

Ceremonial Presentation Honoring OUSD's 2025-26 Teachers of the Year

September 10, 2025

Presenter: Tara Gard



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Community Schools, Thriving Students

Our Vision

All OUSD students will find joy in their academic experience while graduating with the skills to ensure they are caring, competent, fully-informed, critical thinkers who are prepared for college, career, and community success.

Our Mission

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) will build a Full Service Community District focused on high academic achievement while serving the whole child, eliminating inequity, and providing each child with excellent teachers, every day.



Ask of the Board

Adoption by the Board of Education of Resolution No. **2526-0055** - Collectively and Individually, for Oakland Unified School District's 2025-2026 Teachers of the Year, as follows:

1. Maria De La Fuente, 3rd Grade Dual Immersion Teacher, Esperanza Elementary School;
2. Alyssa Kronick, 9th-12th Grade Reading and Literacy Teacher, Oakland International High School; and
3. Krista Toumi, 6th Grade Science Teacher Roosevelt Middle School.

Outline

- We identify and honor three outstanding teachers, celebrating and paying special tribute to their tireless efforts
- The District's Teachers of the Year are known as particularly outstanding candidates chosen from among a competitive group of high-caliber instructors Districtwide
- OUSD's Teacher of the Year program aligns with the criteria set by the State of California's Teachers of the Year

Maria De La Fuente



3rd Grade Dual Immersion Teacher, Esperanza Elementary School

- Maria De La Fuente-Moreno has served Oakland Unified for over twenty years, and her class is a model of effective systems and protocols that ensure equitable engagement and participation across multiple language levels. Her students not only actively engage with these systems and protocols, but they also self-assess on the ways they follow these same protocols. Colleagues say Ms. De La Fuente-Moreno consistently demonstrates outstanding dedication and commitment to her role as an educator, putting her heart and soul into everything she takes on.
- She helps shape the academic direction of Esperanza—a dual language school—ensuring instructional alignment and consistency. As a school site that serves primarily English Learners, it is said that Maria deeply understands the importance and urgency of language acquisition and biliteracy development. Beyond her skill as an educator, she is known for kindness, thoughtfulness, and a deep commitment to understanding her students’ needs and for creating an environment where students feel deeply seen, supported, and challenged. She views her students as full humans in development and notes that her job is to support, guide, and be as present as she is able. Maria’s students understand that although she is the class leader, ultimately, they are responsible for their learning. As a result, consistency, organization, classroom routines, and classroom responsibilities she has put in place enable students to accomplish their learning goals. Students also learn to practice empathy, show determination, and maintain a culture of caring for one another.
- Students in Ms. De La Fuente-Moreno’s class take on responsibility for their peers’ wellbeing, actively comforting one another when they are in need of support. Caring practices are introduced based on the principles of empathy, compassion, and respect, allowing students to feel safe, valued, and supported in their learning, and they go on to maintain these practices. Students learn to see one another’s perspectives and acquire needed skills to work things out together. As a class, they decide on rules collectively and reach common solutions, allowing learning to happen with joy and respect for one other.

Alyssa Kronick

9th-12th Grade Reading and Literacy Teacher, Oakland International High School



- Alyssa Kronick, 9th - 12th Grade Reading and Literacy Teacher at Oakland International High School, has served Oakland Unified for over nine years and is acknowledged as having maximum impact, totally transforming OIHS's reading program. Whether articulating new courses, developing curriculum for multiple levels, supporting the integration of new teachers, developing new assessment protocols, or helping guide the work of paraprofessionals, Aly is known for her exceptional competence, follow through, and the care she brings to her work. Colleagues note that she is literally on a quest to find the most effective ways to teach high school-aged newcomers
- Ms. Kronick has built much of her career on appreciating the power of students to drive their own thinking and learning. She is moved by her students' motivation and holds herself to high expectations, determined to provide each with a learning environment that honors and allows them to feel success as multilingual learners. One of her greatest joys is the fact that no students are alike, and there is always space to learn more from each. She skillfully plans for full student access, scaffolding content, repeating strategies to lower the cognitive load during transitions between tasks, and differentiate supports for various language proficiency levels
- She has developed units that follow year-long foci and themes, including historical and political events from a range of racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, and language perspectives, (including studying racism/colorism, disability justice, LGBTQIA+/gender identity, and indigenous languages in North and Central America), Ms. Kronick also collaborated with Emerson Elementary school teachers to build a partnership program. that allowed Oakland International students to go monthly to Emerson classrooms and read books covering different social justice topics. Students were responsible for creating their own lesson plans for their elementary school buddies, culminating with the high school students choosing a children's book that highlighted a specific value, adapting the book to a play and either performing a live action play or puppet show for the elementary school students. Projects such as these well illustrate the creativity and community Ms. Kronick has created with and for her students, going far beyond lessons in the classroom

Krista Toumi

**6th Grade Science Teacher,
Roosevelt Middle School**



- Krista Toumi has served Oakland Unified for over five years, and colleagues say she is well known for her tireless efforts, whether trying out new instructional moves, learning new science content, or building diverse partnerships. Ms. Toumi partners with outside organizations creating opportunities for field trips as well as cross-program activities. For example, she has welcomed extensive support needs students into her classroom to work with her general education students, supporting the building of student relationships. Parents know whatever their children's challenges, she will take the time to help students understand science in fun and motivating ways. She is known to invite spontaneous classroom visits, form meaningful relationships with families, and to hold every student to a high expectation.
- Colleagues say she is magical in her ability to connect with students and make them feel safe to learn. It is said Krista makes real world connections for students, allows them to experiment and fail in safe ways that encourage their love and curiosity for science. One of her greatest strengths is in building a strong classroom culture; she mindfully takes time from science to intentionally build culture around the school community, the city of Oakland, and the multiple student cultures and what each brings to the classroom. Murals on classroom walls make it a place where students feel represented, which increases the amount of learning that is possible in the classroom. Krista builds strong relationships with families, finds joy in every day with her students and colleagues.
- Ms. Toumi is stimulated by the experience of new generations of thought as they occur on a daily basis in her classroom. She loves witnessing what she terms "the new wave of how students are thinking and talking, how they feel about issues, seeing the changes in history that are happening through our youth, and as much as I give them, no question, they give back one hundred times more," which is why she will always be a growing exemplary educator whose social-emotional expertise that invites student voices to be heard and honored.

THANK YOU to Our Teachers of the 2025-26 School Year!





Community Schools, Thriving Students



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
Community Schools, Thriving Students

www.ousd.org



@OUSDnews

1000 Broadway, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94607