



CALIFORNIA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS

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BRIGHT SPOTS & PROMISING PRACTICES

JUNE 2023 - GRADUATION EDITION



A monthly spotlight of *promising practices* happening at county offices of education throughout the state, rotating the five that are featured and the focus areas covered. You can view past *bright spots* by clicking the link at the bottom of this page. This month is our special "**Graduation Edition**", and focuses on the amazing variety of student graduates that were celebrated this last month at county offices of education across the state. Special bonus highlight at the bottom that you won't want to miss!



Graduation Focus: Operation Recognition Diplomas for U.S. Veterans and Japanese American Citizens

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In **Sacramento County**, Louis "Lou" Soto attended Rio Linda High School for two years prior to enlisting with the U. S. Marines in November 1968. A high school diploma was presented to Soto in May 2023 through SCOE's Operation Recognition program, adopted by the Board of Education in 2001, to retroactively honor U.S. veterans and Japanese American citizens who missed graduating with their high school classes due to wartime circumstances. Soto will become the 201st recipient of an Operation Recognition high school diploma.

Graduation Focus: Special Education Students, Preschool - 22 Years

Special Education students in programs at county offices of education graduate

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when they reach the age of 22. For many families, graduation marks the end of a years-long relationship with their programs. For Isaac, he had been a preschool student in **San Joaquin County** Office of Education's Special Education Programs, said Penni Jordan, his mother. "He's come a long way. We are very proud," she said. "We could have never done it without the staff at Redwood School."



Graduation Focus: English Language Learner Special Education Students

In a celebration of achievement, 12 students enrolled in the Special Education program at the **Merced County** Office of Education were reclassified as Fluent English Proficient using the Alternative English Language Proficiency Assessment of California (Alt ELPAC) as the English Language Proficiency Assessment. This was the first time that students who are English Learners had the opportunity to showcase their English proficiency skills since there was previously no assessment geared toward students with moderate to severe disabilities. The reclassification highlighted the importance of inclusive educational opportunities for students. The achievement serves as inspiration to reconsider assessment practices and opportunities available to students with disabilities and the significance of equitable education for students of all abilities.

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Graduation Focus: Students with Autism

Joey Hazlett's analytical way of thinking impacted his social interactions, leading to difficulties in school where he often felt misunderstood and out of place. Joey's mom Johnna says all that changed when he was referred to Triton Academy in Camarillo. The school operated by the **Ventura County** Office of Education focuses on serving kids on the autism

[Learn More Here](#)

spectrum. Joey graduated from high school earlier this month and has already taken a few online courses at Moorpark College and plans to enroll at Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo.



Graduate Focus: Juvenile Court and County Community School Students

On June 21, 2023, Los Angeles County Office of Education hosted a commencement celebration at the beautiful Walt Disney Concert Hall for more than 130 at-promise students who completed their high school graduation requirements. One of the graduates, Kiyah, said she was hoping to become a registered nurse. She said she was thankful for the smaller class size the community school offered. “The minute I went to a smaller school is the minute I got everything I needed, and had been looking for at a bigger school,” she said. Angel, a student at Global Academy of California, was also complimentary of his JCCS experience. “It’s a great school. There are a lot of people here willing to help and motivate you, and push you to succeed.”

[Learn More Here](#)



CELEBRATING PRIDE MONTH & JUNETEENTH



San Diego County Office of Education has a [Resource Guide Library](#), which includes a [Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students](#) resource guide. This page features community programs for families and students along with a host of other resources to support LGBTQIA+ students. They also have an [LGBTQIA+ Students](#) section on their website with a list of questions and answers to a series of topics ranging from bathroom and school facilities to books and instructional materials. Both of these resources are continuously updated and shared with schools/districts.

Sonoma County Office of Education held two flag-raising events this past month, the first of which celebrated the [raising](#) of the Intersex-Inclusive Pride flag. They worked with members of their office's LGBTQ+ Educator Collaborative, a new group created to provide support for teachers and staff members who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, to organize the event. The second event was the raising of the Juneteenth flag. Their [event speakers](#) included staff members, the co-founder of a

local Black Student Union club, and a relative of the woman who started the first official Juneteenth celebration in Santa Rosa. Both of these flag-raising events were undertaken at the direction of Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Amie Carter as her office seeks to celebrate the diversity within Sonoma County's public schools. These events helped their office establish new ties within the community, engaging students, educators, and families in ways that they may not have in the past.

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