



Fontana Unified School District

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NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified MCJROTC Program Named Naval Honor School for Sixth Consecutive Year

FONTANA — Fontana High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (MCJROTC) program has once again been recognized for its excellence in community service, leadership, and academics, earning a Naval Honor School designation for the sixth straight year and the 19th time in its 33-year history.

The Naval Honor School distinction, awarded annually by the U.S. Marine Corps Training and Education Command, evaluates more than 250 MCJROTC units nationwide. This year, Fontana High (FOHI) stood out despite new, more rigorous standards. Placed in the newly created "mega" category against some of the nation's largest and most competitive programs, FOHI earned the honor for its academic achievement, leadership development, success in national competitions, and commitment to community service.

"Fontana High's MCJROTC program continues to set the standard for excellence, not only through outstanding competition results but also through their commitment to community service and leadership," Fontana Unified Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "This recognition reflects the hard work, dedication, and character of every cadet."

Naval Honor School programs are evaluated on a range of criteria, including academics, results in drill and marksmanship competitions, cadet leadership, higher education and military enrollment, volunteerism, and extracurricular participation.

"This recognition validates the students' hard work – the hours they put in before and after school, on weekends, and even during the summer," said FOHI MCJROTC Senior Marine Instructor, Lieutenant Colonel Rugsithi Denny Meelarp, Ret. "Thanks to the dedication of our cadets and instructors, the program remains among the top units in the country year after year. Ultimately, it's all their accomplishment, and that's the most rewarding part."

Fontana High MCJROTC cadets earned nearly \$1.15 million in scholarships and enlistments, with 38 receiving individual academic awards in the 2024-25 school year. In competition, three marksmanship teams qualified for the MCJROTC and Civilian Marksmanship Program Nationals, where they captured titles in National Rifle Association 40-Standing and Distinguished League play. The program also qualified teams for the MCJROTC National Raider competition and hosted the Raider Instructor Course in summer 2025.

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FOHI MCJROTC also strengthened its community impact in 2024-25, partnering with the Fontana Foundation of Hope, which supports volunteer efforts with law enforcement and the District, to expand its outreach. During the 2024-25 school year, cadets completed 5,859 hours of community service, supported 33 public events, and saw 115 students take on leadership roles in school clubs and activities, LtCol Meelarp said.

Beyond preparing students for potential military service, Fontana High's MCJROTC program emphasizes developing essential life skills that foster personal growth and leadership.

"This program focuses on leadership and life skills," LtCol Meelarp said. "Cadets learn time management, responsibility, and teamwork, while gaining confidence in public speaking, problem-solving, and decision-making. Our goal is to expose students to opportunities that help them grow into responsible citizens, contributors to society, and successful leaders in college, career, and life."

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_NAVALHONOR: Fontana High School's MCJROTC program earned a Naval Honor School award for the sixth consecutive year and 19th time in its 33-year history.

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