



**For Immediate Release
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Long Beach Unified School District School Psychologist Called Outstanding

Mary Ann Seng, a school psychologist with the Long Beach Unified School District, was named Outstanding School Psychologist by the California Association of School Psychologists (CASP) for the southern and eastern areas of Los Angeles County.

Each year CASP officially recognizes the outstanding work of school psychologists with its Outstanding School Psychologist award. Only practicing school psychologists who provide direct service to students, teachers, parents, or community agencies may receive this recognition. Nominated by their peers, one school psychologist in each of CASP's 10 regions receives the award at the association's annual convention, held last month in Monterey. CASP Region V, in which the Long Beach district is located, also includes all districts in Los Angeles County, excluding Los Angeles Unified and some districts in the northern points of the county.

Seng is the only school psychologist in the Long Beach district who speaks fluent Khmer. This is especially important because the city of Long Beach has the high number of Cambodians outside of Cambodia, and many are survivors of the Cambodian holocaust, as dramatized in the movie "The Killing Fields." Post-traumatic stress disorder runs rampant in the community, and, according to colleagues, Seng handles those and many other difficult cases that involve, to a lesser extent autism, rape, schizophrenia, attendance issues and gang involvement. She has built trust in that community, often acting as translator for Cambodian families in hospital settings, for those in dealings with police, at mental health facilities and for other school district personnel.

Colleagues said Seng is also talented at assessing all students – not just those of Cambodian descent – for learning difficulties. Some of these students are referred for special education. But others, such as the second-grader who was so rambunctious that school officials shortened his day only to find that he had sight and hearing problems that were resolved, just need someone to take a hard look at what the learning problems could be.

A resident of Anaheim, Seng has had to curtail her working hours because of ongoing health concerns. But she continues to inspire other school psychologists with her dedication to her schools and community, colleagues say.

The California Association of School Psychologists, with more than 3,000 members, is the largest state association of school psychologists in the nation. For more than 50 years, CASP has advocated on behalf of all of California's students. School psychologists offer student assessments, classroom management, program development for at-risk students and many other services to schools and their communities.

NOTE: A photo of Mary Ann Seng is available by email. Call the number above or email Heidi Holmblad at communications@casponline.org.