



**Santa Maria Joint Union**  
**HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**NEWS \* NEWS \* NEWS**  
**PRESS RELEASE**

Wednesday,  
April 20,  
2023

Righetti High School Drama Program Director and Theater Teacher, Elesa Carlson, has been selected as the 2024 Santa Barbara Bowl Performing Arts Teacher of the Year.

Carlson will be honored on May 11 at the Santa Ynez Valley Marriott in Buellton by the Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO) Teachers Network. She will receive a \$500 honorarium from the Santa Barbara Bowl, two tickets to a future show, and appear in a short video.

“I truly love working at Righetti with such a wonderfully diverse group of students,” said Carlson, who also teaches Fine Arts. “It’s been my personal mission to present spaces where all are welcome and to share the arts inclusively by offering opportunities big and small for them.”

RHS Principal, Ted Lyon, nominated Carlson for her impressive and meaningful contributions to the school’s performing arts program that provides plays and musicals for special education students, the student body, and community throughout the year. Carlson also joins PVHS Theater and Technical Theater Drama Club Director, Selyn Harwin, in producing district-wide productions such as “Chicago”, “Grease,” and others.

“Elesa inspires creativity in students as artists and actors,” Lyon said. “She makes sure that students with disabilities, English learners, and those that struggle with a variety of other pressures at school or home have a place in the classroom. She is one of the most talented and humble educators I have encountered in my 31-year career in education.”

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