



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 8, 2021

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180 Fontana Unified Seniors to Receive State Seal of Biliteracy, Recognized by County Superintendent of Schools

FONTANA, CA – One hundred and eighty Fontana Unified School District seniors were recognized by the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools for their proficiency in bilingualism and biliteracy, an achievement that will earn them the State Seal of Biliteracy (SSB) at graduation.

To receive the SSB, marked by a gold seal on a graduate's diploma and notation on their transcript, students must meet requirements outlined in the California Education Code that demonstrate high levels of achievement in speaking, reading, and writing in both English and one or more partner languages. The District's 180 seniors, who are track to meet these requirements by graduation, were recognized by San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools Ted Alejandre during a virtual ceremony on Oct. 16.

"Fontana Unified is positioning itself to make a major difference and to compete globally, and it will be so exciting to see where our students take the future of Fontana," said Martha Dueñas, Fontana Unified Director of Multilingual Programs and Services. "By developing bilingualism and biliteracy, they will be able to address the Fontana community and its needs."

Based on past FUSD graduates, Dueñas projected that the number of SSB awardees will increase to 400 or more students by the end of the 2021-22 school year.

Students are also eligible to earn the Fontana Unified Seal of Biliteracy, an honor with even more rigorous student expectations. In order to receive this award, Fontana Unified students must attain exceptional scores on proficiency exams that measure bilingualism and biliteracy, complete community service hours that engage their partner language, compose an autobiography in their partner language and undergo a panel interview.

Fontana Unified aims to foster multilingualism as early as kindergarten, providing a Spanish dual-language immersion program at Redwood Elementary and Dolores Huerta International Academy that jumpstarts learning in both languages for native English speakers and English learners. Currently, the District is extending foreign language instruction to middle school students, providing a continuum of language instruction from elementary school to high school.

Students with high levels of biliteracy and bilingualism are encouraged to return to Fontana Unified after graduation and serve as translators, bilingual teachers and paraprofessionals. By creating a pipeline with nearby universities and recruiting former students, Dueñas said, the District hopes to create career opportunities for members of the Fontana community.

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“At Fontana Unified, we are proud to foster bilingualism and biliteracy for students at every developmental stage,” Fontana Unified Superintendent Randal S. Bassett said. “By receiving the California State Seal of Biliteracy and the Fontana Unified Seal of Biliteracy, our high school seniors demonstrate they are making the most of the opportunities available to them and preparing for success in college, career and life.”

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