



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

JACK O'CONNELLState Superintendent
of Public InstructionRelease: #08-45
April 9, 2008Contact: Pam Slater
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Schools Chief O'Connell Announces 2008 California Distinguished Schools

SACRAMENTO — State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell today announced that 343 exemplary California public elementary schools from 189 districts in 39 counties have been selected as 2008 California Distinguished Schools.

The list of schools may be viewed at: [California School Recognition Program](#).

"These outstanding elementary schools represent many different kinds of communities, organizational structures, and student populations," said O'Connell. "Sixty-four of these schools come from small, rural communities, 11 are charter schools, and nearly half or 156 schools have significant populations of students living in poverty and are supported by federal Title I funding."

This year, the selection criteria for the Distinguished School program were more stringent than ever. Schools wrote a substantive narrative application and then were subject to an extensive site validation.

"Most heartening, many of the schools we are recognizing today as the '*best of the best*' have overcome significant educational challenges, showing that it is possible to provide opportunities for success to all students," O'Connell said.

This year, 300 (87.4 percent) of the award-winning schools serve populations high in minority student representation and 182 (53.1 percent) of them are educating students who are learning English.

Earlier in the week, O'Connell called each school principal to personally convey the good news.

"I was honored to be able to join in the excitement as these dedicated educators learned their schools earned this coveted title," he said. "From their stories, it became clear that they share a school-wide vision of excellence where every student can succeed and achieve at the very highest levels of performance."

O'Connell also applauded California's 34 nominees for the 2008 National No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Program that were announced in November. These schools will be honored along with the 2008 California Distinguished Schools during an awards ceremony and dinner at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim on May 16.

The California School Recognition Program is now in its 23rd year and identifies and honors the state's most exemplary and inspiring public schools with the California Distinguished School Award. Although participation is voluntary, the award is highly sought after by schools in all areas of the state. Elementary and secondary schools are recognized during alternate years.

For the current year, 839 elementary schools submitted applications and were identified for eligibility on the basis of their Academic Performance Index and Adequate Yearly Progress results. All applicants underwent a rigorous selection process conducted by the California Department of Education, with the help of many local educators from across the state, and in partnership with the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association.

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United States Senate

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April 24, 2008

Principal Lori Copeland
Promenade Elementary School
550 Hamilton Drive
Corona, CA 92879

Dear Principal Copeland:

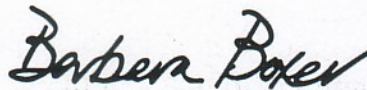
Congratulations on being named a 2008 California Distinguished School! I am pleased to extend my congratulations as you are recognized by the California Department of Education's School Recognition Program.

Your staff, students and community members can take special pride in this recognition of your school's hard work and academic accomplishments. A successful public education is at the foundation of our nation and its young people's future success. The dedication of your staff and the support of your community help to create bright futures for the children you guide, counsel and teach everyday.

I extend my warmest wishes to everyone involved in your school's wonderful achievement.

Congratulations!

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

BB:ajm