

Buchanan High School teacher Paul Lake named California High School Educator of the Year

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BY CARMEN GEORGE

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Clovis Unified School District science teacher Paul Lake has been named California's High School Educator of the Year by the California League of High Schools.

The Buchanan High School teacher has been teaching for 26 years. Lake, initially a regional winner -- selected from nominees in the counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced and Tulare -- was chosen Saturday by CLHS trustees from among regional winners to represent the entire state.

Lake teaches Buchanan's Environmental and Solar Energy Academy and is the school's robotics team adviser.

"I like the interaction with students -- establishing relationships," Lake said of the robotics team.

"When students enter high school they are children, and when they leave they are young adults. It's so much fun to be there for the transition. I hope my robotics students leave with an appreciation of physics and skills for life."

Lake shared the following advice for new teachers: "This job requires a big heart and thick skin. You will spend hours working hard on the most beautiful, thoughtful lesson plan ever conceived. And the kids will chew it up and spit it out.

"Don't take it personally and don't blame the kids. If you blame the kids for a lesson plan that doesn't work, you are taking your first sorry steps towards mediocrity. You must learn from failure. It's the only way to get better. And every once in a while you are going to nail it. You are going to reach them. Something will work, and that will make it all worthwhile."

Lake's favorite subject? "I love physics. The universe is awesome in the old-fashioned meaning of that word."