



Santa Barbara County Education Office

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Susan C. Salcido, Superintendent of Schools

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PRESS RELEASE

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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 Michele Frantz, first grade teacher at Joe Nightingale School in the Orcutt Union School District, as the 2020 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Frantz has 24 years of teaching experience including four years as a teacher on special assignment. She was named the Orcutt Union School District Teacher of the Year for 2018-2019.

“Michele is an amazing and inspirational teacher both personally and professionally,” said Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Susan Salcido. “She is gifted in her ability to understand and meet the needs of each student, whether that need is academic, behavioral, or social-emotional. She is truly gifted.”

“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 one of education’s highest honors.”

Frantz 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 broad-based committee. The committee consisted of administrators, local business leaders, and last year’s Teacher of the Year, Mandi de Witte.

“We were inspired by each of the four 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 Michele will be a great ambassador for education in Santa Barbara County.”

Frantz will become the county’s designated representative on July 1, when she succeeds de Witte as Teacher of the Year, and her nomination for consideration as California’s Teacher of the Year will begin sometime in the fall of 2019. The state winner will then move forward in the competition for 2020 National Teacher of the Year.

“Michele is an amazing and inspirational teacher who is truly dedicated to helping each of her students achieve at their highest level. She makes learning engaging and fun, and a life-long learner enjoys trying new strategies or technology,” said Orcutt Superintendent Dr. Debbie Blow. “Michele is highly respected by her colleagues and parents for her dedication to Orcutt’s motto, where a dedicated staff means Kids Come First.”

Frantz will also be recognized at the May 23 Education Celebration held in Buellton and will be highlighted at the Nov. 2 “A Salute to Teachers” event in Santa Barbara.

As Santa Barbara County Teacher of the Year, Frantz will be available to speak countywide. She can be reached by calling SBCEO Director of Teacher Programs and Support Steven Keithley at 805-964-4710, ext. 5281.

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