



# Press Release

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## ***California Teacher Is Recipient of First Bob Costas Grant for the Teaching of Writing, Announced by the College Board***

**NEW YORK**—Callen Taylor, a history teacher at Mission High School in San Francisco, California, is one of six teachers in the nation who have been awarded the first College Board Bob Costas Grants for the Teaching of Writing, the College Board announced today. The grants are in recognition of the innovative methods these teachers use to inspire and develop their students' writing skills. The award was named for Bob Costas, the Emmy Award-winning broadcaster and author, due to his dedication to the craft of writing and his generous public service work on behalf of the National Commission on Writing. Each teacher will receive a grant of \$2,000.

"The honorees are remarkable teachers who are creative and successful in their approach to get young people excited about writing and learning," said Costas. "Their commitment is clearly reflected in the confidence they are building in their students, who are developing lifelong skills of incredible value. I'm honored to be associated with this national program recognizing such noble work."

One grant recipient was selected from each of the College Board's six regions. Taylor's grant will be announced at the College Board's Western Regional Forum on February 26, 2006, at the Aladdin Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada.

### **Callen Taylor**

In the forested area along the coast of California's Monterey Peninsula is a retreat center called Asilomar where, every year, students from Mission High School spend three days in writing workshops. "I went to the writer's retreat last year and I think it was awesome," wrote one student, a young woman from Mongolia. "The background was relaxing and very comfortable to write. I concentrated more than I do at school."

The trip is the year-end culmination of the Mission Writers Project, led by Callen Taylor. On any given day, students engage in a wide range of writing—whether preparing for a poetry slam, working on a play, or composing nonfiction articles. It is all part of what Taylor calls a multilayered, real-world approach to writing. Seventy

percent of juniors and seniors participate in writing groups where they learn to revise their work and reflect on what they have learned.

All of this is accomplished through partnering with local community groups, including Youth Speaks, which holds poetry slams; Writers Corp, for nonfiction writing; Magic Theatre, where playwrights help students write and produce their own plays; and the tutoring program, 826 Valencia. “Many of our students are recent immigrants and are in need of basic tools to help them express themselves in a new language,” Taylor explained. “Our students have so much to say, so many deep ideas and dreams just waiting to be transformed into the written word.”

Taylor’s student continued: “I just came here from Mongolia and sometimes I don’t have confidence in my writing and my ideas. But through my teachers and activities like the retreat, I feel I am getting better at expressing myself. . . . Maybe I will become an English major in college someday.”

Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board, said: “These winners, along with many of the other highly qualified applicants, are doing critical work. To succeed in the classroom and later in life, students need to acquire strong writing skills. We were heartened by the overwhelming response we received in the first year of this program and to learn about so many great efforts being made across the country to inspire students to write well.”

The College Board established the National Commission on Writing in 2002 to create more national support for the teaching of writing. Bob Costas, a *New York Times* best-selling author, has received numerous Emmy awards, including two for writing, and has been honored as Sportscaster of the Year a record eight times by the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association. He has supported the Commission’s work by producing a national public service announcement encouraging young people to develop strong writing skills for success in the classroom and the workplace.

Teachers of grades 6–12 from any discipline, in both public and nonpublic schools, are eligible for the Bob Costas Grants, as are writing programs that take place within schools or the community. For more details about the award and the other honorees, visit [www.collegeboard.com/costasgrants](http://www.collegeboard.com/costasgrants).

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,000 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT<sup>®</sup>, the PSAT/NMSQT<sup>®</sup>, and the Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> (AP<sup>®</sup>). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.

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