



# South Bay Union School District

A community dedicated to achievement for all

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## NEWS RELEASE

September 17, 2018

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### **South Bay Teacher named among San Diego County Teachers of the Year District Celebrates Jose Villegas from Nestor Language Academy**

Imperial Beach, CA – Nestor Language Academy middle school teacher Jose Villegas was named among the five San Diego County Teachers of the Year during the 28th annual Cox Presents: A Salute to Teachers. The annual award ceremony, sponsored by San Diego County Credit Union and the San Diego County Office of Education, was broadcast live from Balboa Theatre Saturday night, and celebrates the work of San Diego County's 22,000 public school teachers.

The five teachers honored were selected from 10 finalists, out of a field of 41 nominees from districts throughout the county. A panel of judges evaluated the nominees on criteria including student achievement, professional development and community involvement, teaching philosophy, knowledge of current issues in education, promotion and development of the teaching profession, accountability, and ability to serve as ambassadors of education. The five county recipients will represent San Diego in the California Teacher of the Year program, which will announce a winner later this fall.

Jose was honored for his dedication to his students. He teaches math in Spanish to students in grades 7 and 8 at Nestor Language Academy. His students are fully bilingual and his classroom is buzzing with collaboration and rich language. "Teaching, to me, is beyond test scores, beyond homework, beyond discipline. Students know I care and that I am there for anything they may need," Villegas said. Using restorative practices with his middle school students has changed the dynamics of his classes. Villegas earns his students' trust through restorative practices circles, and they feel comfortable coming to him when they are struggling. Outside the classroom, Villegas ensures his students are connected to the community by leading 8th-graders in volunteer work at a nonprofit. Many of those students continue to volunteer long after their 20-hour commitment.

Superintendent Katie McNamara is thrilled by the recognition. "I could not be more thrilled for Mr. Villegas as this recognition is so well deserved. This is South Bay's second Teacher of the Year in a row and such reinforcement and recognition of our District's growth with an increased focus on innovative teaching and learning. South Bay has many talented and dedicated teachers and I am confident that Jose will serve as an outstanding representative of our team."

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#### ABOUT SOUTH BAY UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

The award winning South Bay Union School District proudly serves over 7,500 students in Imperial Beach, San Ysidro, and south San Diego. The District is comprised of twelve campuses, including nine K-6 schools, two K-8 charter schools, and one Preschool. South Bay offers several specialized programs including Dual Language, Instrumental Music, Leader in Me, No Excuses University, Visual and Performing Arts, and a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Academy.

Superintendent  
Katie McNamara, Ed.D.

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