



Monterey County Office of Education

Leadership, Support, and Service to Prepare All Students for Success

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Consortium of Monterey County Office of Education and Nine School Districts Receives \$729,900 to Recruit and Retain Special Education Teachers

Salinas, CA – A consortium of nine school districts led by the Monterey County Office of Education has received a \$729,900 Local Solutions grant to help recruit new special education teachers and support the 236 special education teachers who serve 4,117 students with disabilities across Monterey County.

The nine school districts in Monterey County included in the consortium are: Alisal USD, Greenfield USD, King City USD, Monterey Peninsula USD, North Monterey County USD, San Ardo USD, San Antonio USD, San Lucas USD, and Soledad USD.

The Local Solutions Grant from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing is aimed at helping improve teacher preparation and reduce costs to enter the profession, increase teacher compensation, and provide quality mentoring and induction for all beginning teachers. Funding can be used for supports and incentives such as teacher service scholarships, student debt payment, living stipends, signing bonuses, service awards, mentors for existing teachers, professional learning communities, teacher career pathways or other solutions that address the need for special education teachers.

California's schools are facing a severe teacher shortage. Shortages are most pronounced in special education, mathematics, science, and bilingual education. The 2018–19 state budget includes \$130 million to address teacher shortages and strengthen the teacher workforce through three grant programs, one being the Local Solutions Grant.

In Monterey County, which encompasses a range of urban, suburban, rural, and remote districts, educators face a myriad of barriers to meeting the growing need for qualified special education teachers. High costs of living, changing demographics, the regional economy, and budget shortages all affect the ability to recruit and retain highly-qualified teachers, especially special education teachers.

“Receiving a grant to support special educators is very much needed to enhance our efforts countywide to provide mentoring and professional development for teachers who work with students with special needs,” said Nancy Kotowski, Ph.D., Monterey County Superintendent of Schools.

“No two students enrolled in Special Education have the same needs and abilities, and as such, their teachers must be trained to manage a classroom of students with multiple and competing needs, and be empathetic to the challenges students are facing,” said Kotowski. “Becoming a special education teacher requires rigorous training, a supportive structure in the workplace, and ongoing professional development.”

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