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# Jessica Pack named a California Teacher of the Year

## James Workman Middle School teacher one of only five chosen statewide

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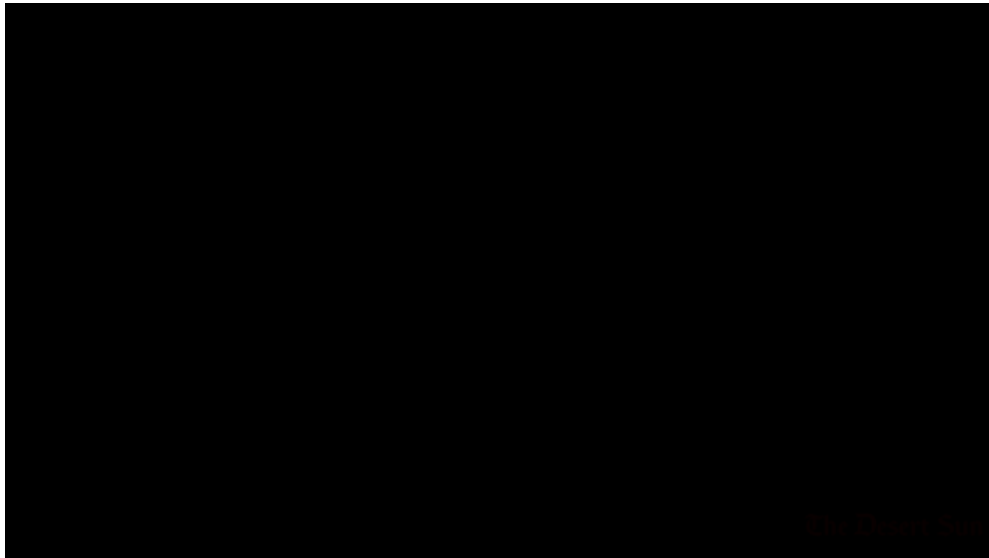
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Jessica Pack named California "Teacher of the Year": Jessica Pack named California "Teacher of the Year"

Written by **Brett Kelman**  
The Desert Sun

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**CATHEDRAL CITY** — A west valley teacher who has taught both students and colleagues about the power of classroom technology was named one of only five California "Teachers of the Year" for 2014 on Monday.

Jessica Pack, a sixth grade teacher who works at James Workman Middle School, was one of five teachers chosen from more than 260,000 California educators. She's the first Palm Springs Unified School District teacher to win the award in at least 23 years.

After school on Monday, education officials from the school, district and county offices surprised Pack with flowers, balloons and a celebratory banner.

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“This is very overwhelming — I thought we were just having a staff meeting,” Pack said, holding a giant bouquet, standing in front of the James Workman faculty. “I am very honored. And by no means do I think this would at all be possible without being placed at this amazing school with all of you. Nine years ago, I remember being welcomed with open arms ... and I feel so blessed with all of you.”



Jessica Pack was named a California Teacher of the Year on Monday, Nov. 4, 2013. / Omar Ornelas, The Desert Sun

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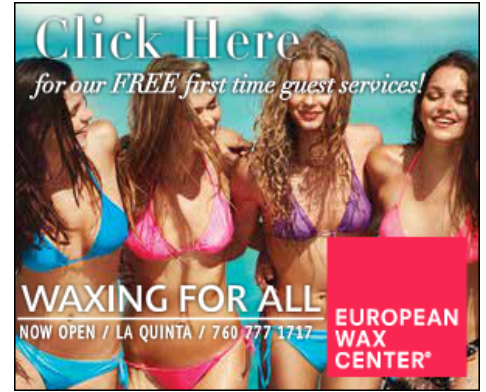
Pack teaches language arts, social studies and a class that combines student government and video production. She also heads the James Workman Audio Visual Club. In June, Pack led a districtwide teacher training on the new “Bring Your Own Device” initiative that encourages students to bring their laptops, tablets and smart phones for use in the classroom. Pack’s video production students also have dominated the Digicom film festival since its inception five

years ago.

Michael Marks, a seventh-grader at James Workman, said Pack’s technological teaching style reshaped his view of gadgets like iPads or smart phones.

“My cousins have iPads and iPhones, and I see them — practically all the time — using them to play videos or playing games,” Marks said. “But when I went to her class, I realized that they are not just about games or YouTube videos. You can actually use it as a tool or another way to learn. ... She showed me the world is much bigger than writing an essay on paper. She showed me the way the Internet is like a pathway.”

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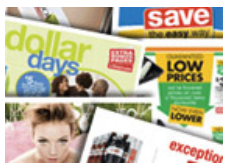
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