

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces: Countywide *Excellence in Education* Winners Announced Teacher of the Year, School Employee of the Year and Administrator/Manager of the Year Named

A selection committee of 15 Tulare County business and educational leaders met recently to choose the Tulare County Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year and School Employee of the Year for 2008. The *Excellence in Education* Awards recognition program, now celebrating its 14th year, honors “the best of the best” in three educational categories. Applications are reviewed and scored individually by every member of the committee.

"The common trait in this year's winners is that they are people who work passionately to ensure every student's success," says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "They are people who set high standards for themselves, the people they support and their students. They also demonstrate remarkable success in meeting those standards."

The Tulare County Office of Education and County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak are pleased to announce the following *Excellence in Education* Award winners:

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Administrator of the Year

Howard Berger, Superintendent, Tulare Joint Union High School District

Howard Berger, superintendent of Tulare Joint Union High School District, is the 2008 Administrator/Manager of the Year. Mr. Berger exemplifies the concept of moving students toward academic excellence, first as principal at Tulare Union High School and now as district superintendent. His district-wide academic improvement plan is being implemented with one goal in mind: promoting success for all students. Mr. Berger was also praised for his vision in implementing new community programs to support the schools including the development of a board of business leaders to lend support for a newly formed academic/vocational studies program.

Teacher of the Year

Rebecca Bullick, English Teacher and Lead Teacher of the Agribusiness Academy at Mt. Whitney High School, Visalia

Winner of the 2008 Tulare County Teacher of the Year, Rebecca Bullick, impressed the selection committee for her work with at-risk or disengaged students through her role as the Lead Teacher for Mt. Whitney's Agribusiness Academy. Nominators said that Ms. Bullick "lives" for her students, energizing them to meet her high expectations, whether they are enrolled in one of her English classes or the Agribusiness Academy. Colleagues and students alike commended her high standards, skilled guidance and loving encouragement. Principal Jeff Hohne said "As a result of her safe and supportive classroom, many students with storied pasts and weak personal foundations have blossomed into academic champions."

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School Employee of the Year

Jennifer Daniels, Principal's Secretary, Tulare Union High School

Mrs. Daniels was selected as the 2008 School Employee of the Year for her extraordinary support skills as secretary to Principal Michelle Nunley. Nominators praised her for her communication and coordination abilities in service to the families, students and staff of Tulare Union High School. With nearly 2,000 students and 160 staff members to track, Mrs. Daniels is responsible for helping to oversee the school's budget, manage the substitute teachers, create school publications, brochures and catalogs, and comfort students and parents when needed. Her "can-do" attitude has earned her the respect of administrators in the district office. She was recently given the responsibility of developing Tulare Joint Union High School District's new web site.

Summary

"We greatly appreciate the support of our partners in this event – the Educational Employees Credit Union, its President/CEO Beth Dooley, and board of directors," says Jim Vidak. "Together, we have the privilege of recognizing the many talented men and women who devote their lives to educating children and young adults in Tulare County."

Award recipients, finalists and nominees will be honored at a recognition breakfast beginning at 7:30 a.m. on October 15, 2008, at the Visalia Convention Center. For more information, contact Christine Chapman, Administrative Assistant, at (559) 733-6302.

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