local education pioneer Emily Garfield to focus on successful alcohol and drug prevention programs as well as positive youth development and community wellness programs. The Emily Garfield Award comes with a \$1,000 program grant. The winner of the Emily Garfield Award this year is Dr. Scott Yarbrough of the Redwood City School District.

The 16 Kent Award Winners include:

- **Belmont-Redwood Shores School District: Nesbit School** - Raising Achievement through Intensive Teacher Professional Development and Collaboration
- **Belmont-Redwood Shores School District: Ralston Middle School** - Environmental STEM Project – Wind Turbine Design
- **Burlingame School District: Roosevelt Elementary School** - Building Engineers from the Ground Up
- **Cabrillo Unified School District: Cunha Intermediate School** - Leadership Activities Program
- **Hillsborough City School District: North Hillsborough Elementary** - Student Engagement and Applied Leadership (SEAL) Program
- **Las Lomas School District: Las Lomas Elementary School** - Playground Buddies
- **Menlo Park City School District: Oak Knoll Elementary** - School Wide Yearly Theme

- **Pacifica School District: Ocean Shore School** - Ocean Shore Pods
- **Portola Valley School District: Ormondale School** - 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Farmer's Market
- **Portola Valley School District** - Caring School Climate
- **Redwood City School District: Hoover School** - Hoover R.E.A.C.H. Academics
- **San Carlos School District: Central Middle School** - Cross Curricular Bird Project
- **Sequoia Union High School District: Sequoia's Adapted Physical Education Program** - Be Safe, Be a Friend, Have Fun
- **Sequoia Union High School District: Menlo-Atherton High School** - Partnership for Success
- **South San Francisco Unified School District: Spruce Elementary** - Positive Behavior Intervention and Support
- **South San Francisco Unified School District: Parkway Heights Middle School** - Skyline College: Middle School Outreach Program

"Every year we continue to be so impressed by the amazing work done by educators here in San Mateo County," said Alisa MacAvoy, President of the San Mateo County School Boards Association and Governing Board Member of the Redwood City School District, "we are proud to continually honor their innovation."

More information about the Kent Awards presentation and banquet and SMCSBA can be found at <http://www.smcsba.org>.

#### About the San Mateo County School Boards Association

The San Mateo County School Boards Association represents the 22 school districts, the Community College District and County Office of Education in San Mateo County, California. SMCSBA supports the governance team -- school board trustees, superintendents and senior administrative staff --through education on critical public education issues and networking opportunities for its members. SMCSBA is a chapter of the California School Boards Association and is involved in developing, communicating and advocating the perspective of California school districts and county offices of education.

*For more information or to schedule a press briefing, please contact:*

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**SAN MATEO COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**  
**J. RUSSELL KENT EXEMPLARY PROGRAM AWARD**  
**Summary of 2015 Award Recipients**

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**Belmont-Redwood Shores School District**

***Nesbit School***

***Raising Achievement through Intensive Teacher Professional Development and Collaboration***

Recognizing that strong, effective teaching raises student achievement, Nesbit has created a powerful learning environment for teachers whereby teachers are able to gain the skills necessary to implement ELA curriculum at the highest possible levels. In addition to receiving extensive Reading and Writing Workshop training and extensive collaboration opportunities, Nesbit has created on-site Lab Sites every Wednesday. These Lab Sites have allowed teachers to design mini-lessons in collaboration with peers and the principal and then deliver such “live” while receiving in-the-moment coaching on improving delivery. All told, efforts to increase student achievement by increasing teacher capacity has proven highly successful

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**Belmont-Redwood Shores School District**

***Ralston Middle School***

***Environmental STEM Project – Wind Turbine Design***

The Wind Turbine Design project evolved as a result of the growing awareness and concern about global climate change. Students learn about a range of relevant scientific concepts and current affairs before they are asked to design, build and market their own wind turbine design. Designs are tested for their ability to effectively and efficiently harness wind energy, and a competition mirrors the real-world competition among engineers to develop and produce the best product. This project supports the widely anticipated new Science standards as well as requiring that a range of Common Core Standards be utilized.

