

IVANNIA SOTO TEACHERSHIP AWARD

VANESSA ESPINOZA

Region III, University of California, Irvine

"Si Dios quiere." Three words my parents have always told me. Words I repeat to myself whenever I feel lost. A reminder that faith and perseverance can guide me through any challenge.

When you ask kids what they want to be when they grow up, you usually hear superheroes, doctors, astronauts, or princesses. These are all wonderful, but mine was different. From a young age, I wanted to help, encourage, and inspire others, as a teacher.

My passion for bilingual education comes from my experiences as a bilingual learner. In school, there were often language barriers between my teachers and my parents. I quickly realized the power of language and how I could help not only my family but also others in my community, translating anywhere it was needed. Being a translator showed me how meaningful it is when someone truly feels heard.

Bilingual programs are important, especially today. They build bridges, not walls. They strengthen cultural identity and support students in developing proficiency in two languages, while recognizing bilingualism as a powerful asset.

I want to be a teacher who celebrates diversity and empowers students. I strive to celebrate their cultures and help them see that their voices matter in both English and Spanish, and ensure families feel included with access to resources in both languages. During my placement, I have witnessed the joy that bilingualism brings to the classroom and the sense of community it fosters. I am excited to bring that same experience to my own classroom

CABE is proud to present to Vanessa Espinoza the CABE 2026 Ivannia Soto Teachership Award!