

# SLOCOE e-News



*Monthly News from the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education*



May you be proud of the person you are, the work you do, and the difference you make. [Photo - SLOCOE's blooming cactus]]

## IN THIS ISSUE

---

**Meet Nelson  
Payton, Manager,  
Maintenance,  
Operations &  
Transportation**

---

**SLOCOE Staff Enjoy  
Reconnecting at  
End-of-Year  
Gathering**

---

**Staff Transitions & News**

---

## **Together We Are Stronger**

*by James Brescia, County Superintendent*

The San Luis Obispo County Office of Education's mission is to promote student services, and to provide countywide leadership and advocacy. Our mission cannot be achieved without you, our highly skilled and dedicated employees.

*Together, we have proved that  
we are stronger, can achieve  
more, and will serve students  
with even greater commitment  
as we transition into a post-  
COVID world.*

After a year-long delay, we held our employee appreciation celebration last month. The afternoon of June 22 was the first time in over a year that we gathered in person as an organization to celebrate our employees. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing many of you, listening to live music, and breaking bread together. Please

know that I am very proud of the patience, concern, and dedication you continue to show for colleagues, students, families, and community during difficult times.

SLOCOE will continue to implement COVID-19 physical distancing and safety practices. Your support in following the Public Health Department guidelines is much appreciated, and has assisted in making our community safer.



The upcoming weeks and months will continue to require patience, clarification of understanding, and clear communications. I have tremendous confidence in our employees, our districts, and community to join forces as we increase in-person services to the best of our ability. Together, we have proved we are stronger, can achieve more, and will serve students with even greater commitment as we transition into a post-COVID world.

*Andra tutto bene - Everything will be okay.* It is an honor to serve as your county superintendent.

*~Jim Brescia*

## Meet Nelson Payton

*Manager, Maintenance, Operations & Transportation*



Who is a third-generation native of San Luis Obispo County, is a farmer at heart with an orchard of 30 fruit trees, is the father of four children, and can say he had DJ Pittenger as his fifth grade teacher? Nelson Payton, of course!

In his first few months here, many of us grew accustomed to seeing Nelson everywhere, consulting with roofers or security camera installers, or providing hands-on help to his staff. "I love getting out there and working with the crew," he says.

Nelson comes to us from Paso Robles, where he supervised a great deal of activity that included construction during the normal hubbub created by 6,700 students. He embraces the outdoor environment and culture here at SLOCOE, saying he loves kids and enjoys his part in maintaining "an environment that gives them success."

When not working, Nelson loves time at home with his wife and three daughters, ages 7, 5 and 3; and son, 4 months old. He inherited his love of growing things from a grandfather. His orchard includes trees that produce Elberta peaches, figs, and apricots. He also grows berries. The Payton children often put on their grubby clothes to help him paint tree trunks.

If you have not yet met Nelson, make some time to visit him in the MOT building. "Don't be a stranger!" he says.



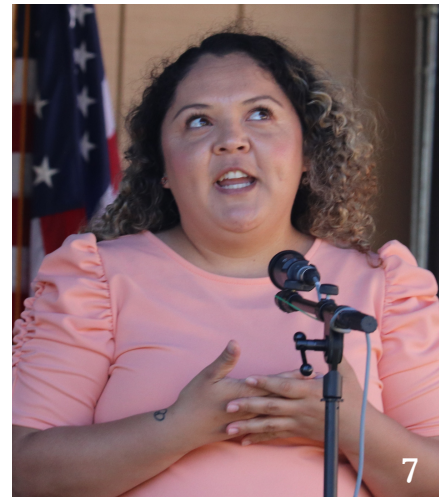
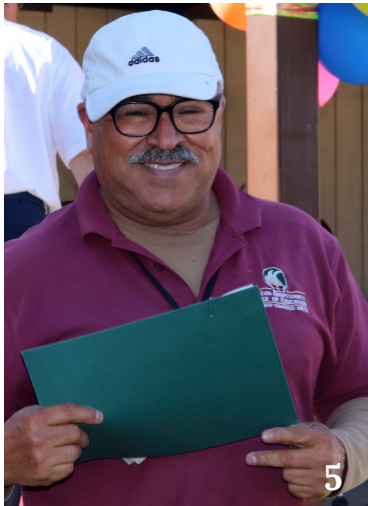
## SLOCOE Staff Enjoy Music, Dinner, and Social Time at June 22 End-of-Year Celebration at Rancho El Chorro

Nearly 70 SLOCOE staff gathered at Rancho El Chorro for the first in-person gathering in over a year. Pleasant weather, music from vocalist Talia Ortega and her jazz combo (1), tacos catered by the Puentes family of El Compadre Restaurant (2), and raffle prizes added to the fun. Dr. Brescia and Thomas Alvarez named 2021 Employees of the Year for SLOCOE, including Classified Employee of the Year Lenette Costa (3 & 4); and Teacher of the Year Susanne Murphy (not pictured).

