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## Lafayette School District 2018-19 Teacher of the Year receives special visit

*Submitted by Jonathan Lance*



Lamorinda Teachers of the Year, from left: Katherine Walton, AHS; Karlene Steelman, JM; Carol Levin, Glorietta; and Scott Westphal, Burton Valley. Photo Jonathan Lance, CCCOE respect they need to order to move forward."

Recently, Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools Karen Sakata visited Scott Westphal's classroom at Burton Valley Elementary School in Lafayette. Westphal, a 34-year Lafayette School District teacher, was named by the district as their Teacher of the Year earlier in March. During his impressive career, Westphal has taught all subjects and instructional technology to grades K-5. Currently, he's teaching general subjects to fourth-graders at Burton Valley.

LAFSD's Instructional Support Teacher Alissa Levenberg reports, "My job is to support kids with special needs, and I work closely every year with teachers from 25 different classrooms. When I know my kids are going to be placed in Scott's classroom, I celebrate! I have witnessed, year after year, that even my most challenging students emerge from his class as more confident, resilient, and positive than when they began. Scott connects with every kid in his room. He sees them for their strengths, not for their weaknesses. It is this trait that gives him the ability to meet them exactly where they are as learners, allowing them the space and

Levenberg continues: "Being in Scott's classroom is always an enjoyable experience. His humorous, laid-back temperament creates an atmosphere where students can learn without stress. He doesn't measure his students by standards and test scores. Instead, he takes the time to get to know them as people. He then fosters that relationship of trust in order to help them reach their full potential."

The 22 Contra Costa County TOYs, class of 2018-19, including Westphal, will be introduced and honored Sept. 27 at the annual Teacher of the Year Gala, held at the Concord Hilton. Additional Lamorinda TOYs include Katherine Walton, Acalanes Union High School District, Acalanes High School, Karlene Steelman, Moraga School District, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School and Carol Levin, Orinda Union School District, Glorietta Elementary School (see story on page A6).

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