

Tyra, Bob

Page: Overview

While “career and technical education (CTE)” is new to many, those in the field have long understood the power and importance of education that provides students with high-tech, real-world learning infused with career exploration. Not only is CTE at the roots of today’s most relevant education trends such as ‘STEM’ and ‘Maker Spaces,’ it’s a vital component to ensuring America’s economic prosperity and status as a leader for innovation. It is part of ACTE’s mission to ensure the value of CTE continues to grow and gain the recognition it deserves.

ACTE’s Champion for CTE Awards were created to recognize education leaders, business and industry executives, celebrities and thought leaders who support and champion CTE programs as a vital part of developing a prepared, adaptable and competitive workforce. The words and actions of a few dedicated and influential individuals have the power to further best practices, foster supportive policies, and shape a more positive public opinion of CTE. These awards showcase outstanding champions—from local leaders to national figureheads—who have leveraged their influence to expand, improve, and promote CTE.

These examples of model leadership serve to inspire and inform other leaders on creative and meaningful ways to positively impact the field. Highlighting their stories aligns with ACTE’s goal of cultivating a positive image of CTE and recognizing a broad community of supporters, ultimately creating a stronger vision for the future of CTE and empowering its leaders to speak with a unified voice.

If you know of a deserving candidate for this recognition, we urge you to explore ACTE’s preeminent awards program.

These awards are open to education leaders, business and industry executives, celebrities, thought leaders and other individuals who have made a significant impact on the improvement and expansion of CTE programs and/or on positively influencing policymakers and public opinion regarding CTE. *Federal policymakers are not eligible for these awards and should instead be nominated for [ACTE’s Policymaker of the Year Award](#).* Greater consideration will be given to candidates who have repeatedly demonstrated their public support for CTE and who exhibit an understanding of the components of modern, high-quality CTE.

Nominations will be accepted online until May 1 and may be submitted by the candidate or by a third party nominator. All candidates who meet eligibility and criteria requirements will be highlighted on ACTE's website as a 'Champion for CTE Spotlight.' Top nominations may be featured as model leaders in a future issue of *Techniques*, and/or invited to present sessions at ACTE's CareerTech VISION.

An independent panel will review all submissions to select the national recipient(s) of the ACTE Champion for CTE Award, which will then be considered for approval by the ACTE Board of Directors. Winners will be notified in August and recognized at the ACTE Awards Banquet during CareerTech VISION.

All nominators permit ACTE to use and edit content of the application for promotional activities. ACTE reserves the right to maintain the anonymity of judges and confidentiality of their scores. Non-winning candidates may be re-nominated for the same or another Excellence Award the following year. Winning candidates at the national level may not be nominated for the same or another national ACTE Excellence Award within three years of their win.

Page: Basic Information

Nominator Information

Please provide your information as the nominator of this candidate.

Your Name

Tyra, Bob

Email Address

btyra2.0@gmail.com

Title

DOL Youth Career Connect Grant Technical Assistance Coach

Employer

Performance Excellence Partners, LLC

Phone Number

562-774-5890

Relationship to the Candidate

Technical Assistance Coach

Candidate Information

Please provide information on the candidate being nominated.

Candidate's Name

Esther Soliman

Title

Linked Learning and CTE Administrator

Employer

Los Angeles Unified School District

Work Address

333 South Beaudry Avenue
Los Angeles California 90017-1466 US

Email

esther.soliman@lausd.net

Phone Number

(213) 241-8754

Does the candidate have a background (diploma, certificate, degree) in a career and technical education field?

No

If yes, please provide more detail about their background in CTE.

Esther Soliman holds an MA degree in Educational Administration from New York University and an MFA in Theatre Directing from California Institute of the Arts.

She served as a lead teacher and principal at Los Angeles HS of the Arts. This was one of the first Linked Learning (LL) pilot schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the first certified LL pathway in LAUSD.

As the LL and CTE administrator for LAUSD, Esther oversees 44 pathways in eight industry sectors:

- Health Science and Medical Technology
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Law and Teaching
- Arts, Media and Entertainment
- Energy, Environment and Utilities
- Business and Finance
- Engineering

Esther's and her team also manage the Department of Labor's Youth Career Connect Grant, Career and Technical Education Innovation Grant and the California Career Pathway Trust Grant to support LL in her district.

Page: Description of Candidate

1. Please describe actions the candidate took to help expand, improve, and/or promote CTE.

In the words of Dalton Cole, principal of the Contreras Business and Tourism Academy in Downtown Los Angeles:

"CTE in LAUSD used to be disjointed and compartmentalized into its different divisions that worked fairly independently of each other without a common vision. When Esther became administrator for Linked Learning, she worked hard to create a more unified division, providing it with a clear vision with a more coherent menu of services that schools receive.

She makes sure that schools in Linked Learning (LL) have the resources and support they need for success through writing grants, lobbying local districts and community partners to see the value of our work and the need to financially support it. She makes sure that our schools are supported by additional funding from programs like California Career Pathways Trust, Career and Technical Education Innovation Grant, and Youth Career Connect."