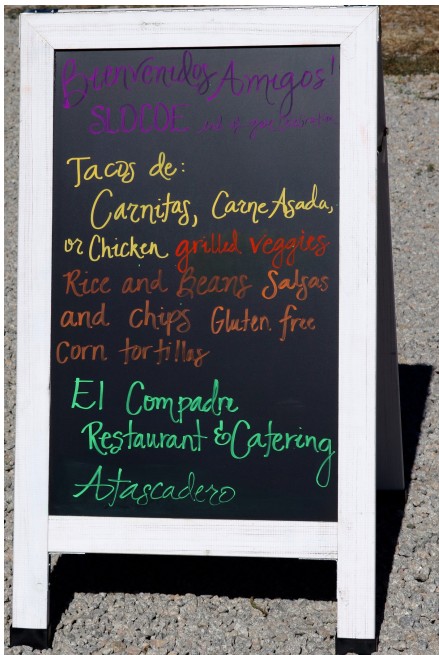




Thomas Alvarez also announced Classified Employee of the Year nominees: Arturo Rojas (5), Shirley Marshall (6), Zola Moore-Stansbury, Ruth Allen, and Amy Peterson, (not pictured). Several new staff who attended the gathering were invited to introduce themselves: Daniela Garcia, Classified Coordinator for Homeless & Foster Youth (7), Nelson Payton, Director of MOT (8), Sherry Lopez-Dewolf, Payroll Retirement Specialist (9), Stefanie Monahan, Teacher for Orthopedic and Multi-handicapped (10), Chris Balogh, Director of Alternative Education (11), and Eileen Higgins, Program Specialist, Support Systems (12).







Staff enjoyed a simple but tasty menu, cooked and served by El Compadre Restaurant. They relaxed around tables set on the lawn at Rancho El Chorro. Board trustees also enjoyed the opportunity to visit with staff.



## STAFF TRANSITIONS & NEWS



### WELCOME TO SLOCOE!

**Josy Aguilar**, Migrant Education Services Specialist/Recruiter, Educational Support Services

**Chris Balogh**, Director, Alternative Education, Student Programs & Services

**Jennifer Ford**, Administrative Assistant II, Homeless & Foster Youth Services, Educational Support Services

**Daniela Garcia**, Classified Coordinator for Homeless & Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program

**Eileen Higgins**, Program Specialist, Support Systems, Educational Support Services Program, Educational Support Services

**Nelson Payton**, Manager, Maintenance Operations and Transportation

**Christopher Phillips**, Director, Special Education, Student Programs & Services

### EMPLOYEE RECOGNITIONS

**Ruth Allen**, nominated for Classified Employee of the Year for 2021

**Lenette Costa**, SLOCOE's Classified Employee of the Year for 2021

**Zola Moore-Stansbury**, nominated for Classified Employee of the Year for 2021

**Ginnie Murach**, nominated for Classified Employee of the Year for 2021

**Susanne Murphy**, SLOCOE's Teacher of the Year for 2021

**Amy Peterson**, nominated for Classified Employee of the Year for 2021

**Arturo Rojas-Castaneda**, nominated for Classified Employee of the Year for 2021

### CONGRATULATIONS!

**Dr. Joe Koski**, newly selected Executive Director, Educational Support Services

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

**Chelsea Campbell**, Behavioral Health Specialist, Student Programs & Services

**Courtney Carden**, Culinary Arts Coach, Grizzly Youth Academy

**Ann Donovan**, Behavioral Health Specialist, Student Programs & Services

**Sabrina Green**, Behavioral Health Specialist, Student Programs & Services

**Michelle Mayabb**, Manager, Business Services

**Jessica Ortiz**, Administrative Assistant, Grizzly Youth Academy

**Sheena Riso**, Job Placement Specialist, Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)

**Grisel Gomez Sanchez**, Migrant Education Services Specialist/Recruiter, Bilingual, Educational Support Services