



For Immediate Release

2014 Kent Awards Highlight Excellence and Innovation in Schools Across San Mateo County

Foster City, CA - March 31, 2014 -- 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 2014 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 the 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 2014 Kent Award winners include programs that focus on innovation in the areas of 21st century learning, community engagement and creative partnerships, professional development, the arts, and academic support.

The Kent Awards ceremony will be held on **Monday, May 19th at 6pm at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Foster City, California**. Social hour and musical performance (by the San Carlos School District Tierra Middle School Jazz Band and Swing Sisters Jazz Choir) will begin at 6pm with dinner and the awards ceremony to follow at 7pm. At the ceremony, 16 award winners will be honored, including:

- Jefferson Elementary School District - Data Dialogues-Principal Professional Learning Communities
- Jefferson Elementary School District: John F. Kennedy Elementary School - John F. Kennedy School Academic Center
- Menlo Park City School District: Laurel School - The Life Skills Program
- Pacifica School District: Sunset Ridge Elementary School - Sanchez Goes to School
- Portola Valley School District - Inclusion Education Initiative (EMILY GARFIELD AWARD)
- Redwood City School District: Adelante Immersion School - Two-way Spanish Immersion
- Redwood City School District: Hoover Community School - Community Mobilization Team
- Redwood City School District: Roosevelt School - Pencil Box News
- San Bruno Park School District: Belle Air Elementary - Belle Air-Notre Dame de Namur University
- San Mateo-Foster City School District: Abbott Middle School - School Climate Change Initiative
- San Mateo-Foster City School District: Various Preschools - Parent Involvement Project

- San Mateo Union High School District - Guided Studies
- Sequoia Union High School District: Sequoia District Adult School - Sequoia Adult School Scholars (SASS)
- South San Francisco Unified School District: Sunshine Gardens Elementary School -GENE Academy Program
- South San Francisco Unified School District: Martin Elementary School - School Safety Patrol Program
- South San Francisco Unified School District: Skyline Elementary School - Skyline Glee Club

Julie Flynn with the Portola Valley School District is included in the award recipients as the winner of the third 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.

“San Mateo County continues to innovate, and we are proud to honor so many dedicated educators and amazing programs throughout our region,” said Alisa MacAvoy, President of the San Mateo County School Boards Association and Governing Board Member of the Redwood City School District.

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 which 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 2014 Award Recipients

Jefferson Elementary School District

Data Dialogues-Principal Professional Learning Communities

Jefferson Elementary School District recognized an achievement gap on English Language Arts and Mathematics State Assessments between its student groups especially English learners, Hispanic/Latino, and African American students. In order to address this inequity of learning outcomes, the district worked with staff to establish a plan of action. One of the activities was to develop "Data Dialogues" or a professional learning community for site administrators to discuss and highlight where the gaps occurred through presentations and structured conversations to work collaboratively with other site leaders to determine next steps and actions to improve student achievement.

Jefferson Elementary School District

John F. Kennedy Elementary School

John F. Kennedy School Academic Center

Beginning in 2006, the Academic Center opened to provide small, after school homework assistance to 25 4th and 5th graders and expanded to span grades K-3 involving 80 students. Throughout the past eight years, the program has changed each year adding grade levels, morning and afternoon sessions, as well as involving many credentialed teachers who share their innovativeness and creativity with the high school and college student tutors giving them "hands-on" experience in teaching. The center strives to improve and expand to better serve students and community by providing free tutoring, homework assistance and enrichment activities to all participants.

Menlo Park City School District

Laurel School

The Life Skills Program

The Life Skills Program at Laurel School provides the foundation for personal and social growth in students, teaches the Life Skills through literature, and builds a common language and camaraderie at school. Each month, a Life Skill is spotlighted throughout the school. Teachers read books representing the month's Life Skill and students participate in activities to reinforce the Life Skill. Parents complete Life Skills Grams to recognize their child's successful use of the Life Skill. Each month selected students are recognized and awarded a Life Skill wristband for doing an outstanding job exemplifying that month's Life Skill.

Pacifica School District
Sunset Ridge Elementary School
Sanchez Goes to School

Sanchez Goes to School provides students with high quality hands-on experiences in visual arts in grades TK-5. The program is developed around the standards and 21st century learning skills focusing on creativity, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and citizenship. Students have done etchings, self-portraits, still lifes, collages, mosaics, and pencil drawings using music and the outdoors as their inspiration. The student population is diverse, 30% Hispanic, 30% Filipino, 15% Caucasian, 14% Multi Racial, 6% African American, and 5% other ethnicities. The arts allow them to share common experiences that build community.

Portola Valley School District
Inclusion Education Initiative
(EMILY GARFIELD WINNER)

The Inclusive Education Initiative (IEI) emerged in 2010, the outcome of extensive parent input sessions noting the need for cohesive Special Education and inclusion support. IEI is built upon six focused pillars:

- Response to Intervention
- Learning Differences Advisory Group
- Inclusion Service delivery model
- “Universal Design for Learning”
- Ability Awareness Week
- Academic Foundations

IEI is one of the few initiatives that is innovative in structure, with networks and leadership teams, provisions for low/no cost professional development, and broad-based student support. Exemplary in parent outreach, in three short years it has emerged as a model program.

Redwood City School District
Adelante Immersion School
Two-Way Spanish Immersion Program

Adelante Spanish Immersion School is a two-way immersion program. The goals of the program include reaching advanced levels of communication and literacy in two languages, attaining academic performance levels at or above grade level in each language, developing an appreciation and understanding for the cultures of the languages studied, and gaining positive attitudes among students, families and the community. Students at Adelante receive an enriched educational program in a warm and supportive learning environment from a community dedicated to preparing children linguistically, academically and socially. We strive to enable students to contribute and thrive in our ever-changing world.

