

2025 CCOG EDUCATORS SUMMIT @The Beach



CENTER TO CLOSE
THE OPPORTUNITY GAP

CSU The California State University

ROOTED IN CARE: TAKING CARE OF OUR STUDENTS, OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER



FRIDAY, JULY 25TH



9:00AM - 1:00 PM



[HTTPS://CSULB.ZOOM.US/J/89213496062](https://csulb.zoom.us/j/89213496062)



SCHOOLSFIRST
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

CCOG EDUCATORS VIRTUAL SUMMIT AGENDA

8:45-9:00AM LOG INTO THE SUMMIT ZOOM
MEETING:
[HTTPS://CSULB.ZOOM.US/J/89213496062](https://csulb.zoom.us/j/89213496062)

9:00-9:30AM **WELCOME**
EDTALK: **NICHI AVIÑA**

9:30-10:10AM **TEACHER PANEL**
MODERATION BY CYNDI TING

10:30-11:15AM **BREAKOUT SESSION:**
GABRIELA OROZCO GONZALEZ

12:25-1:00 PM EDTALK: **ALEX KAJITANI**
CLOSING REMARKS



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EDTALK SPEAKER

NICHI AVIÑA

2022 CA Teacher of the Year



Nichi Renea Aviña is a 2022 California Teacher of the Year and nationally recognized trauma-informed educator transforming classrooms into spaces of healing and resilience. A first-generation immigrant and middle school science teacher in Palm Springs Unified, she integrates somatic education, social-emotional learning (SEL), and sustainable innovation to support academic success and nervous system well-being.

After earning a biology degree from UC San Diego, Nichi began her career in cancer research focused on clinical trials. Inspired to pursue broader healing, she earned a master's in education at UCSD. Her personal experiences with displacement, systemic hardship, and the early loss of her brother shaped her commitment to equity, resilience, and nervous system literacy.

A Certified Community Resiliency Model® (CRM) Teacher and Somatic Experiencing®-trained educator, Nichi conducts nationwide trainings applying neuroscience to education. At her school, she pioneered a STEAM Lab, art mentoring, and the Eco-Hero Program with a sustainable garden, empowering students as wellness leaders.

She co-hosts trauma-informed workshops with expert Maggie Kline and is authoring *Regulate to Educate: An EduProtocols SEL Field Guide*, a toolkit for building connection and resilience.

Nichi's mission is to make schools sanctuaries of healing and joy—one regulated nervous system at a time.

EDTALK SPEAKER

ALEX KAJITANI

2009 CA Teacher of the Year



Alex Kajitani is the 2009 California Teacher of the Year, and a Top-4 Finalist for National Teacher of the Year. He is the author of several books, including *Owning It*, which was named “Recommended Reading” by the U.S. Department of Education. His most recent book for new teachers, *You’re a Teacher Now! What’s Next?* is getting rave reviews.

Alex is known around the world as “The Rappin’ Mathematician, and his rap music videos have received hundreds of thousands of views and are being used in homes and classrooms around the world. He has a popular TED Talk, and was honored at The White House. He was also featured on *The CBS Evening News*, where Katie Couric exclaimed, “I LOVE that guy!” (and you will too!).

Twenty years ago, Alex left his lucrative job as a restaurant manager to pursue his dream of becoming a teacher. He earned his Master’s Degree in Education from San Diego State University, and has dedicated his career to teaching high poverty, culturally rich neighborhoods.

A native of southern California, when he’s not talking about education, you can find Alex hanging out with his family, or at the beach surfing.

For more info, visit www.AlexKajitani.com



TEACHER PANEL

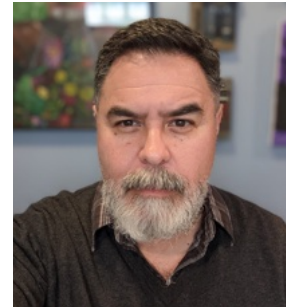
Cyndi Ting

Cyndi Abundabar Ting, a Filipina American educator and community organizer, integrates neuroscience and data analysis into her work as a high school Special Education teacher. A late-diagnosed ADHD parent of neurodiverse children and former teen mom, she brings unique perspectives to her classrooms and workshops. She holds leadership roles with FANHS, NABT JEDI, FACC Cerritos, and Teofilo Coffee Company.



