



PRESS RELEASE

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Sequoia Middle School Celebrates 2018 Schools to Watch Designation

FONTANA, CA – Past and present Sequoia Middle School students were moved to tears as they shared stories about the school’s culture of continual growth during a March 6 ceremony highlighting Sequoia’s listing among the 2018 California Schools to Watch.

“I have spent most of my career, and part of my childhood, on this very campus,” Sequoia teacher Tammy DeVries said. “As a Sequoia student, and then as a teacher, I have watched this school, this staff and these students grow. I believe the important piece of Sequoia success has been the way we care about each other and how we help each other rise above the struggles.”

More than 1,500 students, parents, staff and community members – many dressed in Sequoia’s red and black colors – enjoyed student band performances and listened to district and community leaders praise the school’s efforts to boost student achievement and create a positive campus culture.

“Sequoia is a school that is academically outstanding, a place where everyone belongs, each student having a voice to be heard,” Sequoia Associated Student Body President Andrea Cardenas said. “The learning we do here is aimed at our success. Here at Sequoia, all the teachers and staff teach us to soar.”

Created by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, Schools to Watch identifies schools across the U.S. for their academic excellence, developmental responsiveness and social equity.

Just 22 California schools received the three-year designation for the first time in 2018; 112 schools in the state have been honored since 2003.

FUSD Executive Director of Secondary Schools Gorge Santiago, who attended Sequoia as a student and served as principal for seven years, challenged students, staff and the District to further improve Sequoia’s programs and to strive to become an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) National Demonstration School.

“This recognition is well-deserved for Sequoia, which has continued to demonstrate high academic achievement and social growth,” Fontana Unified Superintendent Randal S. Bassett said.

“Congratulations to the students, families and staff on their hard work, and on taking to heart the goals that embody the spirit of Fontana Unified.”

This year, the Schools to Watch program selected and honored 465 successful schools across the country. Sequoia Middle School and other Schools to Watch sites will be honored in Washington D.C. at the National Schools to Watch Conference, held June 27-30.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

030918_FUSD_SEQUOIA1: Fontana Unified administrators and Sequoia Middle School staff unveil the school's new banner, celebrating its inclusion in the 2018 California Schools to Watch List. Sequoia celebrated its recognition during a March 6 ceremony.

030918_FUSD_SEQUOIA2: Sequoia Middle School students pose for photos during a campus wide Schools to Watch ceremony on March 6. Sequoia was recognized for its positive school climate and culture of continual growth, aided by its Renaissance club, award-winning counseling program and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) discipline system, and mentoring programs.

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