

"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.



Laura Abernathy Mancha
shares how she is inspired



Profile in Excellence:		Laura Abernathy Mancha, Board Member	
FUSD Schools Attended:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Randall Pepper Elementary School (K-5) • Cypress Elementary School (the first year it opened, sixth grade only) • Fontana Junior High School • Fontana High School (Class of 1977) 	
Higher Education:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaffey College, Associate of Arts Degree • Cal State San Bernardino, Senior Year (Sociology major) 	
FUSD Career Experiences:		<p><i>It was the greatest honor for me to be elected to the Board of Education in 1993. I am humbled by the support I receive from the community that I love. I have been fortunate to be re-elected and take my governing responsibilities seriously. I am a product of Fontana Unified School District.</i></p>	
Who were the FUSD staff that affected you most as a student?		<p><i>Too many to mention in one paragraph! Mrs. Cartzdafner, Mrs. Tjensvold, Mr. Duff, and Mr. Aflerbaugh in elementary. Mr. Peavy, Mr. Vacher, Mrs. Hartman, and Mr. Lewis at Fojay. Mr. Cappiello, Mr. Eitelman, Mrs. Goetz, and Marva (Wigeman) Alman at Fohi.</i></p>	
What did you dream of growing-up to be as a child that would lead you to your work with FUSD?		<p><i>I wanted to be a Broadway star! I suppose this grand aspiration may have led me to take a chance and run for the Board of Education. I never knew that I would be so interested in learning until then. It has inspired me to pursue my own higher education. I am a much better student now than I was in high school. I'm hoping to continue on for a Masters Degree.</i></p>	
Since you've joined FUSD as staff, what experience(s) have you been most proud of?		<p><i>I am most proud of our kids! Fontana's innovative programs and our willingness to try new things are also something that I brag about to other Boards. It's nice that there is a sense of community among our employees as well.</i></p>	
What keeps you up at night about your work for FUSD?		<p><i>A lot! The recent lay-offs have made this the most stressful time I can ever remember. I know that class size reduction works in Fontana, and it hurts our kids not to have it. I worry about what happens to kids when they go home at night. We are all just sick about what has happened to school funding. We'll continue to fight for our fair share but it is a very frustrating time.</i></p>	
What do you think is the biggest misconception the public has about our work?		<p><i>The biggest misconception is that we receive a lot of money. There are so many fluctuating factors in our funding sources that the general public can't begin to comprehend it. Even our local</i></p>	

State and Federal legislators don't have a clue about the complicated mechanisms and restrictions our staff undertake to keep us financially solvent.

What can the community do to strengthen public education?

Get involved. Write letters to our elected officials and express your support for public education. In my opinion, it is the single greatest asset our country has. Everyone deserves a quality education.

What inspires you to give your very best for the students of FUSD?

My greatest inspiration is knowing that I am working on behalf of Fontana's kids. I always base my decisions on how they will ultimately affect our students. I love learning new things, and knowing that I may be an inspiration for others to learn, is a great feeling. School is cool!

What might staff or students be surprised to learn about you?

Some people may be surprised to know that I am good at Jeopardy! I have also begun to advocate for people with disabilities. I suffer from hearing loss and have become personally aware of the obstacles that many people (with disabilities) face.

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.