The collective total of funding dollars provided by these three grants alone: \$77 million.

Linked Learning in LAUSD has coordinated multiple program site visitations for federal, state and local policymakers. In addition, Project-Based Learning and Senior Defense events and presentations have brought representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, SpaceX, Kaiser Permanente, Nickelodeon, the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine, the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship and many other businesses, governmental agency and higher education representatives into LL classrooms.

The LAUSD Media Department has provided consistent support for media outreach including print and social media. Articles have been published in the Los Angeles Times and on the Voice of America, California Economic Summit, Broadway World, EdSource, LA School Report, LAUSD Daily, Education Dive, America's Promise, Education Writer's Association, Chronicle of Social Change, KPCC Radio and other websites.

2. How did the candidate's actions shape the adoption/expansion of best practices in CTE?

Linked Learning aligns with the High-quality CTE Framework., Esther has moved LAUSD to multiple adoption/expansions of best practices in CTE. Following are selected examples:

1. Standards-aligned and Integrated Curriculum: In all Linked Learning Pathways, teachers engage students in rigorous academic coursework that exceeds the California A-G college preparatory requirements.
2. Sequencing and Articulation: Esther and her team are actively involved with the Los Angeles Community College District in aligning Linked Learning curriculum with the nine community colleges that serve LAUSD students. Under Esther's leadership LAUSD also implemented CTE in 22 middle schools with 6-12 articulation across multiple feeder patterns.
3. Student Assessment: Students in LAUSD's Linked Learning pathways participate in a rigorous and demanding demonstration of knowledge known as the student portfolio defense.
5. Energizing Instruction: Linked Learning Support Services include academic, social-emotional counseling, tutoring, parent engagement, mentoring, career assessment and exploration, and bridge programs to post-secondary education. These services are fundamental to the pathway experience and critical for ensuring students succeed in their challenging academic and technical coursework.
7. Facilities and Equipment: • Esther has been on the forefront of expanding facilities and equipment for the 21st Century Workplace. Some examples of her forward-thinking in this area include the creation of maker spaces, biotech labs, automotive shops, patient care training rooms, as well as a number of state-of-the-art facilities improvements supported by the CTE Incentive Grant.
8. Business and Community Partnerships: LAUSD's Linked Learning Initiative includes the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, Communities in Schools - Los Angeles, International Trade Education Programs (ITEP), Altamed, Southern California Gas Company, Kaiser Permanente, the L.A. Trust for Children's Health, and the Los Angeles Office of the Mayor.
11. Work-based Learning: In addition to coordinating work experience and other related job shadow and internship activities during the school year, LAUSD's Summer Bridge program provides hundreds of paid internships in local businesses and agencies.
12. Data and Program Improvement: The 4-year Department of Labor's Youth Career Connect Grant Initiative involved the implementation of a Participant Tracking System (PTS.)
A Data Action Network, under the direction of United Way, is working on establishing a Balanced Scorecard for the region that will capture the efficacy of Linked Learning across indicators, with baseline data serving as an anchor.

3. How did the candidate's actions impact CTE policies or positively influence public opinion of CTE? How did these actions contribute to a broader understanding of modern CTE (not 'vocational education') that is robust, rigorous and relevant?

Esther is a tireless advocate for the LL approach to CTE. Esther's support of CTE work helped LAUSD increase CTE to 324 pathways expected in 2018-19 with 22 pathways at the middle school level. This year, she worked with Los Angeles Unified's Division of Instruction to increase administrators understanding of CTE as a part of all student's high school development. She partnered with CTE advocates to present to all assistant principals and principals and organized a showcase for administrators across the district to better understand how CTE increases rigor and relevance across all subject areas. She has presented to multiple stakeholder groups throughout California including:

- Presenter, "Portfolio and Defense," Linked Learning Conference, Oakland, CA. 2017
- Presenter to Boston principals and superintendents, Los Angeles, CA. 2017
- Presenter, "Linked Learning 101," Linked Learning Conference, Oakland, CA. 2017
- Presenter, "Data in LAUSD Linked Learning Pathways," California State University, Long Beach, CA. 2017
- Presenter, "Linked Learning 101," Linked Learning Conference, San Diego, CA. 2016
- Presenter to Boston principals and superintendents, Los Angeles, CA. 2016
- Keynote Speaker, "Why Linked Learning?" LAUSD Linked Learning Institute, Los Angeles 2015
- Presenter on Linked Learning to principals and superintendents, Detroit, MI. 2014
- Presenter, "Why Linked Learning," California State University, Los Angeles, CA. 2014

Seema Puri, an LAUSD CTE coordinator, shares.

4. What is the scope of the candidate's impact on CTE?

State

5. Would the candidate be willing to speak about their supportive efforts on behalf of CTE at an ACTE event?

Yes