

PED unveils 2018 New Mexico ‘Teacher of the Year’

Written by Gallupsun Staff
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SANTA FE – Education Secretary-Designate Christopher Ruszkowski announced Ivonne Orozco as the 2018 New Mexico Teacher of the Year Oct. 24. Orozco is a Spanish teacher in grades 8-12 at the Public Academy for the Performing Arts in Albuquerque. Ruszkowski joined students, staff, and Orozco’s family to surprise her with the award.

“Mrs. Orozco represents the very best of our teachers across the state,” said Ruszkowski. “Her innovation in teaching and passion for her students extends far beyond the scope of the classroom, as she is a fierce advocate for all of her students. We are proud to have her represent New Mexico’s educators.”

Orozco was among 14 semi-finalists considered for the recognition of New Mexico Teacher of the Year. All candidates were required to submit a resume, essays, three letters of recommendation, and demonstrate professional and community engagement.

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A committee of state and local education leaders reviewed the semifinalists' applications. The committee chose the top two highest-scoring applications for the final selection.

Orozco is in her fourth year of teaching at Albuquerque's Public Academy for the Performing Arts. Her community involvement is evident as she is involved in many clubs and organizations at the school.

Orozco has been a strong champion for suicide prevention and has worked diligently with NMPED for the revision of Spanish End-of-Course Exam blueprints that are utilized statewide.

She serves as a sponsor of the school's National Honor Society Chapter. She believes that education provides students with the tools to create real change in our world, and in the power of education to transform lives for all kids, regardless of background or zip code.

In the fall of 2017, Orozco will be recognized alongside other state Teacher of the Years in Washington, D.C. During this time, the National Teacher of the Year will be announced by the President of the United States and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

The New Mexico Teacher of the Year Program has recognized outstanding teachers across the state since 1963. All school districts and charter schools are invited each year to nominate an outstanding teacher for this award and the winners go on to represent our great state in the national competition.