



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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City of Riverside Names Beth Schwandt as Recipient of City Spirit Award

Alvord Unified School District educator recognized for community spirit, good citizenship, and dedication to enhancing the quality of life in the city

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Beth Schwandt, a 30-year teacher in the Alvord Unified School District who specializes in teaching music, has been named as the 2023 recipient of the City Spirit Award.

Schwandt, who was nominated by City Council members Jim Perry and Steve Hemenway, was recognized at last night's (9/17) City Council meeting for extraordinary deeds and community spirit, good citizenship, and dedication to enhancing the quality of life in the city.

Schwandt has held multiple positions within Alvord and currently is an instructional coach over their expanded learning program. In this capacity, she also works and serves as a board member for the Riverside Arts Academy.

“Beth Schwandt has spent decades enriching the lives of young people in the Alvord Unified School District,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “Her work with the Riverside Arts Academy expanded her influence citywide, bringing arts education to countless students across Riverside.”

Last year Schwandt was named one of four [Teachers of the Year](#) by the Riverside County Office of Education. She sees music as “an all-encompassing curriculum that embraces literacy, multi-cultural diversity, ethnic studies, social justice, English language development, social/emotional therapy and behavioral intervention.”

“Beth Schwandt is a bright light in the Alvord district, and in our educational system in western Riverside County,” Councilmember Perry said. “I am proud to see her accomplishments recognized in this manner.”

Schwandt is known for providing her students with field trip opportunities to expand their knowledge and experience. Most recently, she worked with city staff to facilitate a program entitled "Make A Ripple," which provided an opportunity for AUSD students to perform the arts (music and dance) at The Fox Performing Arts Center to a near capacity crowd.

“Her ability to create memorable experiences and opportunities for students is what makes Beth so exceptional,” Councilmember Hemenway said. “And because of her profound passion for music and deep dedication to students, her life’s work will have lasting impacts throughout our city for generations to come.”

The Mayor and City Council have given the award each year since 1995. The last three have been Francisca Beltran, Lynn Heatley and Ofelia Valdez-Yeager