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Del Lago Academy Teacher Carissa Duran Named Aurora Institute's Personalized Teacher of the Year

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Escondido, CA): The Aurora Institute (formerly iNACOL) presented their 2019 Innovator Awards Thursday, October 30th, at its annual Symposium in Palm Springs, California.

Carissa Duran of Del Lago Academy received The Personalized Teacher of the Year Award, which honors a K-12 educator whose efforts as a personalized learning teacher exemplify a commitment to student success, knowledge, and skill as a professional educator and dedication to his or her students.



"I am beyond grateful for this honor," said Duran. "This is not an honor earned in isolation. Personalization for me is not a mere strategy or approach. It is the very belief that every learner is unique... It's a belief that to thrive requires a system of supports. I accept on behalf of the systems and people with whom I've been able to live out my belief in personalized learning... and on behalf of Del Lago Academy, where my colleagues daily challenge me to make visible our belief that all learners are capable of achieving at high levels when we know them and meet them where they are."

"Carissa Duran is an educator of excellence!" said Ruth Hellams, principal at Del Lago Academy. "Carissa is recognized by her peers as a leader in innovation and her work as an instructional coach allows her to partner with her colleagues to find unique ways to bring learning to life."

Eligibility for the award requires the recipient to be serving as a personalized learning teacher in grades K-12 and that at least 75% of the teacher's instructional time is spent as an educator working

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in a personalized learning environment.

“Personalization is one of the core beliefs outlined in Del Lago Academy's Mission,” said Hellams. “Carissa and the entire DLA staff, understand that learning is a social process and that a focus on personalization helps to build relationships that serve scholars well beyond the classroom walls.”

According to the Aurora Institute, personalized learning allows students to have a say in their learning, the individual needs of each student are met, so each student is successful, and students have a clear understanding of their learning goals and know how to achieve them.

Students also get to make choices about how they “show what they know.” They get the support they need when they are challenged or need help with new concepts, and, finally, students get the encouragement they need when they are ready to move forward.

The Escondido Union High School District is committed to providing high quality educational programs that maximize the success of each and every student. Foundational to our success is the continued focus on the development and completion of District Goals that are in concert with the following beliefs:

We, the Escondido Union High School District, believe that it is our responsibility to:

- I. Hold high expectations for and improve the academic achievement of all students within Escondido Union High School District.
- II. Provide a highly skilled, caring and committed staff that collaborates to positively support and affect instruction and learning.
- III. Provide the appropriate educational facilities that create an environment supportive of both teaching and learning within a safe and orderly setting.
- IV. Promote, foster, and develop community connections through strong and effective communication and partnerships, as well as opportunities for shared input.
- V. Support organizational alignment that maximizes student academic success.