

San Joaquin County Office of Education

James A. Mousalimas, County Superintendent of Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
015-045: 2015-16 Teacher of the Year

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Seventh Grade Science Teacher Cassandra deWood Named County Teacher of the Year *Jefferson Elementary School District teacher helps lift students over a high bar of achievement*

The San Joaquin County Office of Education would like to congratulate Cassandra deWood, the 2015-16 San Joaquin County Teacher of the Year.

The Tom Hawkins Elementary School seventh grade science teacher sets a high bar for her students and does everything she can to make sure they have what they need to reach those lofty educational goals. It is for those reasons – and much, much more – that deWood received this year’s award.

The winner was announced at the Fifth Annual San Joaquin County Classified Employee and Teacher of the Year Awards Celebration Dinner on Thursday, June 11, 2015. She also received \$1,000 from Premier Community Credit Union, a long-time supporter of educators in San Joaquin County and co-sponsor of the annual awards banquet for teachers and classified school employees.

“At the end of the day, Ms. deWood pairs high expectations with incredible scaffolds,” writes Tom Hawkins Elementary School Principal Christina Orsi when nominating deWood. “The result is successful students.” The school is located in the Jefferson Elementary School District in Tracy. Principal Orsi provides examples of how those students describe deWood as somebody who pushes them to do their best; is always willing to help; makes learning about science fun; and cares about helping them.

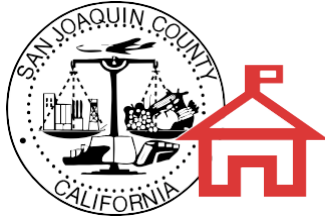
Cassandra deWood is a state and county leader in science education, and she spearheaded her own district’s implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards. She’s been awarded the California State Science Fair Teacher of the Year Award and three of the seven finalists in this year’s San Joaquin County Science Fair came from deWood’s classroom.

Or, as Orsi puts it: “Ms. deWood is synonymous with excellence in science education.”

She involves the community in science education, too, through an annual Family Science Night and the “Hawkapalooza” music festival. Money raised at the festival buys science supplies for the entire campus. She also led efforts to bring 21st-century technology into the school district. And in her classroom, she will stay late or at lunch to ensure all students and their parents have access to the technology.

Her dedication to students does not stop at science and technology. She teaches drama classes and volunteers over 100 hours a year creating the school yearbook. Her application will be submitted to the state for consideration as the California Teacher of the Year.

Four other outstanding teachers were recognized as finalists. Each received \$400 from Premier Community Credit Union.



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They are:

- Alyce Cook, Banta Elementary School, Banta Elementary School District
- Kristi Michaels, El Portal Middle School, Escalon Unified School District
- Gina Mickley, **one**.Chartville, San Joaquin County Office of Education
- Joe Sandoval, Bear Creek High School, Lodi Unified School District

Also recognized on Thursday were the four San Joaquin County Classified Employees of the Year in four different categories. Each received \$400. They are:

- Child Nutrition: Shelli Nicholas, Dent Elementary School, Escalon Unified School District
- Maintenance, Operations & Facilities: John Azevedo, Dent Elementary School, Escalon Unified School District
- Office & Technical: Karen Head, Park View Elementary School, Ripon Unified School District
- Para-Educator & Instructional Assistant: Denise Alexander, August Knodt Elementary School, Manteca Unified School District

About Teacher of the Year:

In 1972, California began recognizing outstanding teachers for their dedication and commitment. Since that time, three County Teachers of the Year, Paulette Bogetti (1992), Jeff Wright (2001), and Art Coleman (2003) went on to be selected as California Teacher of the Year. Each district, through their superintendent's office, may submit up to three candidates for consideration for the County Teacher of the Year.

About the San Joaquin County Office of Education:

San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) provides educational leadership, resources, and services to support schools throughout the county. With its highly regarded programs, innovative staff, and community partnerships, SJCOE ensures that every student in San Joaquin County has the opportunity of a quality education. For more information, visit www.sjcoe.org.

About Premier Community Credit Union:

Premier Community Credit Union was founded in 1931 in the midst of the Great Depression. A handful of local educators gathered to form a nonprofit, financial cooperative – Stockton Teachers Credit Union – to provide much needed personal financial services to educators. Over the past 81 years, the credit union has grown and thrived, while maintaining its strong ties to the education community.

To share the financial services with other parts of the community, the credit union has expanded the benefits of membership to all of San Joaquin County communities. While it expanded, Premier Community Credit Union has always been dedicated to the education community in San Joaquin County – one of the reasons why they are proudly sponsoring the Classified Employee and Teacher of the Year Awards Celebration Dinner. Standing true to the credit union philosophy of “people helping people,” Premier Community Credit Union is ready to service the needs of the education community as well as the broad communities it serves in San Joaquin County. For more information, visit www.premierccu.org.