

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TheBestSchools.org Announces Winners of \$20,000 Best in Education Award for 2017

PELLA, IOWA (Oct. 11, 2017) — Who are the top school leaders in America? Recognizing the best K–12 school administrators, TheBestSchools.org announces the winners of its \$20,000 Escalante–Gradillas Prize for Best in Education for 2017.

“We looked nationally at outstanding school leaders who do more with less, meet exceptional needs with innovative solutions, and whose students demonstrate strong academic gains,” says Dan Edelen, director of marketing services for TheBestSchools.org. “The Escalante–Gradillas Prize is our way of celebrating excellent school leaders who might otherwise go unrecognized. By spotlighting these winners, we hope to bring them the accolades they deserve for all they do to help our children succeed.”

Through the prize, TheBestSchools.org, continues to promote the high academic standards of the late Jaime Escalante, the famed calculus teacher profiled in the 1988 film *Stand and Deliver*, and his principal, Henry Gradillas, who now serves as an academic advisor to TheBestSchools.org.

- **José Espinoza, superintendent of the Socorro Independent School District in El Paso, Texas**, is the 2017 overall winner of the Escalante–Gradillas Prize for Best in Education. He receives an individual prize of \$10,000, along with an additional \$10,000 for his district.
- **Sharif El-Mekki, principal of Mastery Charter–Shoemaker in Philadelphia**, takes second, and will receive a \$5,000 award for his school.
- **Woodland Johnson, principal of Mort Elementary in Tampa, Florida**, is the third-place finisher and receives \$3,000 for his school.

Results and full educator's bios:

<https://thebestschools.org/special/2017-best-in-education-prize-winner/>

“With \$28,000 in total awards, the Escalante–Gradillas Prize for Best in Education remains one of the premier US educator prizes,” says Edelen. “By recognizing school administrators and classroom teachers in alternating years, we acknowledge that education is a partnership, just as teacher Jaime Escalante and principal Henry Gradillas worked together to achieve success for their students.”

For details on the Escalante–Gradillas Prize for Best in Education or to nominate a classroom teacher for 2018, see:

<https://thebestschools.org/special/escalante-gradillas-prize/>

TheBestSchools.org is a leader in school rankings — K–12, college, postgraduate, online, and on-campus — providing millions of prospective students with the information they need to find the right school for them. TheBestSchools.org is an independent educational website whose staff and advisory board believe learning transforms lives for the better and should be a lifelong pursuit.

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