

PRESS RELEASE



For release on April 20, 2022

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Coronado Unified Announces 2022 Teachers Of The Year

Four teachers, one from each of the school sites, have been selected as Coronado Unified School District Teachers of the Year.

“Recognition of these four outstanding educators is also a celebration of the profession, and our amazing team of teachers across the district. I am inspired by their commitment to our children.” said Superintendent Karl Mueller.

The teachers will be recognized at the April 21st Governing Board meeting and the public is encouraged to attend. The recognition will take place at the beginning of the meeting at 4pm in the CUSD District Office at 201 6th Street.

Jodi Judd, Silver Strand Elementary, 2nd grade teacher

Jodi Judd has been a teacher in the district since 1999. Her experience, curiosity, and calm demeanor endear her to colleagues and students alike.

Her students shared their thoughts on their teacher: “Mrs. Judd believes in us and when we make mistakes she tells us it’s okay,” said Eva. “She’s the perfect combination of strict and fun,” said Jack. “She’s kind,” was the unanimous opinion of her class.

Silver Strand’s Reading Specialist Ellen Cody shared, “Jodi incorporates project-based learning, which allows enrichment for academically strong students and a love of learning for all. One such activity is her “Invention Convention” where students create inventions from everyday things (and their creativity) to share with their classmates.”

Cody added that “Jodi was a military dependent as a child and taught in South Korea through the Department of Defense prior to coming to Coronado, so she understands the unique needs of our military population.”

Rise’ Cooley, Village Elementary, 3rd grade teacher

Rise’ Cooley has been a teacher in the district since 1998. Her openness to new ideas and passion for teaching and learning make her a leader among her peers.

Students in her 3rd grade classroom credit her with making school and learning fun: "She's a fun teacher and tries to make things fun every day by having animals in the classroom," said Maddox. Wolfgang added, "When she was sick, we knew that she missed us. She said, I'd rather be with you than at home. She understands our needs and is trustworthy." Maddie put it succinctly, saying, "She is determined to help us learn!"

"You can definitely tell that her students adore her and are thriving with the supports she has instilled," noted Village Teacher Alexis Wright. "She is constantly evolving and never ceases to amaze her teammates. Risé spends many tireless hours ensuring that her students are receiving top notch instruction skills. She truly embodies everything that it means to be an educator," Wright added.

Kevin Ramirez, Coronado Middle School, 6th grade Science and ASB

Kevin Ramirez has been teaching in the district since 2013. In addition to teaching 6th grade science and ASB, he serves as the school's Science Department lead and co-advisor for the CMS Optimist Club.

Kevin begins each class period by helping students find their own voice and develop their own ideas as they examine together something newsworthy in the world of science. His classes are collaborative and safe places where students thrive and explore the world around them.

Current and former students of Mr. Ramirez expressed their gratitude for time spent in his classroom: "Mr. Ramirez gains a connection with students that allows them to be creative and be themselves, no teacher I've ever met is like him and he is truly unforgettable," shared Bella. "He not only teaches us content but is a role model to us students. He doesn't just do what's expected, he connects with us and makes us feel like school is our second home," said Sydney. Liam added, "He makes everyone he is around feel important and good about themselves."

CMS Science teacher Stacy Salimando shared, "Kevin Ramirez is a wonderful co-worker. He puts in an incredible amount of effort every day to do the absolute best he can to serve all students and staff from various cultural and academic backgrounds. He goes above and beyond for all of his 6th grade students, ASB, and helped out with KCMS extensively during the beginning of the year."

William Lemei, Coronado High School, physics/AP Physics teacher

William "Bill" Lemei began teaching at CHS in 2000 and has taught various mathematics subjects and all levels of physics over the years. He has a special bond with students, sharing in their Islander heritage as a 1965 CHS graduate.

His gentle nature and insightful communication skills have a positive impact on his students and on staff members across the entire district. Fellow teacher Nicole Belong acknowledged Lemei's leadership role, "He is a great leader. Stepping up to do the work on our new LMS (Learning Management System) and present that to our CUSD focus group."

CHS math teacher Michelle Walker summed up Lemei's influence on his colleagues. "He is honest but comforting, demanding but bendable, and knowledgeable but questioning. I aspire to be like him, but I can never attain his kind of greatness. He is simply one word - AMAZING."

He is also popular and respected among students, and consistently receives multiple nominations for the annual student-selected Most Inspirational Teacher award. "Mr Lemei inspires his students to find what they love through his passion for physics," said Mallory. Josephine agreed, "Mr. Lemei is so passionate about teaching. He's eager to teach us, which makes us eager to learn." Abi shared, "Not only does he care about us learning, he also cares about us becoming good people."

CHS Principal Karin Mellina said, "Mr. Lemei prepares our students to be inquisitive, mindful thinkers and inspires everyone he meets to embrace their best self."

In addition to being named the CHS Teacher of the Year, Lemei has also been selected as the CUSD District Teacher of the Year. As the CUSD representative, Lemei will be nominated for the San Diego County Teacher of the Year award and honored at the annual Cox Communications "Salute to Teachers" event next fall.

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