

# 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 second annual Torch Academic Achievement Awards announced**

This month, the Tulare County Office of Education will honor ten schools for their progress in student academic achievement. The recognition is part of the second annual Torch Awards for Academic Achievement. The awards were created last year to recognize Tulare County schools or districts for effective instructional practices that are making a difference in improving student achievement. The recipients of the 2010 Torch Awards are: Dinuba High School, Jefferson Elementary (Dinuba), Golden Valley Elementary (Orosi), Earlimart Elementary, Alila School (Earlimart), Sundale Union Elementary (Tulare), Ducor Union Elementary, Goshen Elementary (Visalia), Santa Fe Elementary (Porterville) and Richgrove Elementary.

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.

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Dr. Ceballos has contacted each of the winners and will present the awards to the schools/districts in the next few weeks. “We appreciate that schools are continually refining their instructional practices in order to meet the individual needs of their students,” says Dr. Ceballos. “We want to celebrate the practices that are making a difference and showcase programs that are showing growth on a consistent basis.”

The schools or districts receiving the Torch Award were nominated by the Instructional Services program managers 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.

“Through the Torch Awards, we hope to encourage other schools to study the winning programs and utilize the practices that might improve their own instructional efforts.” says County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak.

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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