



GROSSMONT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Catherine Martin, Public Affairs
(619) 644-8082

Grossmont Union High School District Announces 2008-09 Teacher of the Year Nominees

*Daniel McDowell and Thomas Waldron Selected to Represent GUHSD in
Prestigious San Diego County Teacher of the Year Competition*

EL CAJON, CA—At its Governing Board Meeting on Thursday, April 10, the Grossmont Union High School District honored Teacher of the Year nominees from its represented school sites. These nominees are selected by their peers. A panel comprised of previous Teachers of the Year and District personnel selected two representatives from this distinguished group of nominees to be considered for the San Diego County Teacher of the Year competition. If selected to represent the County, the next step is the California State Teacher of the Year competition.

GUHSD 2008-09 Teacher of the Year Nominees:

Mathematics Instructor and Class Advisor
Representing Grossmont High School
Fred Cole

English Instructor and Coordinator for the Academy of Hospitality & Tourism Management
Representing Mount Miguel High School
Kim Bellaart

Construction Technology Instructor, Department Chairperson and Softball Coach
Representing El Capitan High School
Joseph Cota, Jr.

Social Science Instructor, Class Advisor, Girls' Waterpolo Coach and Eagle Link Coordinator
Representing Granite Hills High School
Daniel Root

Social Science Instructor, Title I Coordinator, BTSA Support Provider, Director of the Success Academy, the Advisory Program, and the Learning Center
Representing Monte Vista High School
Marcus Barlow

(more)

Social Science Instructor, Class Advisor, BTSA Support Provider, Department Chairperson, Cross-Country and Track Coach
Representing Santana High School
Donald Bainum

Mathematics Instructor and Department Chairperson at Chaparral High School
Representing Alternative Education
Melanie Ruiz

Speech and Language Pathologist at El Capitan and former Special Education Instructor
Representing Special Education
Fredda Schiffman Ferguson

Following are the two GUHSD Teachers of the Year who have been selected to go on to compete at the County level:

Thomas Waldron
2008 – 2009 GUHSD Teacher of the Year
Representing Valhalla High School

Tom has been teaching English and AVID at Valhalla for almost 32 years, and is a former Golden Apple winner. One student described Mr. Waldron's class as, "planned spontaneity"; where the lessons are constantly evolving, depending on how well the previous lesson went. Mr. Waldron starts each day with music and individually greets each student with a handshake. Tom is well regarded by his colleagues and adored by his students. One colleague said of Mr. Waldron, "(he) treats his students with such respect, as adults – or better yet, as colleagues in learning..." Tom's own daughter, who was formerly a student of his, wrote a note which stated, in part, "I feel privileged to be not only your daughter, but your student as well. You are such a gifted teacher and our ...class was one of the most wonderful, memorable classes of the last four years."

Daniel McDowell
2008 – 2009 GUHSD Teacher of the Year
Representing West Hills High School

Dan is currently teaching Social Science and computer courses, and is also a Club Advisor and the Web Manager at West Hills. He is "always open to new ideas, theories and techniques that better serve (his) objectives and the varying needs of (his) students." Dan integrates cutting-edge technology-based projects and assignments throughout his curriculum. Mr. McDowell is part of a nationwide network of teachers and educational technologists who continually look to improve instructional strategies, due to his connections with the SDSU Department of Educational Technology, the San Diego County Office of Education, and our own Technology Resources Department. According to West Hills Principal Brian Wilbur, "Dan's love for his kids is evident to all. He is innovative and creative. (He teaches) what was once a dying class, (that) now has a robust enrollment with a waiting list. Dan is a much sought after presenter at State and National conferences. He literally touches the lives of thousands of students through his own, and other's classrooms."

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