

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: Winners of first annual Torch Academic Achievement Awards announced

To recognize Tulare County schools or districts for effective instructional practices that are making a difference in improving student achievement, the Tulare County Office of Education has created the new Torch Academic Achievement Awards program. The program was conceived by Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services Dr. Pansy Ceballos and the program managers within her division who work directly with school districts supporting their instructional efforts. For example, Instructional Services programs such as Educational Resource Services (ERS) are directly involved in supporting academic achievement through countywide teacher training and professional development, assessment and evaluation of instructional programs. “All Tulare County schools are working hard to realize consistent academic growth for their students,” says County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “The Torch Awards are a way to highlight those schools that have instituted innovative programs to achieve academic growth. Through these awards, we hope to encourage other schools to study the winning programs and utilize the practices that might improve their own instructional efforts.”

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Page 2

The Tulare County schools or districts selected for the first annual Torch Award are: Columbine Elementary (Delano), Exeter High School, Freedom Elementary School (Farmersville), Mineral King Elementary School (Visalia), Mt. Whitney High School (Visalia), Mulcahy Middle School (Tulare), Pleasant View Elementary School District (Porterville), Waukena Joint Union Elementary School District (Tulare).

The schools or districts receiving the Torch Award were nominated by the Instructional Services Program Manager based on the following criteria: 1) Achievement, based on measurable data, such as a schools' Academic Performance Index scores; 2) An innovation that has contributed to academic growth, such as student interventions, an attendance program, etc.; and/or 3) A successful partnership with parents, businesses or an outside educational agency.

Dr. Ceballos has contacted each of the winners and will present the awards to the schools/districts in the next few weeks. "The winners of the Torch Award have been delighted by the recognition," says Dr. Ceballos. "Receiving this award acknowledges that teamwork and focused effort are the keys to realizing sustained student achievement."

For more information on the Torch Academic Achievement Awards, contact Dr. Pansy Ceballos at (559) 733-6328. For information on other Tulare County Office of Education programs or events, call Robert Herman, public information officer, at (559) 733-6606.

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