SPOTLIGHT
ON
SONOMA
COUNTY
TEACHERS
2015-16
Teaching is a calling—a vocation devoted to the betterment of society.

My desire to have an impact on the community and influence the next generation is what led me to the profession. Shortly after completing active military service, I became an educator, teaching history and American studies to middle school students. One of my proudest moments as an educator was when my daughter decided to become a teacher after graduating from college. She, too, had the calling.

In the classroom and when I made the transition to school and district administration, my first priority was always to create a positive learning environment that would give students the greatest opportunity for success. This continues to be my highest priority, and it is the goal of all good teachers. As you’ll see in the following pages, today’s teachers are meeting this challenge by bringing new ideas, innovative strategies, and a dedication to student success into their classrooms.

I hope this collection of teacher profiles inspires others to join the teaching profession. Within this publication is a “roadmap” for anyone looking to embark on the path to being an educator. We are in an era when many experienced teachers are retiring and we will soon face a teacher shortage in Sonoma County. With this challenge brings the opportunity for a new generation of teachers to rise to the occasion and help shape our collective future.
The Teaching Profession in Sonoma County

$66,688 was the median salary for Sonoma County teachers in 2014

There are 180 teaching days in a school year

Sonoma County teachers average 14 years of experience in the profession

3,824 teachers in Sonoma County public schools

- 77% are women
- 25% have master’s degrees
- 13% started teaching within the last two years
- 6% are Latino

Sonoma County teachers teach 71,096 students in kindergarten to grade 12

- 8% are Under 30
- 23% are 30-39
- 25% are 40-49
- 31% are 50-59
- 16% are 60+

93% of Sonoma County students attend public school

180 new hires

Teaching is the profession that makes all other professions possible

47 is the average age of Sonoma County teachers

31% of teachers are 55+ and age-eligible to retire

An average student has 42 different teachers between kindergarten and high school graduation

- 6 TEACHERS • One teacher per year in grades K-6
- 12 TEACHERS • Six teachers for six subjects in grades 7-8
- 24 TEACHERS • Six teachers for six subjects in grades 9-12
Isaac Raya, a history and digital media teacher and wrestling coach at Kenilworth Junior High School in Petaluma, was selected as Sonoma County’s Teacher of the Year for 2015. He has been a teacher for 12 years. According to former Kenilworth Junior High School principal Emily Dunnagan, “He is one of the most outstanding history teachers I have ever met.”

He brings the events of history alive and makes them relevant to his students’ world. He has been a pioneer in using digital tools in the classroom and has actively engaged students in producing original, multi-media works about their country’s history. In addition to his eighth-grade history classes, Raya teaches a digital media class where students learn to tell stories using video. This year, a group of his students earned top honors at the Sonoma County Five-Minute Film Festival.

Isaac has earned distinction at his school and across his district not only for his excellence as a teacher, but also for the innovative, technology-infused instruction that he has brought to his classroom and for his commitment to ensuring that English language learners succeed in school. He engages every student by using a collaborative, project-based learning model in all of his classes.

Isaac will represent Sonoma County in the 2016 California Teacher of the Year program.

Anna Van Dordrecht embodies the 21st century educator as she coordinates the transition to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for Sonoma County school districts while exploring concepts integral to the standards within her own teaching practice. Her dual role serves an important function as schools prepare to take on this set of new benchmarks, which mark a significant shift in science education.

For Anna, the classroom is a place of experimentation when it comes to bringing the standards alive. Her instruction centers on finding innovative ways to make real-world connections for her students. For example, last fall she linked an AP Biology class lesson on viruses to the national conversation about Ebola by arranging a Skype conference between her students and a group of respected healthcare professionals. This focus on relevant issues helps foster big-picture thinking.

