

**Thirty educators and school employees to be honored at 25th Annual Excellence in Education Awards ceremony next week**

Next week, 30 exceptional Tulare County educators and school employees will be honored at the annual Excellence in Education Awards breakfast. The nominees were submitted by Tulare County school districts and the Tulare County Office of Education in three categories – Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and School Employee of the Year. A committee of Tulare County business and educational leaders individually reviewed and scored each nominee to determine the finalists and winners, which were announced in May.

**Administrator/Manager of the Year**

**Dr. Clare Gist**

**Superintendent, Tulare City School District**

Dr. Clare Gist supported the Tulare district for over 29 years before retiring this summer. Her roles included teacher, principal, director, assistant superintendent of Business Services, and superintendent. Dr. Gist holds a Doctorate of Education from University of the Pacific and a Masters in Educational Administration from California State University, Bakersfield. She was praised by her nominators as a hands-on superintendent, wholly dedicated to learning every aspect of district operations. She was also praised for her leadership in promoting programs that support the whole child, the whole school, and the whole community.



### **Teacher of the Year**

#### **Dr. Tabby Grabowski**

#### **English Teacher/Literacy Coach, Tulare Union High School**

Tabby Grabowski is an English teacher and literacy coach at Tulare Union High School. Dr. Grabowski teaches Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum, dual enrollment college English, and is the district's literacy coach. In addition, she is an adjunct instructor in English Language Arts at College of the Sequoias. Her teaching career includes 19 years of experience, with 11 years at the Tulare Joint Union High School District. Dr. Grabowski holds a Doctorate of Education from Northeastern University in Boston and a Masters in Language Arts from California State University, Fresno. Her colleagues wrote that she has an extraordinary ability to connect with each student, making learning fun and inspirational.



### **School Employee of the Year**

#### **Taurie Thayer**

#### **Receptionist, Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE)**

American poet Maya Angelou said, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Taurie Thayer, TCOE's receptionist at the administration building, uses these words to inspire herself in her day-to-day interactions with staff and visitors. Warm, funny, caring, and serving, she calms nervous job applicants, assuring them that they will "ace the interview," and helps presenters using the conference center with an assortment of last minute items. Ms. Thayer, who has worked for TCOE since 2016, also manages the TCOE room reservation system, working with event coordinators and maintenance and operations staff on dozens of meetings held in the Redwood Conference Center every week.



The winners, finalists, and nominees will be honored at an invitation-only awards breakfast at the Visalia Convention on October 29. Among the finalists in the Administrator/Manager of the Year category is Joy Soares, TCOE's College and Career director.

The Excellence in Education program is a partnership between the Tulare County Office of Education and EECU. To see a video highlighting the three winners, visit [tcoe.org/ExcellenceInEducation](http://tcoe.org/ExcellenceInEducation) beginning November 1.

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## Noted improvement science consultant returns to Tulare County November 1



Nationally-respected administrator and consultant Dr. Pat Greco will return to Tulare County November 1 to continue her workshops on improvement science. Dr. Greco is the keynote speaker for the four-part Learning and Leadership Forum organized by the Instructional Services Division. At the first meeting of the Learning and Leadership Forum on September 13, Dr. Greco spoke to 160 Tulare County educators about improvement science processes and the difference they can make in student achievement and overall district operations.

As superintendent of Menomonee Falls (Wisconsin) Schools, Dr. Greco successfully used improvement science to accelerate system, school, and student learning. Under her leadership, the district adopted a problem-solving mindset which yielded an impressive array of impacts, including transforming Menomonee Falls High School from a federal designation of “in need of improvement” in 2011 to a *U.S. News & World Report* “top high school in the nation.”

“Dr. Greco’s work in Menomonee Falls has enormous benefits for Tulare County schools,” said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. “Learning how we can implement improvement methodologies to support Tulare County districts and all student groups will help districts move forward with the improvement process.”

Tulare County administrators interested in hearing Dr. Greco at future meetings of the Learning and Leadership Forum – scheduled for November 1, February 7, and March 20 – should register online at [tulare.k12oms.org/147-164507](http://tulare.k12oms.org/147-164507). To see a video of Dr. Greco’s September 13 presentation, visit [tinyurl.com/TCOELLF1](http://tinyurl.com/TCOELLF1).

*Photo above:*

*~ Dr. Pat Greco is the keynote speaker for the four-part 2019-20 Leadership and Learning Forum. Dr. Greco spoke to 160 Tulare County educators on September 13 on how improvement science methodologies were used to turn her Wisconsin school district around. She will return to Tulare County November 1, February 7 and March 20.*

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## Thousands of students treated to orchestral performances during annual Young People's Concerts



Yesterday, 5,000 Tulare County students, grades 3-6, attended the Young People's Concerts for live orchestral performances. Coupled with the performances were lessons on the various instruments in the orchestra, music history, and concert etiquette. This year, the Sequoia Symphony Orchestra performed its "top ten classical countdown," with selections from pieces chosen by students.

Since 1959, the Tulare County Office of Education and the Sequoia Symphony Orchestra have partnered to bring symphonic music to the students of Tulare County. "We appreciate that the symphony has been our partner for 60 years in inspiring generations of Tulare County students to participate in music programs at their schools," said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. "Music Director Bruce Kiesling does a wonderful job of engaging students in learning about the music, the composers, and the instruments the orchestra members play."