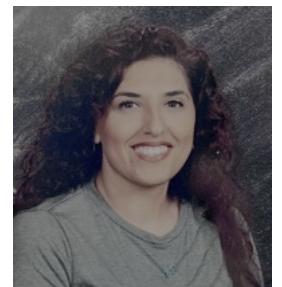
Tino Gutierrez

Tino Gutierrez is an educator with 30 years of experience supporting diverse learners and advancing equity. In the early 1990s at UCSB, he co-founded C.E.P.A.N. to tutor Latino youth and later taught Sex and Reproductive Education for at-risk teens. After substitute teaching in New York City and school districts in L.A. county, Tino earned his Education Specialist Credential at CSULB and teaches Special Education at El Rancho High School, where he helped launch the Ethnic Studies program.



Marine Karapetyan

Marine completed her BS and MS in Mathematics with a focus on Secondary Mathematics Education at CSULB. She has been teaching for almost 15 years, all of which at inner city/Title 1 schools in Los Angeles and Long Beach.



Gabriela Orozco Gonzalez

Gabriela Orozco Gonzalez is a second-grade teacher in Montebello Unified School District and a member of the California State Board of Education. With over two decades of experience teaching kindergarten through eighth grade, she brings the perspective of a seasoned classroom educator to state-level policy decisions, advocating for student-centered learning, equity, and teacher voice in shaping education systems.



BREAKOUT SESSION

Gabriela Orozco Gonzalez

From the Classroom Up: Elevating Educator Voice in Policy Decisions (PK-12 Audience)

Teachers are passionate advocates of equitable change. In this interactive session, learn how your classroom experience can influence school, district, and state policy. By means of story, collective policy design lab, and on-the-ground demonstration, participants will identify critical education issues and translate them into actionable advocacy ideas. Leave with the tools to get your voice heard where it is needed most.

Bio: Gabriela Orozco Gonzalez is a second-grade teacher in Montebello Unified School District and a member of the California State Board of Education. With over two decades of experience teaching kindergarten through eighth grade, she brings the perspective of a seasoned classroom educator to state-level policy decisions, advocating for student-centered learning, equity, and teacher voice in shaping education systems.

Gabriela is widely recognized for her leadership in literacy, mathematics, English language development, and professional learning. She has co-authored districtwide curriculum in both English language arts and mathematics, with an emphasis on academic language, rigorous instruction, and meaningful access for English learners. She also contributed to the design of performance tasks for California's Smarter Balanced assessments, and has supported the implementation of state standards through professional learning efforts with the California Teachers Association, Stanford University, and the National Education Association.

She founded the Common Core Café, a grassroots network that brings educators together to strengthen instruction and collaboration, and launched the Parent-Teacher Connection Project, which empowers families to support learning at home. A two-time Teacher of the Year and featured voice in California Educator magazine, Gabriela remains deeply rooted in the classroom while helping shape policy to ensure every student in California has access to a high-quality, inclusive public education.



CCOG Clearinghouse

The CCOG Clearinghouse is a virtual library of searchable, FREE resources all with the goal of closing the opportunity gaps in CA. This statewide repository includes practices, programs, and policies that promote equity and have been demonstrated to improve student outcomes. The peer-reviewed resources are designed to advance the work of educators, counselors, administrators, higher education faculty, and community partners.

Submissions are open for the practices, programs, and policies that are closing the opportunity gap in your schools & organizations.

<https://ccog.calstate.edu/clearinghouse>



**VISIT THE CCOG
CLEARINGHOUSE**

CCOG Mission

The CSU Center to Close the Opportunity Gap is a state supported multi-campus initiative with regional networks that will collaboratively learn, work, and leverage opportunities across sectors, to support systemic change and advance PK-12 students' academic success. Established at California State University Long Beach, and in partnership with San Diego State University, California State University Fullerton and San Jose State University, the Center will focus on identifying and refining proven strategies to eliminate equity gaps at all levels of education and will share resources, tools and evidence-based best practices with colleges of education across the CSU and education partners across California.

What We Do

Our goals are to

1. Strengthen professional preparation of educators-teachers, education specialists, and administrators;
2. Conduct original research in PK-12 school to identify valid, reliable, and sustainable teaching practices that impact the opportunities and achievement of PK-12 students;
3. Develop and disseminate tools and resources to implement these practices in PK-12 and educator preparation programs.

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