



Santa Barbara County Education Office

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Susan C. Salcido, Superintendent of Schools

To: All media
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EMBARGOED

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Santa Barbara County Education Office names Teacher of the Year

The Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO) is pleased to announce that Mandi de Witte, a biology and environmental science teacher at Carpinteria High School in the Carpinteria Unified School District, has been named the 2019 Santa Barbara County Teacher of the Year. An eight-year classroom veteran, Ms. de Witte is in her second year of teaching at Carpinteria High. She also serves as the school's Science Department chair.

“Mandi engages her students and makes clear for them the real-world applications of what they are learning,” said Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Susan Salcido. “The eagerness with which her students participate in classroom activities demonstrates their excitement for learning and their respect for her as their teacher and role model.”

“Our teachers serve over 69,000 students in 20 school districts,” Salcido concluded. “Being selected Teacher of the Year — and representing all the remarkable teachers throughout Santa Barbara County — is a tremendous honor.”

De Witte was just one of a number of exceptional nominees for Teacher of the Year honors. She was selected after a comprehensive review process conducted by a five-person committee. The committee consisted of administrators, local business leaders, and last year's Teacher of the Year, Oak Valley Elementary School's Jennifer Cline.

“We were inspired by each of the five finalists whose classrooms we visited,” said SBCEO Director of Teacher Programs and Support Steven Keithley. “It's a lot of work on the nominees' part. The applications are extensive, and each of them undergoes a rigorous review process. We were impressed by them all, and we also know Mandi will be a great ambassador for education in Santa Barbara County.”

De Witte will become the county’s designated representative on July 1, when she succeeds Cline as Teacher of the Year, and her nomination for consideration as California’s Teacher of the Year will begin sometime in the fall of 2018. The state winner will then move forward in the competition for 2019 National Teacher of the Year.

“Mandi is an extraordinary teaching talent,” said Carpinteria Unified Superintendent Diana Rigby. “She is incredibly bright and inspires a real thirst for learning in her students. Mandi has accomplished so much so quickly in her teaching tenure. Carpinteria High students and faculty alike are truly grateful for all she does for this school and community.”

De Witte will also be recognized at the May 24 Education Celebration held in Buellton and will be highlighted at the Nov. 3 “A Salute to Teachers” event in Santa Barbara, held in partnership with Cox Communications.

As Santa Barbara County Teacher of the Year, de Witte will be available to speak countywide. She can be reached by calling SBCEO Director of Teacher Programs and Support Steven Keithley at 964-4710, ext. 5281.

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