



## **Stockton science teacher named educator of the year**

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Nicole Gonzalez, a high school science teacher in Stockton, has been given the Michael McKibbin Outstanding Educator of the Year Award by the California Teacher Corps.

The award honors a California educator who pursued teaching through an alternative certification program and is now serving in a high-need public school. The award was presented Friday at the California Teacher Corps Conference in Napa.

Ms. Gonzalez, who attended high school in Manteca and is the oldest of seven children, decided to pursue teaching after graduating from the University of California, Santa Barbara, with a biology degree. She earned her teaching credential through Project IMPACT, a California Teacher Corps program offered through the Teachers College of San Joaquin and the San Joaquin County Office of Education.

She teaches biology and anatomy at Edison High School, which serves nearly 2,100 students, more than half of whom receive free or reduced lunch and 97 percent of whom are minorities.

“Gonzalez embodies the skill and commitment of all Teacher Corps teachers, more than 55,000 educators who work tirelessly day after day in underserved communities and high-need subjects to serve California students,” says California Teacher Corps Founding President Catherine Kearney. “We know that the right teacher makes all the difference and Gonzalez is the right teacher for the Stockton community.”

At Edison High School, Ms. Gonzalez has taken on several leadership roles, including developing the Foundations of Health program. Students spend a year in hands-on study of the human body that combines physics, biology and chemistry in a laboratory setting. In addition, she created the Behavior Intervention Program, designed to create steps for early intervention to support at-risk students.



“At the end of the day, if my teaching benefits even one student, then I know I have made an impact,” says Ms. Gonzalez. “In my role, I can help them realize they can accomplish anything.”