

"Fontana Star" is our web series profiling district staff and alumni who are distinguished for their dedication on behalf of students, commitment to excellence and notable accomplishments in service of FUSD.



Laurie Finucane

shares how she is inspired



Profile in Excellence:

Laurie Finucane, Director of Early Education

FUSD Schools Attended:

- Randall-Pepper Elementary School
- Alder Junior High
- Fontana High School

Higher Education:

- University of California, Riverside (UCR)
- Mesa Community College (Mesa, Arizona)
- Chaffey Community College
- California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB)

FUSD Career Experiences:

- I was an Instructional Aide at North Tamarind and Tokay Elementary Schools from 1980-84.
- I became an Elementary School Teacher in 1986 at West Randall Elementary, transferred to Juniper Elementary in 1988 and Cypress Elementary in 1994.
- I was named Fontana Unified School District Teacher of the Year for the 1994-95 school year.
- In 1997, I became a Teacher-on-Assignment in Technology.
- In 1999, I was hired as a Coordinator of Children's Programs in the Early Education Department.
- In July, 2008 I had the honor of becoming the Director of the Early Education Department.

Who were the FUSD staff that affected you most as a student?

Mr. Lewis Edwards (my 6th grade Teacher) inspired me to have a life long love of writing. Mrs. Swanson (Elementary Choir Teacher), Mr. Dastrup (Elementary Honor Choir teacher), Mr. Dan Friberg (Alder Choir and Madrigal Teacher) and Mrs. Tanya Stupin (Fohi Choir and Madrigal teacher) inspired me to have a life long love of music. Mrs. Pat Goetz (Fohi Physiology Teacher) inspired me to overcome all odds no matter how great and never give up. I didn't realize at the time, but she had a mentally handicapped son and I would share this challenge when my son, Jamie, was born only 4 short years later.

What did you dream of growing-up to be as a child that would lead you to your work with FUSD?

I dreamed of becoming a medical doctor because I wanted to help people. I feel that in education that is our mission - to help children and their families.

Since you've joined FUSD as staff, what experience(s) have you been most proud of?

I am so proud to be from Fontana and to be able to work for FUSD. I am also proud to have taught along side so many wonderful teachers and to have taught great students who have since grown to be responsible citizens. I am honored and proud to have been selected as the Teacher of the Year for FUSD. Last, but not least, I am honored and proud to have been chosen as the

	<i>Director of Early Education at a time when this field is “up and coming.”</i>
What keeps you up at night about your work for FUSD?	<i>At the end of each day, I mentally review all of the events of the day and I always ask myself the question, “Did I do everything humanly possible to make sure that all of the students, staff and families received the support they needed on this day.” The nights when I am not sure of the answer to this question are those restless nights.</i>
What do you think is the biggest misconception the public has about our work?	<i>Preschool classroom activities are more than just “play.” There has been extensive research regarding preschool and the practices in the FUSD preschool classrooms are based on this research.</i>
What can the community do to strengthen public education?	<i>Thank a teacher and tell him or her that they make a difference in the lives of young people.</i>
What inspires you to give your very best for the students of FUSD?	<i>The families and staff of FUSD continually inspire me as I have been granted the privilege to witness extreme acts of courage, sacrifice and dedication to achieving the greater good for all involved, especially for the children.</i>
What might staff or students be surprised to learn about you?	<i>Some might be surprised to know that I was one of two representatives for the State of California at the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for Geography in 1994, assisting in the writing of the Nation's report card in Geography.</i>

If you know of a “Fontana Star,” particularly one who was an FUSD alumnus, you can nominate him or her to be featured by emailing webmaster@fUSD.net. Please provide your name, the name of the individual being nominated, contact information for both of you and a brief description as to why you think the individual qualifies as a Fontana Star.