

L.A. Unified Board Member Mónica García

Board of Education, District 2
Los Angeles Unified School District
333 South Beaudry Avenue, 24th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: 213.241.6180 | Fax: 213.241.8459
www.achieve.lausd.net/garcia



Read, Write, Think, and Believe: The Movement Towards 100% Graduation in Los Angeles

News Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jennifer Valdivia
(213) 414-4812 j.valdivia@lausd.net

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Celebrating Legacy of Sal Castro and High School Teachers Across Board District 2 Who Encourage Equity and Social Justice for All

(Los Angeles, CA, March 25, 2021) — Board Member Mónica García, Local District East Superintendent Jose Huerta and Local District Central Superintendent Frances Baez celebrated the Fourth Annual Sal Castro Teacher Awards, yesterday. Thirty high school teachers from Board District 2 were recognized. They have promoted, inspired, and encouraged youth leadership and education around social justice, civic engagement, and equity and access to college and career pathways for all.

Sal Castro, a Lincoln High School teacher and activist, empowered students to demand a better education more than 50 years ago. He stood bravely alongside thousands of students to call out routine and institutional discrimination against Latino and Chicano/a students in Los Angeles Unified. Their demands have resulted in an increase in the number of Latino students graduating from high school and attending college.

His widow Charlotte Lerchenmuller spoke about the legendary educator. "Sal Castro was a classroom teacher for 43 years who made a major impact on the lives of his students and on the lives of thousands of others who benefited from his laser focus on seeking educational justice with the right of access to equity and a quality education."

"Every day is a great day to be inspired by Sal Castro and demand educational justice in Los Angeles," said Board Member Mónica García, the third Latina to serve on the Board of Education. "As we stand on the shoulders of that one teacher, we must fulfill the promises to los *niños héroes* and the call for equity and access at Los Angeles Unified. It is on all of us to fulfill the demand that every child in our District have equal access to a quality education.

The 2021 Sal Castro Teacher Awardees are:

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2021 Sal Castro Teacher Awardees:

2-2-2-2

Amanda Fernandez, Woodrow Wilson High School
Amanda Johnson, Esteban E. Torres High School - East Los Angeles Performing Arts Magnet
Angélica Reyes, Santee Education Complex
Ayuri Terada, Robert F. Kennedy Community of Schools - UCLA Community School
Beatriz Quinteros, Early College Academy at Los Angeles Trade Technical College
Charles Jimenez, West Adams Preparatory High School
Danielle Torrez, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex - Academic Leadership Community
Dr. Leo Fitzgerald Magallón, STEM Academy of Boyle Heights
Francisco C. Apodaca, Esteban E. Torres High School - Engineering and Technology Academy
James T. Ng, Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy
Javier V. Borjon Jr., Robert F. Kennedy Community of Schools - New Open World Academy
Jo Anna Mixpe Ley, Roosevelt High School - Math, Science, and Technology Magnet Academy
Jonathan Tam, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex - School of Social Justice
Juan L. Melendez, Robert F. Kennedy Community of Schools - Los Angeles School of the Arts
Julian Canek Peña-Vargas, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex - School of Global Studies
Lara Veronica Kissling, Belmont High School
Laura Leticia Aguirre, Esteban E. Torres High School - Renaissance Academy
Loretta Mui, Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts
Matilde Lopez, James A. Garfield High School
Maury P. Zapata, Abraham Lincoln High School
Melanie Livier Barajas, Theodore Roosevelt High School
Melina Melgoza Lopez, Edward R. Roybal Learning Center
Michael A. Leavy, Esteban E. Torres High School - Social Justice Leadership Academy
Paulina Martinez, Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School
Rosa I. Guzman, Robert F. Kennedy Community of Schools - School for the Visual Arts and Humanities
Ryan Berba, Downtown Magnet High School
Sandra Guzman-Arreola, Felicitas and Gonzalo Mendez High School
Socorro Plazola, Orthopaedic Hospital Medical Magnet High School
Xochitl B. Estrada, Sal Castro Middle School
Yolanda L. Salazar, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex- School of Business and Tourism

“Sal Castro was an exemplary teacher and activist,” Alison Towery-Yoshimoto, Chief Academic Officer, said. “He was a giant in the East Los Angeles Walkouts of 1968. We honor him and the distinguished recipients, by recognizing educators for their community service, civic duty and commitment for social justice and equity.”

“Through Mónica García’s leadership, School Board District 2 continues to exemplify the spirit of legendary teacher Sal Castro by recognizing educators who are impacting learning by bringing love and justice everyday into the classroom. Thank you for continuing to lift the next generation of new leaders,” Roberto Martinez, Associate Superintendent of School Culture, Climate, and Safety, said.

"I am so grateful to Mónica García for keeping the legacy of Sal Castro alive in our schools," Jose Huerta, Superintendent for Local District East, said. "Congratulations to all the amazing recipients of the 2021 Sal Castro Award, you are truly my heroes."

“Events leading up to the 1968 walkouts from the legacy schools are marked by injustices, inequalities and inequities towards Chicano students. I stand on the shoulders of the Class of ‘68 who opened doors for us to be here today. Experiencing a quality education in our neighborhood schools is a social justice priority that we need to continue fighting for just as Sal Castro did. The life and legacy of Sal Castro is honored through the dedication and commitment of our acknowledged teachers this year,” Frances Baez, Superintendent for Local District Central, said.

"We are proud to join School Board Member Mónica García to honor the legacy of Sal Castro and the 1968 Student Walkout Movement. Their efforts advanced educational justice, uplifting the injustices facing Eastside schools and declaring that Chicanx students matter and deserve a quality education. We stand on their shoulders as the struggle continues," Maria Brenes, Executive Director of InnerCity Struggle, said.

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