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**Burlingame School District**

***Roosevelt Elementary School***

***Building Engineers from the Ground Up***

Teachers at Roosevelt understand that the need to begin to work with engineering concepts knows no age limit. Schools can wait no longer to begin teaching students to be creators in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. For three years Roosevelt has been working on a school-wide program called “Building Engineers from the Ground Up.” Since 2011, Roosevelt School has built students who have the skill sets necessary for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Building Engineers from the Ground Up program has proven that it can excite students about engineering by teaching them in a hands-on and practical way.

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**Cabrillo Unified School District**  
***Cunha Intermediate School***  
***Leadership Activities Program***

As middle school is a crucial development period for students, socially, emotionally, and physically, Manuel F. Cunha Intermediate School's Leadership Activities Program strives to create a positive and inclusive environment for all students. This is accomplished through a wide range of lunchtime activities and competitions, philanthropy drives, after school events, community involvement, and positive recognition. The Program focuses on developing strong and well-balanced students, emphasizing communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Through this student-led, innovative approach, all students have a place and feeling of belonging at Cunha. Without this Program, Cunha would be a much different place.

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**Hillsborough City School District**  
***North Hillsborough Elementary***  
***Student Engagement and Applied Leadership (SEAL) Program***

The Student Engagement and Applied Leadership (SEAL) program at North Hillsborough School focuses on building leadership skills in the fifth grade students and teaches them to become responsible role models for the younger students. It offers the fifth grade students activity choices during recess time and gives them opportunities to learn new skills and gain new experiences. The entire North community benefits from this program year after year as students build their self-esteem, the staff enjoys the volunteer service, and the parents love the positive experience for their children.

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***Las Lomitas School District***  
***Las Lomitas Elementary School***  
***Playground Buddies***

The Playground Buddies Program provides a unique play experience between kindergarten students and third grade mentors. It was designed to organize recess play in response to enrollment growth. Third grade students are trained to organize games and teach skills to kindergarten students.

Third grade Playground Buddies twirl jump ropes, coach handball and facilitate simple games on the kindergarten yard during recess. Buddies are excited to participate in the program and kindergartners are delighted to play with them. This innovative program provides support on the crowded kindergarten playground and gives the third grade students a wonderful opportunity to mentor younger peers.

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**Menlo Park City School District**

***Oak Knoll Elementary***

***School Wide Yearly Theme***

Oak Knoll School Mission: every student an exemplary scholar, a valued friend and a courageous citizen. To accomplish this mission Oak Knoll uses a yearly theme that is incorporated into everything done at Oak Knoll. Through the use of books, assemblies, and speakers, the entire Oak Knoll community works together to make the theme part of what the school is. This year the theme is compassion.

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**Pacifica School District**

***Ocean Shore School***

***Ocean Shore Pods***

The Ocean Shore Pod Program is cross-grade level program that allows students age 5 to 14 to work together to build a cohesive school community while enhancing each individual's learning and social and emotional development. The Ocean Shore Pod Program allows for all students at the school to be part of a group outside their own classroom and grade level. They work together on school and community projects and the bonds they build by getting to know each other allow for Ocean Shore to be a place of positive and understanding interactions every day.

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**Portola Valley School District**

***Ormondale School***

***2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Farmer's Market***

It started with the question: What can be done to improve the outdoor areas of the school for all to enjoy? The students noticed that the school garden wasn't receiving much attention and chose to focus on this space, turning it into an outdoor classroom. This allows all second grade students, with a variety of learning styles and abilities, an opportunity to engage in designing, creating, and selling items for a yearly farmers' market. The proceeds from this annual event are donated to local needy community gardens along with supporting the school's very own growing garden called The Butterfly Valley.

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**Portola Valley School District**

***Caring School Climate***

Over the last seven years, Portola Valley schools have heavily focused on school culture via a multi-layered social-emotional learning (SEL) approach to support students. The SEL programs are success stories of fresh, innovative strategies to provide and sustain a healthy, caring school climate. A unique combination of direct services to students, an enveloping of campus-wide supports, and triangulation with parent engagement has made a major impact on student well-being. From character awards to lunch bunches, School Climate Committees to flex scheduling, the district's emphasis on connecting students with more adults during the school day helps to maintain a nurturing environment.

