

Preuss School Teacher Kelly Kovacic Named One of Four 2010 National Teacher of the Year Finalists

UC San Diego alumna has long history of service with motivated, low-income students

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Kelly Kovacic, social studies department chair at UC San Diego's Preuss School and a UCSD alumna, has been named one of four finalists for the prestigious National Teacher of the Year competition.

Kovavic's selection was announced January 12 by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The National Teacher of the Year Program is a project of the CCSSO and is sponsored by the ING Foundation.

"The Council is honored to present these four national finalists as representative of the great teaching that goes on in America's classrooms each and every day," said Gene Wilhoit, CCSSO executive director. "We at CCSSO know that the responsibility of ensuring student learning falls squarely on the shoulders of the teacher and any of these four finalists will ably carry the message of learning to the American people as the 2010 National Teacher of the Year."

Kovacic served as a volunteer at The Preuss School while she was attending classes as an undergraduate at UC San Diego. She graduated from UCSD in 2000, and earned a Master of Arts degree in education from Stanford University, where she also received a California Professional Clear Credential. She has taught at The Preuss School for eight years.

Last fall, State Superintendent of Education Jack O'Connell chose Kovacic from among five individuals selected as 2010 state Teachers of the Year to represent California in the national competition. "I am delighted that Kelly is representing California at the national level," O'Connell said. "She is an exceptionally knowledgeable and effective teacher, demonstrating an unparalleled passion and commitment to her students and school community that extends beyond the school day and the school yard."

The State Superintendent annually selects five Teachers of the Year who best represent California's teachers and symbolize the profession's top quality education by focusing public attention on their noteworthy accomplishments. The competition is open to educators who teach pre-kindergarten through grade twelve. County Offices of Education nominate winners of their regional Teacher of the Year competition.

In addition to Kovacic, the other finalists include:

Megan Marie Allen - a fourth grade teacher at Cleveland Elementary in Tampa, Fla.

Sarah Brown Wessling - an English teacher at Johnston High School in Johnston, Iowa.

Robert L. Stephenson - a third grade teacher at Wardcliff Elementary School in East Lansing, Mich.

A panel of educators, representing the 15 largest national education organizations, chose the finalists from the 2010 teachers of the year representing U.S. states, four U.S. extra-state territories, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity, and will select the 2010 National Teacher of the Year. Recognition

by President Barack Obama of the national honoree and the state representatives is tentatively scheduled to take place during the week of April 26-30, 2010.

The organizations represented on the National Selection Committee are: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, American Association of School Administrators, American Federation of Teachers, Association for Childhood Education International, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Association of Teacher Educators, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, National Education Association, National Middle Schools Association, National School Boards Association, and National School Public Relations Association.

The Preuss School at UC San Diego is a middle and high school dedicated to providing an intensive college preparation for motivated low-income students who will become the first in their families to graduate from college. The school is jointly chartered by UC San Diego and the San Diego Unified School District.

About the Council of Chief State School Officers

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks members' consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public. For more information, visit www.ccsso.org.

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