



# Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Fontana Unified Middle Schools Awarded Third-Straight California School to Watch Designations

**FONTANA, CA** – Fontana Unified School District’s (FUSD) Southridge Tech and Wayne Ruble middle schools have been honored as 2025 California Schools to Watch, recognizing them as model schools dedicated to supporting the whole child.

Fontana Unified accounted for two of the 90 middle schools across the state to be named to the California League of Middle Schools’ 2025 list of California Schools to Watch. These schools are recognized for their commitment to academic excellence, social equity, developmental responsiveness, and innovative systems.

“Southridge Tech and Wayne Ruble exemplify Fontana Unified’s commitment to nurturing the whole child,” Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. “This recognition reaffirms their commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and fostering a supportive learning environment where all students can thrive.”

The awarded schools will be honored during the California Schools to Watch Celebrations in Monterey on March 6-7. They will then be recognized as National Schools to Watch by the National Forum Advancing Excellence in the Middle Grades at the National Schools to Watch Conference in Washington, D.C. from June 26-28.

This serves as the third California Schools to Watch designation for Southridge Tech and Wayne Ruble. Both schools were designated in 2019 and re-designated in 2022, with re-designations occurring every three years. It gives FUSD three middle schools currently designated as schools to watch across the state three times, with Sequoia Middle School first securing the honor in 2018 and then again in 2021 and 2024.

Southridge Tech and Wayne Ruble empower and support students through programs like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), which is designed to bolster student achievement through proven strategies. Both schools earned 2023-24 California Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Coalition Awards for creating and maintaining supportive and inclusive cultures that foster student success in the fall.

Since the 2022-23 school year, Southridge Tech has been certified as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, offering the Middle Years Programme in FUSD’s IB Continuum. IB engages students in a globally focused curriculum that fosters their desire to learn and prepares them to excel in their future careers and lives, and is highly regarded by prestigious colleges and universities worldwide.

Southridge Tech has also been designated a Microsoft Showcase School three times, including the last two years in a row, recognizing its success in bridging the technology gap and providing students access to digital platforms that enhance learning.

“Being re-designated as a California School to Watch is an incredible honor and is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our students, staff, and community,” Southridge Tech Principal Amber Knight said. “At Southridge Tech, we are always striving for excellence and continuous growth and this recognition reflects that commitment. It’s more than just an award, ‘it’s a Knight thing,’ and we will continue to push forward for our students.”

Over the last five years, Wayne Ruble has focused on aligning its elective courses with FUSD college and career pathways available at its feeder schools, A.B. Miller and Summit high schools. Wayne Ruble offers courses in robotics, aviation, dance, integrated computer coding, and computing classes.

Wayne Ruble also implemented the Ron Clark Academy (RCA) House System, which is used at schools worldwide to foster positive, inclusive environments, since its last California School to Watch designation in 2022. Wayne Ruble students and staff are randomly sorted into one of four houses they belong to for life: Altruismo, Isibindi, Nukumori, and Revêur. Each house holds unique meanings, values, and traditions – including giving, friendship, courage, or dreamers – students can explore.

“This award validates the hard work and dedication of our entire school community, including our teachers, staff, students, and parents. It acknowledges our commitment to academic excellence, social equity, and continuous improvement for better student outcomes,” Wayne Ruble Principal Anne-Marie Cabrales said. “This focus on continuous growth helps foster a positive school culture where students are able to thrive in both their academics and social-emotional learning.”

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**FUSD\_MIDDLE\_SCHOOLS1:** Wayne Ruble Middle School students engage in a hands-on class project. The school’s commitment to academic excellence and student support earned it a 2025 California School to Watch designation for the third time.

**FUSD\_MIDDLE\_SCHOOLS2:** Southridge Tech Middle School sixth-grader Ethan Espiricueta sets up a robot during an afterschool robotics program. Southridge Tech made the California League of Middle Schools’ 2025 list of California Schools to Watch for its commitment to academic excellence and innovative systems.

**FUSD\_MIDDLE\_SCHOOLS3:** Wayne Ruble Middle School math and computer science teacher Zahra Razi, center, leads students through a class experiment. The school has focused on aligning its elective courses with FUSD’s college and career pathways offered at its feeder schools over the last five years.

**FUSD\_MIDDLE\_SCHOOLS4:** Southridge Tech Middle School eighth-graders Angel Lopez (left) and Leonardo Contreras (right) program a robot during an afterschool program. The school has been honored for creating and maintaining supportive and inclusive cultures that foster student success.

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