



NCUST

National Center for Urban School Transformation

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Fifteen Schools Honored with America's Best Urban Schools Awards

SDSU's National Center for Urban School Transformation Presents Awards to 15 High-Performing Schools

SAN DIEGO – (Wednesday, October 10, 2018) —Today, the National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) at San Diego State University (SDSU) awarded sixteen schools as winners of its 2018 America's Best Urban Schools Award. The schools were recognized and featured at the America's Best Urban Schools Symposium in San Diego, CA.

To compete for the award, schools had to serve predominantly low-income students; yet the schools had to meet a long list of student performance criteria, including high achievement scores, high attendance rates, low suspension rates, and high graduation rates for every demographic group of students. Each racial/ethnic/income group served had to demonstrate rates of academic performance that exceeded the performance for all students in the state. The schools could not use selective admission criteria to screen out less capable students.

Finalists were drawn from a large pool of applicants that included many schools that have earned recognition as National Blue Ribbon Schools, National Title I Distinguished Schools, and winners of many other state and national awards. A review team of experienced educators and researchers (including leaders from previous winning schools) visited each finalist school and observed classrooms and school activities; interviewed students, teachers, parents, and administrators; and examined evidence of student work. The strongest 15 schools were selected as winners of the 2018 America's Best Urban Schools Award. NCUST found that these schools provided all students rigorous and balanced curricula in science, mathematics, English, social studies, the arts, and other subject areas; effective and engaging instruction that motivated students to maximize their efforts and excel beyond conventional expectations; and a positive culture that helped all students feel capable, respected, and valued.

"The winning schools have attained a level of achievement more typically seen in schools that serve very affluent communities," said Joseph F. Johnson, Jr., executive director of the NCUST. He further explained, "In these impressive schools, outstanding teachers and leaders maintain



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very high expectations for all of their students. At the same time, they create learning environments that enable students to meet their high expectations. These schools exemplify how otherwise typical urban schools can transform students’ lives.”

Each winning school received cash prizes, banners, certificates, bumper stickers, and an opportunity to share their story with other educators. The winning schools include:

<i><u>SCHOOLS</u></i>	<i><u>DISTRICT</u></i>	<i><u>STATE</u></i>	<i><u>GRADES</u></i>
Kenmore Elementary	Baldwin Park Unified	CA	K-6
Keller Dual Immersion Middle	Long Beach Unified	CA	6-8
El Sol Science and Arts Academy	Charter/Santa Ana Unified	CA	PK-8
Nestor Language Academy	South Bay Union (San Diego)	CA	K-8
Wildflower Elementary	Harrison (Colorado Spring)	CO	K-5
Fay Herron Elementary	Clark County (Las Vegas)	NV	PK-5
Patrick Henry School Prep. PS/IS 171	Comm. District #4, NYC	NY	PK-8
The Middle College at UNCG	Guilford County	NC	9-12
Solomon P. Ortiz Elementary	Brownsville Independent	TX	PK-5
Mary & Frank Yturria Elementary	Brownsville Independent	TX	PK-5
Bonnie Brae Elementary	Fort Worth Independent	TX	PK-5
Westcliff Elementary	Fort Worth Independent	TX	PK-5
World Languages Institute	Fort Worth Independent	TX	6-10
Young Men’s Leadership Academy	Fort Worth Independent	TX	6-12
Dr. C.M. Cash Elementary	San Benito Consolidated	TX	PK-5



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For the first time, NCUST (in collaboration with SDSU's Department of Dual Language and English Learner Education) invited dual language academies to compete as a separate category. These academies meet other NCUST award criteria; however, they also help students learn another language and culture. Keller Dual Immersion Middle, El Sol Science and Arts Academy, and Nestor Language Academies were the first schools to be recognized as winners in this category.

Also, at the symposium, four high school winners from prior years (O'Farrell High School in San Diego, James Pace Early College High School in Brownsville, Texas, Eastlake High School in El Paso's Socorro Independent School District, and Revere High School in Boston's Revere Public Schools) were invited to present. The four schools are featured in a new book entitled *Five Practices for Improving the Success of Latino Students: A Guide for Secondary School Leaders*. Leaders from the four high schools shared how their schools are helping Latino students from low-income families graduate well prepared for college and careers.

For more information about the America's Best Urban Schools Award or the National Center for Urban School Transformation, please visit www.ncust.com.

The NCUST was founded as part of the QUALCOMM Institute for Innovation and Educational Success at San Diego State University. The Center's mission is to help urban school districts and their partners transform school into institutions where all students achieve academic proficiency, evidence a love of learning, and graduate well-prepared to succeed in post-secondary education, the workplace, and their community.