



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Middle School Named ‘National School to Watch’ for Commitment to Equity and Excellence

FONTANA, CA – Sequoia Middle School’s commitment to equity, excellence, and innovation led to it being designated as a National School to Watch by the National Forum Advancing Excellence in the Middle Grades.

The recognition serves as a redesignation for Sequoia, which first received the honor in 2017, for the school’s dedication to helping all students belong, learn, and grow. Fontana Unified School District and Sequoia Middle School staff were presented with the accolade at the National Schools to Watch Conference in Washington, D.C. on June 20-22.

As a National School to Watch, Sequoia will serve as a mentor and model for fellow middle schools. The National Forum, a nonprofit educators’ association, selects Schools to Watch each year based on key factors including strong leadership, teachers who work together to improve curriculum and instruction, and a commitment to continuous improvement that is based on supporting the whole child through social, emotional, and academic growth.

“We strive to support our students academically and holistically,” Sequoia Middle School Principal Monica said. “We focus on all aspects of our students’ development, including their social and emotional well-being by providing a sense of belonging and staff members who serve as mentors. One of our primary goals is to ensure that students are eager to come to school.”

In the 2023-24 school year alone, Sequoia was redesignated as a California Middle School to Watch, Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID) National Demonstration School, and secured Platinum Certification from the California Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Coalition.

Sequoia Middle School offers a range of innovative, award-winning programs designed to boost its students’ college and career readiness. AVID is a program designed to narrow the achievement gap between students and ensure more students attend four-year colleges; PBIS is a proactive and evidence-based framework designed to create supportive learning environments and promote positive behaviors in educational settings.

Since 2022-23, Sequoia has also served as Fontana Unified’s middle school in the Spanish dual-language immersion (DLI) pathway. The school also offers robust student support through its award-winning counseling team and Where Everybody Belongs (WEB) peer mentoring program.

Fontana Unified provides comprehensive support for all students, focusing on their physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. The District's Multi-Tiered System of Supports Department consists of nearly 30 employees, including 15 social-emotional support staff of counselors and mental health therapists and 12 climate and culture specialists/coaches who are dedicated to fostering positive cultures at each school.

"This honor signifies a validation of the hard work, dedication, and commitment of the Sequoia and Fontana Unified community to provide an exemplary educational environment," FUSD Executive Director of Middle Schools Dr. Roy Rogers said. "It reflects the school's success in fostering academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and strong organizational structures. This recognition is a testament to the collaborative efforts of students, staff, parents, and the broader community, highlighting their shared vision of achieving high standards and continuous improvement."

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_SEQUOIA: From left to right: Fontana Unified Executive Director of Middle Schools Dr. Roy Rogers, Sequoia Middle School teacher Lydia Delgado, principal Monica Young, assistant principal Brittney Davis-Fox, and Multi-Tiered System of Support teacher on assignment Christine Clark celebrate after Sequoia was honored at the 2024 National Schools to Watch Conference on June 20.

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