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NEWS RELEASE

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State Schools Chief Tom Torlakson Announces 2017 Finalists for Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

SACRAMENTO—State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson today nominated eight exceptional secondary mathematics and science teachers as California finalists for the 2017 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

“These teachers are dedicated and accomplished individuals whose innovative teaching styles prepare our students for 21st century careers and college and develop them into the designers and inventors of the future,” Torlakson said. “They rank among the finest in their profession and also serve as wonderful mentors and role models.”

The California Department of Education (CDE) partners annually with the California Science Teachers Association and the California Mathematics Council to recruit and select nominees for the PAEMST program—the highest recognition in the nation for a mathematics or science teacher.

Each applicant must display subject mastery, appropriate use of instructional methods and strategies, lifelong learning, and leadership in education outside the classroom. State finalists were selected by a panel of their peers who reviewed each candidate's content knowledge, teaching effectiveness, achievement results, and professional involvement.

Mathematics Finalists

Clayton Dagler teaches at Luther Burbank High School in the Sacramento City Unified School District and has been teaching for 17 years. He currently teaches International Baccalaureate Mathematics Standard Level classes, one applied math class with computer programming and robotics, and an introduction to computer science class. He has been one of the main trainers for the University of California, Davis (UCD) C-STEM program, and was the 2013 C-STEM Teacher of the Year at the UCD Center for Integrated Computing and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education. In 2016, Mr. Dagler was named one of California's Distinguished Teachers by Teach California.

James Snyder teaches at Anderson Valley Junior Senior High School in the Anderson Valley Unified School District and has been in the profession for 10 years. He is the Mathematics Department Chair and has taught every level of mathematics from grade seven through

Advanced Placement (AP) calculus. He is the founder and director of the Boonville Space Program that challenges students to build a weather balloons to collect data and imagery from space. In 2015, Snyder was the California State Science Fair Teacher of the Year, Senior Division.

Andrew Walter teaches at Alonzo Stagg Senior High in the Stockton Unified School District. A 22-year veteran of teaching and a Nationally Board Certified Teacher, he currently teaches pre-calculus, AP calculus, and pre-engineering. He is a Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) advisor and received the MESA award of excellence in 1994, 1996, 1999, and 2000. He led student groups to the national competitions in 2006, 2012, and 2014.

Science Finalists

Kathryn Beck is a high school teacher at Bolsa Grande High School in the Garden Grove Unified School District and has been teaching 18 years. She creates a safe classroom environment for her students using cooperative learning through table talks and group discourse. Beck developed College Board-approved advanced placement Physics B and AP Physics C curriculum as well as a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) after school extension class, which was developed with the Orange County Department of Education.

Erin Dunroe teaches at Lake Center Middle School in the Little Lake City Elementary School District. She has been teaching for nine years. Dunroe teaches life science and physical science along with Advancement Via Individual Determination. She provides multiple opportunities for students to show their understanding, including open-ended questions, peer discussions, and hands-on investigations. She serves as a mentor for student teachers through the Los Angeles County Office of Education.

Allie Kittay is a high school teacher at Redwood High School in the Tamalpais Union High School District. A 31-year veteran of teaching, she teaches AP biology and Integrated Science 3-4. Kittay mentors student teachers and provides a variety of instructional strategies to support the students within her classes. She provides workshops for new and experienced AP biology teachers, such as inquiry-based labs and quantitative skills in biology.

Kari Milton teaches grades six through eight at Bancroft Middle School in the Long Beach Unified School District and has been teaching for 16 years. Milton teaches computer-aided drafting, which implements top-design concept, and coding skills through HTML and CSS. She is also the advisor to the Genius Bar, where students participate and help with the technology needs of the school. She rewrote and updated course guides for grades seven and eight technology curriculum for the district that follow accountability with national technology standards and also provides support for those who would like to earn their National Board Certification.

Jose Rivas is a high school teacher at Lennox Mathematics, Science, and Technology Academy in the Lennox School District. He has been teaching for 14 years and currently teaches AP physics, principles of engineering, and engineering design and development and

uses a variety of instructional methods including phenomenon-based learning, structured discourse, and modeling. As the department chair, he coordinates and leads professional learning and observations for the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) Department. He has presented at local and national conferences such as the National Science Teachers Association Conference and the U.S. News STEM Solutions Conference.

The National Science Foundation administers PAEMST on behalf of The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. PAEMST was enacted by Congress in 1983 and authorizes the President each year to bestow up to 108 awards. PAEMST awards primary and secondary teachers in alternate years. Awards are given to mathematics and science teachers from each of the 50 states and four U.S. jurisdictions including Washington, D.C.; Puerto Rico; U.S. Department of Defense Schools; and the U.S. territories.

For more information, visit the CDE's Presidential Awards for Math and Science Teaching CDE Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/pa/>, or the PAEMST Web site at <https://www.paemst.org/>.