



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 7, 2018

018-060: San Joaquin County Teacher of the Year Announced

Contacts: Zack Johnson, (209) 662-5839; Carly Sexton, (209) 468-9297

**Catherine Ettle Named San Joaquin County Teacher of the Year**

*Lincoln Unified School District music teacher moves forward as California Teacher of the Year finalist*

The San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) is excited to announce that Lincoln Unified School District (LUSD) teacher Catherine Ettle has been named the 2018 San Joaquin County Teacher of the Year. The surprise announcement was the culminating moment at the Eighth Annual San Joaquin County Classified Employee and Teacher of the Year Awards Celebration Dinner held at the SJCOE on Thursday, June 7.

As San Joaquin Teacher of the Year, Ettle received \$1,000 from Premier Community Credit Union, a longtime supporter of educators in San Joaquin County and co-sponsor of the event. Ettle's nomination will now be submitted to the state for consideration as California Teacher of the Year.

Ettle, a 21-year teaching veteran, is LUSD's lead music program teacher and the Sierra Middle School and Lincoln High School band teacher. Ettle was nominated by LUSD Superintendent Tom Uslan for her success creating one of the premier music programs in the country.

Her nomination was further supported by a letter from Dominic Solari, a former student of Ettle's who highlighted her tireless efforts advocating for students and her ability to connect with, support, and inspire students. In his letter, Solari writes:

She has altered the course of my life and the lives of countless other students. She works tirelessly to make band and music available to everyone, regardless of their academic, scheduling, or economic challenges. She brings her students together as a community and extolls a love of life and music that is infectious to the entire band. She pushes us past our self-conceived limits and finds or creates new opportunities for us to grow as musicians and people. Above all, she is a friend who will always be there for any of her students, ready and willing to help them deal with any of the challenges that life dishes out. She is one of those teachers that they make movies about.

Four other outstanding teachers were recognized as San Joaquin County Teacher of the Year finalists. Each received \$400 from Premier Community Credit Union. They are:

- **Kristin Olson**, Mountain House High School, Lammersville Unified School District
- **Charles Spikes**, Jefferson School, Jefferson Elementary School District
- **Shirley Steigenga**, Park View Elementary School, Ripon Unified School District
- **Melissa Turner**, Lodi High School, Lodi Unified School District

Also recognized at the awards dinner were the six San Joaquin County Classified Employees of the year in six different categories. They are:

- **Carrie Jones**, *Child Nutrition*, Tracy High School, Tracy Unified School District



- **Lisa Eisenga**, *Maintenance, Operations, and Facilities*, Monticello Elementary School, Jefferson Elementary School District
- **Heather Kooreman**, *Office and Technical*, Sebastian Questa Elementary School, Lammersville Unified School District
- **Opal Burt**, *Para-Educator and Instructional Assistance*, New Jerusalem Elementary School, New Jerusalem Elementary School District
- **Craig Schwarz**, *Support Services and Security*, School for Adults, Stockton Unified School District
- **Becky Duncan**, *Transportation*, Jefferson Elementary School District

For pictures of the honorees and finalists, please go to:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14rA2V-c6xupmat6S9d0DPuv00mwMXBet?usp=sharing>.

***About Teacher of the Year and Classified Employee 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. For more information about California Teacher of the Year, go to [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct/). For more information about California Classified School Employee of the Year, go to [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cl/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cl/).*

***About the San Joaquin County Office of Education:***

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