



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Champions for Leadership, Seal of Biliteracy and Pathway Awards Initiative take home Golden Bell awards**

**SAN JOSE, CA** – The Santa Clara County Office of Education’s Champions for Leadership program and Seal of Biliteracy and Pathway Awards Initiative have been chosen as two of this year’s recipients of the prestigious Golden Bell Award. Presented by the California School Boards Association (CSBA), this award recognizes public school programs that focus on meeting the needs of all students, are innovative and sustainable, and have made a demonstrated difference in the classroom.

Champions for Leadership is a leadership development, mentoring and succession planning program that matches future leaders with a mentor and professional development opportunities to deepen the impact of their work in public education. While enrolled in the program, participants complete a project designed to address organizational needs, such as improved paraeducator recruitment and retention and individualized action plans for alternative education students who need help getting back on the track to graduation. Since 2009, 104 SCCOE employees have completed the program.

The Seal of Biliteracy and Pathway Awards Initiative is a countywide recognition program that encourages students to adopt a second language by presenting Pathway Awards to fifth-, sixth- and eighth-grade students who have made exceptional progress towards fluency, and the Seal of Biliteracy to graduating seniors who prove themselves functionally “biliterate.” Since its inception in 2011 the program has grown from 208 students studying five languages to 1,267 students across 10 languages.

“The Golden Bell Award is a worthy honor for both of these remarkable programs,” said Jon Gundry, County Superintendent of Schools. “They each represent great examples of our ongoing efforts at the Santa Clara County Office of Education to ensure that our educators and students are among the best-served in the nation. I am tremendously proud of the efforts of our staff.”

A 26-member judging panel made up of experts from school districts and county offices of education reviewed all written entries and made initial recommendations for awards. Finalists

were assessed through an on-site visit, evaluating the programs in action. Both of the SCCOE's honorees will receive their awards at a recognition ceremony to be held on Tuesday, Dec. 16 at the CSBA's Annual Education Conference in San Francisco.