



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three Fontana Unified Elementary Schools Earn Prestigious 2025 California Distinguished Schools Status

FONTANA, CA – Three Fontana Unified School District elementary schools have been recognized for their excellence in closing the achievement gap with their selection for the prestigious 2025 California Distinguished Schools (CDS) Program.

Beech Avenue, Date, and Shadow Hills elementary schools were named California Distinguished Schools by the California Department of Education (CDE) on March 25 in recognition of their academic growth and commitment to fostering positive school climates. Twenty-two Fontana Unified schools have earned the California Distinguished Schools award since its inception in 1985, with Shadow Hills receiving the distinction three times in its history.

The schools earned the distinction under the program's Closing the Achievement Gap category, based on data from the 2024 California School Dashboard. They will be honored at the California School Recognition Programs Awards Ceremony in Anaheim on Friday, May 30.

"The California Distinguished Schools recognition is one of the highest honors awarded by the California Department of Education, and I want to commend Beech Avenue, Date, and Shadow Hills elementary schools for this outstanding achievement," Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "Fontana Unified is dedicated to empowering all students, and it is truly rewarding to see our schools honored for their unwavering efforts to close the achievement gap and foster academic success."

In order to qualify under Closing the Achievement Gap, schools must enroll at least 40% of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and demonstrate outstanding academic growth in English Language Arts (ELA) or math. Schools also had to meet high performance standards in chronic absenteeism and suspension rates.

According to the California School Dashboard, Beech Avenue, Date, and Shadow Hills made impressive gains in 2024, each improving their ELA and math scores by more than four points. They also reduced chronic absenteeism rate by more than 7% and achieved top ratings in suspension rates, reflecting strong commitments to academic progress and a positive school climate.

Since 1985, the CDE has recognized exceptional schools through the California Distinguished Schools Award for their innovation, talent, and success in supporting students. Elementary schools and middle and high schools are recognized in alternate years, with awardees holding the distinction for two years.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_DISTINGUISHED1: A Beech Avenue Elementary teacher guides a student through a digital learning activity, demonstrating the dedication to academic growth and support that helped the school earn recognition as a 2025 California Distinguished School.

FUSD_DISTINGUISHED3: Date Elementary students engage in interactive learning on their laptops, showcasing the academic dedication that contributed to the school's recognition as a 2025 California Distinguished School for Closing the Achievement Gap. Three Fontana Unified elementary schools earned CDS recognition in 2025.

FUSD_DISTINGUISHED3: Shadow Hills Elementary students marvel at the solar eclipse in April 2024. Shadow Hills earned its third California Distinguished School recognition and was one of three elementary schools in Fontana Unified honored in 2025.

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