

Edith Bowen Laboratory School Vice Principal Laura Reina Recipient of the Sorenson Legacy Award for Excellence in Arts Education

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Left to right: Laurie Baefsky; Laura Reina; Aurora Hughes Villa, Beverley Taylor Sorenson endowed director for elementary arts education; and Nate Justis

Laura Reina, Ph.D. and vice principal of Edith Bowen Laboratory School (EBLS) housed within the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, was awarded the Sorenson Legacy Award for Excellence in Arts Education on April 11 by Laurie Baefsky, fine arts coordinator in the Utah State Board of Education. Reina is one of nine educators and administrators across the state of Utah who received a Sorenson Legacy award this Spring. The award underscores the critical role of arts education in Utah's school and honors administrators who support an arts-centered school as well as educators who excel in integrating the arts into their teaching.

"Dr. Reina has taken EBLS to incredible heights with her concentrated efforts on integrating the arts in everything we do," said Nate Justis, principal at EBLS. "She has devoted her whole heart and soul to helping young children see and achieve their potential, and she does so with incredible grace and creativity. We could never thank Laura enough for what she contributes to our magical learning experiences at Edith Bowen."

Established in memory of Beverley Taylor Sorenson, an advocate for high-quality arts in public education,

the award recognizes Utah educators who have demonstrated commitment to the power of the arts in student development.

Reina is well deserving of the recognition. She has worked in elementary education for 23 years as both teacher and administrator. She came to EBLS 14 years ago from Granite School District in Salt Lake City and has worked in various positions at the school, including RTI (Response to Intervention) specialist, Title I director, gifted specialist, Beverley Taylor Sorenson arts specialist, levelled library curator, and school musical director. She is currently the curriculum and assessment director as well as vice principal, a position she has held for eight years.

In addition to her administrative endorsement, Reina holds endorsements in elementary drama integration and elementary dance integration. Drawing upon that expertise and her remarkable creativity, she has written and produced 35 school and class musicals in her 23 years of working in elementary education. At EBLS, she has directed a school musical for the past 14 years, casting more than 100 students in each production. She is also actively engaged in creating the staging, choreography, costuming, and overseeing the set design and music. Reina recruits her students to fill leadership roles in the productions such as student directors, stage managers, and members of the light and sound crew. She also ensures that every student shines on stage regardless of ability or other challenges.

"Today Dr. Reina is receiving the award for being the best of the best of the best for excellence in arts administration," announced Baefsky at the award ceremony, where she addressed students, teachers, and administrators in the EBLS auditorium, praising Reina's impressive 23-year career and her impact on children in arts education.

"I feel so honored to receive this award as it recognizes something I feel is so important," said Reina. "Reading and math are the core, but the arts are the flavor! Everything is more fun when we can sing it, move it, or create it in some way. I am fortunate to have seen so many kids blossom and shine on a stage. I am excited to get this award, particularly this time of year when every extra minute is spent sewing costumes and creating props—a good reminder of why I love this work when it gets so hard."

In recognition of her outstanding achievements, Reina received a \$2,500 cash award. Additionally, EBLS was granted a \$500 cash award to further support the school's arts programs.