



**SAN MATEO
COUNTY
OFFICE OF
EDUCATION**

Excellence and Equity in Education

Anne E. Campbell
County Superintendent of Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Project Change Awarded Top State Educational Honor

Redwood City, CA—Project Change, an innovative program run in partnership between the College of San Mateo, the San Mateo County Office of Education, and the San Mateo County Probation Department, has been awarded the state’s top educational honor, the Golden Bell Award. The Golden Bell Awards, now in their 39th year, are sponsored by the California School Boards Association (CSBA) to recognize outstanding public school programs for innovation, sustainability, and best practices that facilitate positive student outcomes. Project Change will be honored at a recognition reception and ceremony on Thursday, November 29, at CSBA’s Annual Education Conference and Trade Show in San Francisco.

Students involved in the juvenile justice system often experience personal and systemic barriers that keep them from pursuing higher education. Project Change seeks to remove these barriers and provide vulnerable youth with tangible opportunities to attend and succeed in college. The program provides students with college instruction inside juvenile justice facilities, support in completing college and financial aid applications, and direct access to postsecondary education. Once in college, students receive wrap-around services, including a mentor and their own space on campus to convene regularly. Students in Project Change achieve greater success in college compared with students of similar backgrounds and even average first-year students at the College of San Mateo. They are leaders on campus and in their communities.

San Mateo County Superintendent Anne E. Campbell is thrilled with the honor and is pleased that CSBA recognized Project Change’s transformative power. “Project Change has completely changed the outlook for so many of our students. Where they once may have felt disconnected from their futures, they now have both hope and a plan to continue their education and achieve their goals. Project Change provides them with a new beginning.”

San Mateo County Board of Education Vice President Hector Camacho, Jr., a strong supporter of Project Change, added, “The Board of Education is committed to Project Change and is grateful for the work it does to help many of our most vulnerable youth succeed. The results speak for themselves—students from our Court and Communities schools are now thriving in college.”

A 17-member judging panel made up of experts from school districts and county offices of education reviewed the written entries and made the initial recommendations for the

awards. On-site validators assessed the programs in action. This year's awards are presented to school districts and county offices of education helping students achieve through after-school programs, mentoring, instructional interventions, use of data, and other innovations.

"The Golden Bell recipients exemplify the spirit of innovation and excellence for which all of California's public schools strive," said CSBA CEO and Executive Director Vernon M. Billy. "The Golden Bell Awards reflect the depth and breadth of outstanding education offerings in our state, and demonstrate the tenacity, vision, and dedication of school leaders across California." To learn more about the Golden Bell Awards, visit the California School Boards Association's Golden Bell website at <https://gb.csba.org/>.

CSBA is a nonprofit education association representing the elected officials who govern public school districts and county offices of education. With a membership of nearly 1,000 educational agencies statewide, CSBA brings together school governing boards and district and county office administrators to advocate for effective policies that advance the education and well-being of the state's more than 6 million school-age children. Learn more at www.csba.org.

The San Mateo County Office of Education is committed to ensuring excellence and equity in education by inspiring students, investing in teachers, invigorating leaders, and involving communities.