



## OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR URBAN SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION'S AMERICA'S BEST URBAN SCHOOLS AWARD PROGRAM

Thanks for considering applying for the 2019-2020 America's Best Urban Schools Award. This page provides a general overview of the program.

### **Purpose of the Award Program**

The America's Best Urban Schools Award is designed to identify and celebrate urban schools possessing many indicators of both educational equity and excellence. America needs to know that there are urban elementary, middle, and high schools, dual-language schools, and alternative schools where every demographic group served achieves impressive academic results. We recognize that there are many impressive private schools; however, our award program recognizes public schools and public charter schools only. Similarly, we realize that some outstanding public and public charter schools maintain admission policies that exclude typical students; however, our award program is designed specifically to recognize schools that enroll students without regard to their academic strengths.

As we identify and award amazing, high-performing schools, we try to learn about their attributes and the factors that have contributed to their successes. By sharing our findings through our books, articles, webinars, symposia, courses, and district partnerships, we hope to support schools and districts as they strive to improve. Ultimately, we hope to influence increases in the number of urban schools that achieve outstanding results for every demographic group they serve.

### **Who Should Apply?**

Each potential applicant should review the application items and pay particular attention to the items marked with asterisks (\*\*\*). The items with asterisks describe non-negotiable criteria. A school should apply only if they meet the criteria specified in every item marked with an asterisk. **A school district may submit applications for no more than five schools.**



## HOW TO APPLY?

1. Please prepare and submit the Intent-to-Apply Form (page IV) by Friday, November 1, 2019. Submission of the form is not required but is strongly encouraged.
2. Select either the elementary, middle school, high school, dual language school, or alternative school application. Choose the elementary form if the highest grade served is grade six or lower. Choose the middle school form if the highest grade served is grade seven, eight, or nine. Choose the high school form if the highest grade served is grade ten, eleven, or twelve. Choose the dual language school application only if all students, at every grade-level, participate in dual language programming that develops students' proficiency in two or more languages. Note: Currently, only elementary and/or middle schools can participate in the dual language award program. Choose the alternative school application only if the school primarily serves students whose academic, behavioral, social, or emotional needs are often not met in typical schools.
3. Complete the application and submit it to NCUST. To ensure consideration, NCUST must receive the application by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on Monday, December 2, 2019. Please mail a packet that includes:
  - a) Application Cover Page (page 1)
  - b) Paper copy of the completed application
  - c) Certification page with original signatures (page 15)
  - d) Video Cover Sheet and Release Form (page 16-17)
  - e) DVD of sample lessons (see description of page 16)
  - f) Photograph Permission Form (page 18)
  - g) CD of photographs (see description on page 18)

All of the above items should be mailed to:

**National Center for Urban School Transformation  
San Diego State University  
5500 Campanile Drive, EBA 332  
San Diego, CA 92182-1165**

Please submit an electronic copy of the application via email as an attachment to [ncust@sdsu.edu](mailto:ncust@sdsu.edu).

**Please do not send video clips or photos via email.**



## HOW ARE APPLICATIONS PROCESSED?

1. When applications are received, NCUST will send a confirmation email to the applicant.
2. NCUST will review all non-negotiable items (those marked with an asterisk) to determine if the application meets all required criteria. If all criteria are met, the school will be identified as a 2020 America's Best Urban School, Honor Roll School. Notification will appear on the NCUST website ([www.ncust.com](http://www.ncust.com)) by January 15, 2020.
3. NCUST will review and compare all applications and video submissions to determine which Honor Roll Schools will be finalists for the America's Best Urban Schools Award. Applicants that present the greatest evidence of academic accomplishment for the demographic groups they serve will be identified as 2020 award finalists. By January 15, 2020, applicants will be notified if they are award finalists.
4. Each finalist school will receive an on-site visit from a team of NCUST personnel; former award-winning principals, administrators, and teachers; and other outstanding educators. The on-site visits will occur during February and March 2020. During each on-site visit, the team will validate the information presented in the school's application; observe classrooms, teacher planning meetings, and student interactions; and interview students, parents, teachers, and support personnel. Based upon all the information acquired, NCUST will identify the schools with the greatest strengths as 2020 America's Best Urban School award winners. Winners will be notified by April 10, 2020.

### **Awards**

Each winning school will receive an expense-paid trip for two people to the America's Best Urban Schools Symposium in San Diego, CA on May 11-13, 2020. At the symposium, the school will be featured in a breakout session and honored at an award luncheon. Additionally, each winning school will receive a large banner, a certificate, a profile on the NCUST website, an opportunity for students to win cash prizes in a speech contest, and an opportunity to have a volunteer recognized. Additionally, schools will be designated as bronze, silver, or gold-level winners and receive cash prizes of \$1,000, \$2,500, or \$5,000 respectively.

### **Questions**

Please email questions to [ncust@sdsu.edu](mailto:ncust@sdsu.edu) or call 619-594-7905.