As a leader in the rollout of the new science standards, Anna conducts research and develops presentations for educators across the county. She has worked closely with two local teacher-leader groups to learn and teach NGSS to others during the transition. Next year, Anna will design and coordinate SCOE professional development offerings around NGSS and continue to provide hands-on support in classrooms as the standards are implemented.
When Forestville Elementary School started a Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program three years ago, Erica Randolph was one of two kindergarten teachers at the forefront. TK bridges the gap between preschool and kindergarten for students with fall birthdays, helping them develop the fundamental skills they need to succeed in school settings. The program at Forestville started out small, with the teachers each integrating two TK students into their regular kindergarten classrooms. For Erica, the balance lay in bringing these students into the fold without overwhelming them with the rigors of kindergarten or frustrating them with activities beyond their developmental level.

Erica organizes her classroom so that her youngest students are involved in every aspect of the day, with everyone working at his or her own level. For example, TK students can accomplish “writing” in ways that don’t involve pencil and paper, using Play-Doh, Popsicle sticks, and Q-tips as writing tools.

Now in her third year of teaching a combined-grade class, Erica is responsible for all 13 TK students at her school. “While it’s been a challenge, I have loved the wealth of knowledge and insight I’ve gained from the experience,” says Erica. “And let’s face it, this age group is so much fun!”

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Taking the first steps

Jose Sevilla decided to become an educator after seeing the need for more Spanish-speaking teachers. Motivated by a desire to help families and a great deal of inspiration from his wife, who has worked with English language learners for ten years, Jose decided to earn a teaching credential and make the transition. “By becoming a bilingual educator, I hope to fill the gap and encourage Spanish-speaking families to become actively involved in their children’s education,” he says.

Currently, Jose is working with the principal at his school to establish a Student Study Team to identify struggling students in order to narrow the achievement gap and reduce the number of students going into intensive programs. When Jose looks to the future, he sees himself earning a Master’s Degree and perhaps one day becoming a support provider through NCBTP to help create a positive teaching experience for others.
Going from corporate consultant to teacher specializing in Career Technical Education (CTE) was a natural transition for Jennifer Eaton. In her corporate life, she developed training programs for clients from companies such as Coca Cola, Honda, Sprint, and Dell. At a certain point, Jennifer decided to look at pursuing teaching as a profession, taking her well-honed communication skills and applying them to the classroom. “I was no longer fulfilled in the corporate world and knew that teaching, while challenging, would be a much more rewarding career for me,” she reflects.

Volunteering in a friend's math classroom inspired Jennifer to earn her teaching credential in mathematics. From there, she taught middle school before moving to Petaluma High School. When the school received a CTE grant to offer a Principles in Engineering class last year, Jennifer was selected to teach it because she had an undergraduate education in engineering. Teaching the course showed Jennifer how CTE can light passion in students.

Now, she teaches a project-centered curriculum that allows her engineering students to take on design projects throughout the course of the year. Students develop soft skills by learning to work in teams, plan and manage projects, and resolve issues. Jennifer's industry experience adds a relevant perspective to her instruction and gives her an edge in supporting college and career readiness in her students.

Jennifer Eaton applies skills she learned as a corporate consultant and engineering student to teaching Career Technical Education.

Following his calling

Scott Griffin began his career counseling emotionally disturbed adolescent boys at a residential treatment center before turning to education in the early 1980s and pursuing his teaching credential. He did so at a time when Special Education was a new frontier. Today, his breadth of experience spans more than three decades. It includes working at various district, county, and community sites, with students who have a wide range of disabilities.

For the past 13 years, Scott has taught in SCOE’s Transition Program. The program teaches life skills to students with developmental disabilities, ages 18-22. Students learn how to access community services and ride public transportation; practice independence; master tasks like budgeting and banking; and gain on-the-job skills. Scott’s classrooms are not in a traditional setting. One class works at Costco in Santa Rosa and another at TJ Maxx in Santa Rosa. There, students learn to work five hours a day, five days a week. Students arrive at this real-life classroom after advancing through several levels of other transition classrooms. This part of the program provides them the job experience they will need to be successful after graduating from SCOE.

