Press Release
For immediate release: May 16, 2017

Rick Barlow
Certificated Employee of the Year
Fremont High School and
FUHSD District Teacher of the Year

Rick Barlow was named the Fremont High School Certificated Employee of the Year by the Fremont Union High School District Board of Trustees at its meeting on April 18, 2017, and was recently announced as the Fremont Union High School District Teacher of the Year. Rick will be honored by the Santa Clara County Office of Education at the 48th Annual Santa Clara County Teacher Recognition Ceremony this coming September.

Rick began his teaching career at Fremont High School in the Fall of 2012 as part of the Mathematics Department. During his tenure in the district, he has taught Algebra 1 and 2, Algebra for English Language Learners, Academic Foundations and credit-recovery math, both during the school year and in summer school. Rick also serves as the coordinator of the English Language Learner program at Fremont.

Rick loves creating learning experiences that stimulate student’s intellectual curiosity. Being able to get a student to ask “why” about something and then giving them the opportunity to explore their “why” is critical to his teaching philosophy. Rick is also grateful for the opportunity to help students work through the math-phobia or math-anxiety they may have. Getting students to understand that math is a process, and helping them see that making mistakes and reflecting on those mistakes is an essential part of the learning process, is key to his practice as a teacher. Rick enjoys the process of thoughtfully planning a lesson and then watching all the pieces come together to create a powerful experience in the classroom.

FHS Dean Jay Lin shared that, “As the EL Program Coordinator, Rick shares best practices and provides meaningful professional development and coaching to his colleagues that is focused on the academic growth and achievement of our English Learners. He created a three-minute observation club that allows Fremont teachers to observe a variety of teaching strategies in action and helps ensure the continuous improvement of our teachers’ individual practice as professional educators.”

Rick was born and raised in New Lenox, IL, about an hour south of Chicago, graduating from Lincoln-Way High School. Struggles in high school and feeling overlooked as a student from a low-income, non-college going family helped lead Rick to his chosen profession. “I felt like my high school focused on kids that were 100% for sure going to college,” he said. “That didn’t feel like an option for me at the time so I didn’t feel very connected to my high school.” Now as the coordinator of the ELD program,
Rick focuses on ensuring that students who are just beginning to learn English have the support they need to achieve at high levels academically in all subject areas.

Rick attended the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he received his bachelor's degree in mathematics and his master's degree in Education. Prior to his career in education, Rick worked in construction and as a store manager for Starbucks, where he learned a great deal that he still draws upon today in the classroom. He enjoys camping with friends, gardening and learning Spanish. Last summer, Rick spent three weeks in Guatemala to study Spanish, with plans to return this summer to continue his studies. Rick is in his fourth year of the Knowles Science Teaching Fellowship, a five-year fellowship that supports math and science teachers with professional development opportunities, classroom resources and mentoring.