



# 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 High School Recognized as 2026 California Distinguished School

**FONTANA, CA** – A.B. Miller High School has been recognized as a 2026 California Distinguished School by the California Department of Education (CDE), highlighting its commitment to academic achievement and closing achievement gaps.

The CDE selects California Distinguished Schools based on data reported on the California Dashboard, recognizing schools that show significant progress in academic performance, student engagement, and school culture and climate, using state indicators such as English language arts and math performance, graduation rates, and suspension rates.

“Being recognized as a California Distinguished School is a great honor and very humbling,” Principal Dr. Barbara Kelley said. “Our school has really been focusing on making these steady improvements, and we focus on skills that students will need beyond high school like communication through speaking, listening, and writing. I am so proud of the work our students and staff have accomplished.”

Kelley, who has been at A.B. Miller for 30 years, started as a band director and then served as Associated Student Body director, assistant principal, and now principal. She said she is most proud of the increased graduation rates at the high school over the last three years, which rose from 89% in 2023 to nearly 95% in 2025.

“That is what we are here to do – build students up and ensure that as many as possible graduate on time,” Kelley said. “My husband and I are true Fontana believers. I have the pleasure of having my daughter as a student at A.B. Miller, and my son will soon follow. We are A.B. Miller Rebels all the way.”

According to the CA Dashboard, A.B. Miller has seen growth in English language arts, math, and college and career readiness, with all three measurements above the state averages. The school has also shown improvement in English learner progress, which reached the state average in 2025.

To target improvements in these areas, A.B. Miller implemented several academic initiatives such as sessions called “Spill the T.E.A.” – topic sentences, evidence, and analysis – which help students improve their short-form writing skills. During “Word Problem Wednesday,” students break down complex word and math problems, focusing on what the question is asking them. These designated days target key skills to ensure students are receiving the support they need to improve.

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“The school has also adopted i-Ready, which is a K-12 education program that provides personalized instruction and diagnostic assessments in reading and math,” Kelley said. “Our teachers work with students to set growth goals for the scores they aim to achieve during the next test. If they meet the goal, students receive rewards such as homework passes.”

First-generation students who plan to attend college can also join Achievement Via Individual Determination (AVID), a college-prep elective that provides opportunities to visit colleges across California. During a recent field trip that included UC Berkeley, UC Santa Barbara, San Jose State, Santa Clara, and UC Merced, AVID students met with A.B. Miller alumni at each school who gave campus tours and answered questions about college life.

A.B. Miller also provides Career Technical Education pathways that offer hands-on learning experiences, including the digital audio recording pathway, where students learn to record their own music and create podcasts; the aviation pathway, which allows students to soar to new heights; and the award-winning Conservatory of Dance, which inspires students to showcase their creative performance talents.

“Congratulations to Dr. Kelley and A.B. Miller for their much-deserved recognition as a California Distinguished School,” Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. “Fontana Unified has a rich tradition of providing equity in education, and this recognition emphasizes the Districtwide commitment to academic achievement for every student.”

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**ABMILLER\_DISTINGUISHEDSCHOOL1:** A.B. Miller High School was recognized as a 2026 California Distinguished School by the California Department of Education, honoring its commitment to academic achievement and closing opportunity gaps. Principal Dr. Barbara Kelley highlighted the school’s 95% graduation rate in 2025 as a point of pride.

**ABMILLER\_DISTINGUISHEDSCHOOL2:** A.B. Miller High School’s Career Technical Education pathways provide hands-on learning opportunities, including its aviation program, empowering students to explore interests and prepare for future careers.

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