“I found myself as an advocate and willing to support the underdog, and standing up for those that didn’t quite fit in—I think I found my passion,” Scott says as he reflects on his career. “Every day I learn something new, and every day there are new challenges.”
Building the profession

Carinne Paddock’s participation in the Maker Education movement has expanded the walls of her classroom and encouraged her to be more innovative in her teaching practice. She recently had the opportunity to observe a group of her beginning teachers receive training in GLAD, a toolkit of over 60 teaching strategies that especially support English language learners. Further, a new teacher inspired her to re-organize her own instruction around a framework of common routines known as Daily 5. Carinne views teacher induction as mutually beneficial and uses it to avoid becoming content with the status quo, saying, “Learning from new teachers is an added bonus of being a support provider.”

As a support provider for new teachers in the North Coast Beginning Teacher Program (NCBTP), Mary Anna Maloney enjoys her role as mentor. As NCBTP readies novice teachers for a career in the classroom through a process called induction, it pairs them with seasoned educators who provide support and guidance. A veteran teacher, Mary Anna initially found her role as mentor to be eye-opening. “Understanding how in-depth and demanding the induction process is for new teachers is an awareness that all veteran teachers should have to be supportive colleagues at their sites,” she says.

While she’s clocked nearly 20 years in the classroom, Mary Anna finds that learning goes both ways when she’s working with beginning teachers. Being a support provider affords a level of exposure to new trainings and instructional strategies that she may not have otherwise thought to incorporate into her own teaching practice.

“My role is not as the keeper of knowledge but as a guide to inquiry.”

Innovating and teaching

Carinne Paddock, a seasoned classroom instructor, is now sharing her experience with a new crop of teachers.

Carinne Paddock gives feedback to Saul (left) and Will as they collaborate on a Maker project.

Carinne Paddock’s participation in the Maker Education movement has expanded the walls of her classroom and encouraged her to be more innovative in her teaching practice. She was among the first group of teachers to complete Sonoma State University’s Maker Certificate program unveiled in 2014-15, and she quickly incorporated the ideas in her fourth-grade classroom.

Maker Education is a new kind of interactive learning that engages students in using their hands and minds to create things and solve problems. During Maker Mondays, Carinne’s students learn safety tips, and then use hammers, screwdrivers, and handsaws to solve design challenges. Last year, they worked to develop a structure to protect new plant growth, then wrote scripts and made films about the process and entered them in SCOE’s Five-Minute Film Festival. Two of Carinne’s students’ films were among the top fifteen finalists.

When it comes to adapting her instruction as she engages her students in making, Carinne says, “The challenge is how to embrace the subtle shift in a teacher’s role; my role is not as the keeper of knowledge but as a guide to inquiry.” She also sees making as a way to integrate the new standards in education, which encourage creativity and thinking outside the box. “I firmly believe that because I was willing to try new things in the classroom, my students were able to try things outside of their comfort zone as well.”
Two Roads to Becoming a Teacher

**UNIVERSITY ROUTE**

- Have a bachelor’s degree
- Pass the CBEST, CSET and U.S. Constitution tests

Be accepted into and begin teaching credential program at university/begin student teaching.

**FINAL DESTINATION:**

Enter the classroom as a teacher intern
Be hired as a teacher while completing two years of intern coursework.

**CALIFORNIA ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO CERTIFICATION: INTERN PROGRAMS**

- Have a bachelor’s degree
- Pass the CBEST, CSET and U.S. Constitution tests
- Complete 160-hour pre-service training

Apply, be accepted and enroll in intern program: the North Coast School of Education is a new, regional option.

**FINAL DESTINATION:**

Begin teacher induction process to earn your clear teaching credential and become a fully-certified teacher.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**FINDING A PROGRAM**

www.ncsoc.org
www.affordablecollegesonline.org

**FINDING A JOB**

www.edjoin.org
www.cde.ca.gov/pd/bt

**HOW TO BE A TEACHER**

www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/teach.html
www.ncbtp.org