



# California Student Aid Commission

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## **California Student Aid Commissioner Honored by Student Counselling Professionals Association**

*NACAC to award Inclusion, Access and Success honor to Catalina Cifuentes*

Sacramento, CA (2018) – The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) will present the Inclusion, Access, and Success award to California Student Aid Commission Vice Chair, Catalina Cifuentes in Salt Lake City during their national conference, September 27-29, 2018.

NACAC's Inclusion, Access, and Success Committee (Committee) annually selects an educational professional who has been instrumental in making postsecondary opportunities available to historically underserved students. Commissioner Cifuentes currently serves as the Executive Director of College and Career Readiness in the Riverside County Office of Education.

“Catalina Cifuentes is a Commissioner who exemplifies our mission every hour of every day and every night,” says Lupita Cortez Alcalá, Executive Director of the California Student Aid Commission. “We are thrilled that she is receiving this well-deserved recognition from NACAC. She lives our mission and is so passionate about making higher education beyond high school accessible for all California students.”

Through her work with the Riverside County Office of Education, Commissioner Cifuentes currently leads a unit that works with education leaders and community stakeholders to support and increase a college-going culture in Riverside County's K-12 schools. This work includes providing counselors a forum through the Riverside County Counselor Leadership Network to share and collaborate on best practices that help create high-performing cultures that promote college and career readiness and leading an innovative partnership that was formed in 2014 in response to a call from the White House to help more students prepare for and graduate from college.

She has previously been acknowledged for her work as the lead counselor at Santiago High School, Corona-Norco Unified School District where the counseling team designed a successful guidance program that led to Riverside County, as well as California Department of Education, recognitions for exemplary counseling practices. She worked with her administrative team and staff to transform the school by raising the academic rigor and expectations from students resulting in the highest graduation rate and second highest A-G completion rate in four southern California counties.

Every day Commissioner Cifuentes focuses her efforts on students, whether it is helping Riverside County Office of Education's meet its Pledge: “All students will graduate from high school well

prepared for college or the workforce” or achieving the mission of the California Student Aid Commission: “Making education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians.”

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*The California Student Aid Commission is the state’s policy leader in the administration of financial aid for higher education, making education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians. California Student Aid Commission serves the needs of not only today’s college students but tomorrow’s students, guiding them through the application process. Information and tools are available online for the parents of tomorrow’s college and career technical students, a fully staffed call center answers questions and the California Student Aid Commission provides workshops and funds grants to organizations that provide access opportunities for students who are first in their family to attend institutions of higher education. For more information on how the California Student Aid Commission serves to educate, inform, and support students, their educational institutions, and the professionals who assist them please visit our website at <https://www.csac.ca.gov> or follow us on [Twitter](#) (@castudentaid) and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CSAC.StudentAidCommission/>.*

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