



California State Treasurer Fiona Ma, CPA

News Release

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Treasurer Fiona Ma Presents “Scholar Dollars” Grants to Sandra J. Gallardo and Placer Elementary



SACRAMENTO– California State Treasurer Fiona Ma presented a \$10,000 “Scholar Dollars” grant today from the ScholarShare 529 program to Sandra J. Gallardo Elementary in Folsom and a \$15,000 grant to Placer Elementary in Loomis.

At Sandra J. Gallardo Elementary, the money will be used to expand the newly created STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) lab. “Thanks to ‘Scholar Dollars’ our teachers and students will finally get the most enjoyment and learning out of this new space on campus,” said Principal Patricia Graham.

“This grant will develop our future STEM leaders at Sandra J. Gallardo Elementary and gives their students the foundation of life skills for future success,” said Treasurer Ma, who chairs the ScholarShare Investment Board that sets investment policies and oversees all activities of ScholarShare, the state’s 529 college investment plan. The program enables Californians to save for college by putting money in tax-advantaged investments.

Placer Elementary School plans to use the money to create a STEM learning lab of their own. "By leveraging the funds to purchase equipment such as robotics, 3D printers, coding curriculum and other materials we will allow our students to unleash their creative minds in practical application of STEM learning and beyond," said Principal Amy Nash.

"Scholar Dollars" supports extracurricular and enrichment programs that in some cases were cut or dropped altogether because of budget cuts. This year it has awarded more than \$300,000 to 20 K-8 schools throughout the state to fund technology, music, art, theater, computer science, sports, and other programs.

The "Scholar Dollars" program helps schools improve the enrichment programs that inspire students, spark their curiosity, and help motivate them to pursue college or other higher education opportunities.

Schools win "Scholar Dollars" grants by mobilizing their communities to cast votes. This year 377 schools competed and more than 285,000 votes were cast. Treasurer Ma commended Sandra J. Gallardo and Placer elementary schools for successfully applying for a "Scholar Dollars" grant.

"I know the dedicated students, staff, and parents came together as a community to record the votes needed to win this grant," she said.

Studies show that students with a savings account in their name are seven times more likely to attend college than others. "Scholar Dollars" helps raise awareness about saving for college early, which is important given that the average student loan debt is \$36,521. According to the U.S. Department of Education's College Affordability and Transparency Center there is \$1.48 trillion total student loan debt in the United States www.collegecost.ed.gov.

ABOUT SCHOLARSHARE 529

"Scholar Dollars" offers families a diverse set of tools to help pay for higher education, including relief from paying taxes on investment growth, if the funds are spent on qualified higher education costs.

TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. serves as Program Manager. To learn more about the ScholarShare 529 2019 Scholar Dollars Program, visit MyScholarDollars.com.

Fiona Ma is California's 34th State Treasurer. She was elected on November 6, 2018 with more votes (7,825,587) than any other candidate for treasurer in the state's history. She is the first woman of color and the first woman Certified Public Accountant (CPA) elected to the position. The State Treasurer's Office was created in the California Constitution in 1849. It provides financing for schools, roads, housing, recycling and waste management, hospitals, public facilities, and other crucial infrastructure projects that better the lives of residents. California is the world's fifth-largest economy and Treasurer Ma is the state's primary banker. Her office processes more than \$2 trillion in payments within a typical year. She provides transparency and oversight for the government's investment portfolio and accounts, as well as for the state's surplus funds. Treasurer Ma oversees an investment portfolio of more than \$102 billion, approximately \$20 billion of which are local government funds. She serves as agent for sale of all State bonds, and is trustee on over \$100 billion of outstanding debt.

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