Over 2,200 students are expected to attend a second pair of concerts on October 29 at the Buck Shaffer Theater in Porterville.

*Photo above:*

*~ Bruce Kiesling, music director for the Sequoia Symphony Orchestra, conducted selections from 10 symphonic arrangements and provided lessons on the various musical instruments for thousands of students that attended the annual Young People's Concerts.*

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## Friday Night Live chapters across the state conduct annual Roadwatch survey



On October 8, young people from 79 Friday Night Live (FNL) chapters in 35 California counties surveyed 96 intersections near high schools and middle schools as part of the program’s annual Roadwatch survey. FNL members observed 16,392 instances of distracted driving in just one hour’s time – an average of over 170 cases of distracted driving per intersection surveyed. With over 54,000 cars passing through the observed intersections, over 30% of drivers were distracted in some way as they traveled past schools during rush hour. Distractions during the one-hour assessment ranged from the use of hand-held cellphones, tablets, and laptops, to eating with utensils and even kissing.

“This assessment activity alone will not be what changes the community,” explains Lynne Goodwin, program director of the California Friday Night Live Partnership. “The actions that FNL participants take as a result of this activity is where we will see real change occur.” Ms. Goodwin reports that in previous years, armed with their Roadwatch data, students of Magnolia High School in Orange County successfully obtained funding for the city to install a crosswalk and traffic light near their school. Another chapter in Watsonville appeared before the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors with data in hand to fight for the re-prioritization of a project to re-engineer a local street to include sidewalks. Year after year, Roadwatch proves to be a vital tool for raising awareness about the issue of distracted driving and improving safety on roadways throughout California.

For more information on CFNLP safety programs, contact Lynne Goodwin at [lgoodwin@tcoe.org](mailto:lgoodwin@tcoe.org).

*Photo above:*

*~ Students from Del Campo High School in Fair Oaks were among 79 Friday Night Live chapters across the state to conduct the program’s annual Roadwatch survey.*

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## Orosi High School crowns Julieana Martinez homecoming queen



Julieana Martinez, a senior at Orosi High School (OHS), was crowned homecoming queen on Friday. Julie is a student in the TCOE AcCEL classroom at the school. Her teacher, Veronica Cruz, says, “Julie is a compassionate and caring young lady who enjoys life. She is very social and always willing to participate with campus and community activities.”

Julie has been an active member of the Cardinal Partners Club for four years on the OHS campus and was secretary of the club last school year. The Cardinal Partners Club is a campus-wide club that promotes interactions and campus events between students in regular and special education classrooms.

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## Local Slick Rock winner captures a top prize at the All American High School Film Festival

Josh Glass, a winner in the 2019 Slick Rock Student Film Festival in the sports highlights category, was at the Kings Theater in Brooklyn, New York October 11-13 for the All American High School Film Festival. Josh had three films accepted to the festival out of over 2,000 entries from students in the U.S. and Canada. Two of his films were accepted in the sports highlights category, the other in the broadcasting highlights category. For his film, *What Do You Show Them?*, Josh won first prize. The film features racing highlights from fellow Redwood High School student and go cart racer Aiden Kempf.

Redwood High School Media Arts teacher Bill Henshaw reports that Josh's winning film fell short at Slick Rock, but that the student reworked the film, adding a voiceover and sound effects to enhance the film. "His hard work paid off and he came home with the big win!" said Mr. Henshaw. Josh's other two films both finished in the top four within their categories. Josh has been invited to apply to the New York University Film School, which he is considering among other universities.



Entries for the 2020 Slick Rock Student Film Festival will be accepted beginning in December. Visit [tcoe.org/SlickRock](http://tcoe.org/SlickRock) for updates.

*Photo above:*

*~ Josh Glass (left) of Redwood High School was a winner in the All American High School Film Festival held in Brooklyn, New York, October 11-13. Josh won for a sports highlights video about Aiden Kempf (right), a go cart racer and classmate. Josh is a previous Slick Rock Film Festival winner locally.*

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## Coming Up!

- **October 20 - 26**  
**CHARACTER COUNTS! Week**  
For more information, contact Kelley Petty at [kelleyp@tcoe.org](mailto:kelleyp@tcoe.org) or (559) 740-4303.

- **October 21 - 25**  
**Red Ribbon Week**  
[More information](#)
- **October 30**  
**Tulare County Red Ribbon Celebration**  
4:00 - 6:00pm, Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia, Visalia  
For more information, contact the CHOICES Program (559) 651-0155.
- **November 4**  
**Implementing the EL Roadmap for Leadership Teams**  
9:00am - 2:00pm, TCOE Conference Center, 6200 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia  
Register online to attend at [tulare.k12oms.org/147-172073](http://tulare.k12oms.org/147-172073).
- **November 5**  
**Region VII Conference Best Results for English Learners**  
8:00am - 3:30pm, Double Tree Conference Center, 2233 Ventura St., Fresno  
Register online to attend at [tulare.k12oms.org/147-166551](http://tulare.k12oms.org/147-166551).

View more events at [tcoe.org/CalendarofEvents](http://tcoe.org/CalendarofEvents).

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To receive *News Gallery Week*, visit [tcoe.org/GetTheGallery](http://tcoe.org/GetTheGallery), or contact Jennifer Fisher at [jenniferf@tcoe.org](mailto:jenniferf@tcoe.org) or (559) 733-6172.

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