



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 17, 2025

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Fontana Unified Special Education Students, Teachers Recognized for Hard Work, Dedication

FONTANA, CA – Nearly 800 Fontana Unified special education students were celebrated in October with Achievement Awards recognizing their determination and commitment to learning, presented by the District’s Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) and Community Advisory Committee (CAC).

FUSD special education teachers and staff select the students, from early childhood through age 22, to receive Certificates of Achievement and gift vouchers to local diners including Applebee’s, B.J.’s, and Shakey’s, for their outstanding effort at school.

“This program is a great way to honor our students and teachers for the exceptional work they do,” FUSD Student Support Representative Katya Quirarte said. “The teachers are excited to nominate their students and coordinating the awards gives me a great feeling.”

The Achievement Awards were launched in 2022, recognizing 50 students at that time. The program continued to grow with community support, providing additional opportunities for more students to be honored.

Quirarte serves as the coordinator for the Achievement Awards, connecting with teachers and CAC members to select students and reaching out to local vendors for gift cards and vouchers. She personally arranges every award package and distributes them to each school site.

“Thanks to the support of Fontana Unified and our local community, we are able to honor so many students who are deserving of being recognized for their persistence in reaching their goals,” Quirarte said. “It’s a lot of work, but so meaningful. When I see the smiles of students who have received an award, it makes me so happy.”

FUSD honors its special education program twice a year, with annual Achievement Awards in the fall semester, and the Above and Beyond Award ceremony in the spring. First held in 2020, Above and Beyond is a District event where students, nominated by their teachers, receive a certificate and a voucher, and SELPA school site staff, from clerical works to principals, are also nominated by parents and families to be recognized and honored.

The SELPA organization ensures the provision of appropriate special education services to students with special needs and resources for their families, while prioritizing the student’s academic growth, health, safety, and well-being in the Least Restrictive Environment. Fontana Unified serves as a single district SELPA.

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FUSD's CAC is a collaborative partnership of parents, educators, students, and adults with disabilities, and private and public agency representatives who support SELPA, serving as an advisory while providing for active parent involvement in special education programs within the District.

"Thank you to our teachers and staff for organizing this important event recognizing our students' hard work," FUSD Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "Fontana Unified is committed to providing an engaging learning environment that ensures every student receives the support they need to thrive."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_ACHIEVE: Hemlock Elementary School special education students are all smiles after receiving Achievement Awards from the Fontana Unified Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for their hard work and dedication in the classroom. Nearly 800 students from across the District received Achievement Awards in October.

FUSD_ACHIEVE2: FUSD Superintendent Miki R. Inbody (in grey suit) high fives a student receiving an Above and Beyond award last year.

FUSD_ACHIEVE3: Fontana Unified hosts an Above and Beyond Award Ceremony each spring, where SELPA school site staff, from clerical workers to principals, are nominated by parents and families to be recognized and honored.

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