Redwood City School District

Hoover Community School

Community Mobilization Team

The purpose of the Community Mobilization Team at Hoover Community School is for the school and families to work together as partners to ensure academic success for all students. The Community Mobilization Team builds community, provides leadership opportunities for families of students, and improves school climate. The team uses the power of family-to-family outreach to increase family engagement at school. This ultimately leads to student success in the classroom and beyond. The team reaches these goals through an action-oriented strengths-based approach. The team offers a welcoming atmosphere, where there is always celebration of positive progress.

Redwood City School District

Roosevelt School

The Pencil Box News

At Roosevelt School, students in fifth through eighth grade have the opportunity to participate in The Pencil Box News, a multi-media broadcast. Students develop global awareness, literacy, and technology skills, as well as the 21st Century skills of collaboration, presentation, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking and decision-making, by creating a weekly news program. Interesting stories from all news media sources, such the Internet, television, newspapers and radio are selected by students. Motivated by a desire to share their stories on film, the students strive to write about the most exciting and intriguing news stories they can find.

San Bruno Park School District

Belle Air Elementary School

Belle Air-Notre Dame de Namur University

Three years ago, Belle Air Elementary School in the San Bruno Park School District was entering its fifth year of program improvement. The School Community determined that doing something “significantly different” was the approach they wanted to take to address the situation and meet No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. Notre Dame de Namur University was interested in establishing a laboratory school to assist in the training of its Multiple Subject teaching candidates. A partnership was established which includes: a student teacher in every classroom, a University supervisor at every grade level, a University professor on campus every day conferring with the school principal and assisting in professional development, university undergraduate and graduate students providing systematic after-school tutoring two days a week, and University assistance in parent engagement efforts. The first three years of the partnership have contributed to significantly increasing student achievement.

San Mateo-Foster City School District***Abbott Middle School******School Climate Change Initiative***

The Abbott Middle School Climate change Initiative (also known as the Campus Climate Committee) is a relational partnership of teachers, students, parents, and school administrators who work together for the continuous betterment of the Abbott School community. The school values mutual respect, empathy, good choices, teamwork, and trust. The community believes that a safe learning environment will promote success for everyone.

San Mateo-Foster City School District***Various Preschools******Parent Involvement Project***

The Parent Involvement Project is a unique and highly successful early intervention that addresses the achievement gap by serving low-income and at-risk children and their families in preschool through first grade. Parents, teachers and community volunteers collaborate in activities to support children's cognitive, social/emotional and physical development. Parents commit to four essential components:

- Participating each month in their child's classroom
- Attending parent education workshops
- Hosting home visits by the classroom teacher
- Participation in enrichment activities with their child

Community volunteers assist with activities such as parent education and field trips that further enrich the learning experience of children and parents.

San Mateo Union High School District***Guided Studies***

Guided Studies is a support program throughout the district that is designed to help struggling students both academically and socially/emotionally to help ensure their high school success. The program provides essential assistance to students who do not qualify for other academic support programs but who need additional help in order to set short-term and long-term goals, complete in-class and homework assignments, stay organized, regularly attend school, and successfully navigate the high school experience. Students whose socio-emotional stressors inhibit them from success may also elect to meet with a counseling intern on a regular basis.

Sequoia Union High School District***Sequoia District Adult School******Sequoia Adult School Scholars (SASS)***

Sequoia Adult School Scholars (SASS) provides financial support and assistance to Sequoia District Adult School ESL and GED students—the vast majority of whom have minimum wage jobs—so they can enroll in community college to continue their education and expand their career options. Founded in 2009, the foundation is run by community and school volunteers. In the past two years, 43 students have received GED scholarships. In 2013, SASS awarded scholarships to 77 Sequoia Adult School graduates who are now attending Cañada College.

South San Francisco Unified School District***Sunshine Gardens Elementary School******GENE Academy Program***

In 2008, Genentech partnered with the SSFUSD and started the GENE Academy with the goal to create positive relationships and support for children. The focus is to make a positive impact on students through a mentoring-tutoring program with Genentech employees and create excitement for science. Students who participate in 3rd grade often continue in 4th and 5th grade. During the weekly sessions, students receive help with homework. Mentors build students' confidence by encouraging problem solving and accepting responsibility. Students most look forward to the hands-on science activities. Hands-on science activities are provided in partnership with R.A.F.T reinforcing the science standards.

South San Francisco Unified School District***Martin Elementary School******School Safety Patrol Program***

The Martin School Safety Patrol Program was developed to accomplish several goals. The primary goal is to have student volunteers help keep students and others safe as they walk to and from school. Safety Patrol also helps monitor the flow of traffic at student drop-off and pick-up locations. Additional goals include teaching the children responsibility, leadership, and discipline by giving them an opportunity to be part of something bigger than themselves. The children learn the importance of civic responsibility and community involvement, while gaining a sense of pride and teamwork. Safety Patrol helps empower children to make better life choices.

South San Francisco Unified School District

Skyline Elementary School

Skyline Glee Club

The Skyline Glee Club has been highlighting the musical, instrumental and theatrical talents of third through fifth grade students since its inception in 1995. The students engage in 2 annual performances that weave music, dance and vocals into a full-blown production complete with costumes, special effects, set changes and the ever popular Grand Staff Chorus. More than 500 students have participated in its 18 year existence. Seen as a rite of passage by our student body, children "gleefully" anticipate the annual sign ups and take ownership in becoming a part of this high-energy musical group.