

## **Ombudsman Arizona Online Academy Principal Honored as 2025–26 SSWAAZ Public Educator of the Year**

*Phoenix, AZ – February 20, 2026 – Ombudsman Arizona Charter School is proud to announce that Dr. Sahithi Mantri, Principal of Ombudsman Arizona Online Academy, has been selected as the 2025–26 Public Educator of the Year by the School Social Work Association of Arizona (SSWAAZ).*

The award was presented at SSWAAZ’s annual state conference on Thursday, February 19, 2026, at Arizona State University West Campus. SSWAAZ honors one outstanding public educator each year who demonstrates exceptional service to students and families through prevention, intervention, and a deep commitment to both academic and social-emotional well-being.

*“Dr. Mantri’s leadership at Ombudsman Arizona Online Academy exemplifies what it means to be a true advocate for students and families,” said Binky Michele Jones, SVP Operations at Ombudsman Arizona Charter School. “This recognition is a testament to her dedication, compassion, and unwavering focus on educational equity and student success.”*

SSWAAZ highlighted Dr. Mantri’s work in empowering families, supporting students’ academic needs, and addressing their social and emotional challenges. The association specifically noted her collaborative approach and her commitment to ensuring positive outcomes for Arizona students, values that align closely with the mission of school social work and the core principles of the profession.

As Principal of Ombudsman Arizona Online Academy, Dr. Mantri leads a flexible, online charter high school program that serves students across Arizona who benefit from an alternative, personalized learning environment. Under her leadership, the academy continues to provide a supportive, accessible pathway to an accredited Arizona high school diploma.

*“We are incredibly proud of Dr. Mantri and grateful to SSWAAZ for this well-deserved honor,” said Dorothy Cohen, Regional Program Administrator. “Her work inspires our entire team and reinforces our mission to meet students where they are and help them succeed.”*

The School Social Work Association of Arizona (SSWAAZ) is a professional organization dedicated to advancing the practice of school social work and promoting the well-being of students and families throughout the state.

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## About Ombudsman Arizona

Ombudsman Arizona operates multiple charter high schools and the Online Academy, providing flexible, accredited pathways to an Arizona high school diploma for students in Phoenix, Tucson, Glendale, Tempe, and across the state. With small class sizes, personalized support, and morning/afternoon schedules, Ombudsman Arizona helps students re-engage in their education and graduate ready for college, careers, and life. Ombudsman Arizona is part of Ombudsman Educational Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of ChanceLight Behavioral Health, Therapy and Education, a leading provider of education and behavioral health solutions for children and young adults. As part of the ChanceLight family of schools, Ombudsman Arizona benefits from national best practices, comprehensive student support services, and a strong focus on positive outcomes for every learner.