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**Redwood City School District**

***Hoover School***

***Hoover R.E.A.C.H. Academics***

Hoover REACH Academics provides intensive support in English reading for 60 of the school's 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students in the after school program. At Hoover, seventy percent of students are learning English as a second language. This program allows for focused literacy support in a small group of students with a certificated teacher for 45 minutes a day, 3 days a week for 8 months. Students use mainly non-fiction texts, correlated with curricular themes taught in the school year. With the shift to common core, the high level interest of non-fiction material at their level is critical to students' success.

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**San Carlos School District**

***Central Middle School***

***Cross Curricular Bird Project***

This cross-curricular activity teaches 7<sup>th</sup> grade students the interrelatedness of the subjects they study in school. By integrating their academic skills, students demonstrate proficiencies in every subject matter. Core classes such as science, English and library science – as well as elective classes such as art – work together to complete a final project. The goal of the Bird Observation Project is to have students gain a better understanding and appreciation of the biodiversity and habitat of the Bay Area through an extended, rigorous process of conducting research and creating a creative final product.

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**Sequoia Union High School District**

***Sequoia's Adapted Physical Education Program***

***Be Safe, Be a Friend, Have Fun***

Be safe, Be a Friend, Have Fun is the Sequoia Union High School District's APE program, serving over 150 students with moderate to severe disabilities weekly through preparation for and participation in competitive events. This program exemplifies how students can exceed community expectations through collaborative and inclusive educational practices that benefit not only students with disabilities, but their non-disabled peers, as well. Be Safe, Be a Friend, Have Fun builds physical and emotional strength, the opportunity for life-long participation in sports, and a level playing field for all students.

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**Sequoia Union High School District**

***Menlo-Atherton High School***

***Partnership for Success***

The Menlo-Atherton Partnership for Success provides comprehensive academic and social-emotional support services for at-risk students and their families. The program has dramatically improved the range and effectiveness of existing programs as well as the connection of individual students and their families to the services that best address their needs. The Partnership for Success is a sustained, comprehensive and successful effort at attacking the educational inequities that hamper students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

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**South San Francisco Unified School District**

***Spruce Elementary***

***Positive Behavior Intervention and Support***

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Program (PBIS) is a research-based school-wide program to support students in exhibiting positive and productive behavior in school and in life. The program goal is to increase instructional minutes by spending less time on disciplinary issues in the classroom and fewer student referrals to the office.

School created rubrics specify expected behaviors in different school settings such as the playground, cafeteria, and classroom. A monthly character trait is emphasized. The focus remains on positive behavior, specific character traits, and good choices. Appropriate behaviors are acknowledged with special incentives.

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**South San Francisco Unified School District**

***Parkway Heights Middle School***

***Skyline College: Middle School Outreach Program***

The Skyline College Middle School Outreach Program runs a series of workshops giving students first-hand access to post-secondary education. The culmination of the series of workshops at Parkway Heights Middle School ends with a conference at Skyline College for the participating students as well as their parents/guardians that want to join. The Conference consists of students attending classes alongside college students to experience what it is like to be a student as well as a tour of the campus and its resources. Students are also exposed to a panel of professionals pertaining to different job fronts.

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**SAN MATEO COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**  
**J. RUSSELL KENT EXEMPLARY PROGRAM AWARD**  
**Emily Garfield Preventive Counseling Award**

**Redwood City School District**

*Dr. Scott Yarbrough*

Dr. Yarbrough has been with the Redwood City School District for 15 years and has made a tremendous impact with regard to supporting special education and high-risk students. He is a school psychologist, a licensed clinical psychologist and a board certified applied behavior analyst. Dr. Yarbrough has trained district staff on behavior management, special education law and crisis intervention. In the spirit of Emily Garfield, he is a true inspirational leader and mentor to many and has left a lasting legacy in the school district.