



California League of High Schools
6615 E. Pacific Coast Highway, Suite 120
Long Beach, CA 90803
www.clhs.net

EDUCATION NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Scotts Valley Teacher the CLHS 2007 State High School Educator of the Year



SCOTTS VALLEY, Calif. — Students in Richard Salome’s pre-calculus, calculus and International Baccalaureate math classes at Scotts Valley High School may think they’re there to solve equations, but that is only part of the picture. “That’s the storefront, that’s the vehicle,” he says. He has an additional agenda for them: to learn, through the mathematical process, the skills to step up to and solve life’s challenges. Along the way, he provides plenty of caring so they find the self-esteem to succeed.

This devotion to students, along with the distinction of founding a rigorous International Baccalaureate math program at his high school, led to Mr. Salome’s selection last weekend as the California League of High Schools (CLHS) 2007 State High School Educator of the Year.

Already one of nine regional CLHS 2007 High School Educators of the Year, Mr. Salome found out while standing onstage during a general session at the CLHS Annual Conference in Monterey, Calif., on Saturday, January 13, 2007, that he had been chosen to represent the state.

At the podium he explained that when he was a child he wanted to be an explorer like Davy Crockett, and was disappointed when he realized all the frontiers had been settled. Then he became a teacher. “It was only when I entered the classroom that I found my frontier: the hearts and minds of the young people in front of me,” he says. Student growth became his motivation.

At school, Mr. Salome is usually the first to arrive and the last to leave. On weekends he volunteers in the community, prepares lesson plans, and tutors students. He regularly attends trainings to do a better job in his roles as math teacher and math department chair. For example, last summer he trained in Geometer’s Sketchpad and this year his department is implementing the program.

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Student work is prominent in Mr. Salome’s classroom. Difficult equations festoon the walls; some are solved with a student’s signature while others wait for determined students to crack them as in the movie, *Good Will Hunting*. At the whiteboard students demonstrate for their peers how they completed homework problems; peer critiques are freely provided. “The wonderful thing is, they’re not afraid to go up there [to the whiteboard],” Mr. Salome notes.

Fostering such a supportive yet intellectually stimulating classroom environment is why Mr. Salome was named State High School Educator of the Year and why his principal, Gregg Gunkel, nominated him in the first place. “He had so much apprehension about me nominating him,” Mr. Gunkel says. “Teachers don’t like to stand out. It was only when I said the possible recognition would be good for the school that he let me do it.”

As for Mr. Salome, teaching is at the core of who he is. “I love all my kids, even the ones who give me a hard time,” he observes. “The question I ask students is, ‘How did you improve yourself today?’ In my classroom, all students are winners if they choose to be.”

To be selected as the CLHS 2007 State High School Educator of the Year, Mr. Salome’s accomplishments were analyzed first by his peers at the regional level using a rubric-based evaluation

process, and second by the entire CLHS board of trustees in comparison to the other 8 regional educators of the year. He will receive an all expenses paid trip to the CLHS Summer Institute in Maui in July 2007 for professional development in differentiated instruction.

The California League of High Schools is a nonprofit association that provides professional development training and resources to high school educators. Holt, Rinehart and Winston sponsors the CLHS High School Educator of the Year Program.

Contacts:

Katie Winchell, Director of Communications, CLHS, Long Beach, Calif.
(800) 858-9365, ext. 23 * editor@clhs.net * **A JPEG image of Mr. Salome is available.**

Richard Salome, Math Dept. Chair, Scotts Valley High School, Scotts Valley, Calif.
(831) 439-9555 * rsalome@santacruz.k12.ca.us

Robin Duncan, Sales Representative, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Calif.
(866) 455-4514 * robin.duncan@hrw.com

Peter Murphy, Executive Director, CLHS, Long Beach, Calif.
(800) 858-9365, ext. 26 * p_murphy@clhs.net

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