

Ontario-Montclair

School District

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DeAnza Middle School Redesignated as a Nationally as a School to Watch

Ontario-Montclair School District's De Anza Middle School was one of one hundred and sixteen exemplary middle-grades schools nationally to be named a "School to Watch" as part of a recognition and improvement program developed by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. In June, Serrano Middle School will be recognized for this national honor in Washington, D.C by The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.

In February 2014, Serrano Middle School was selected at the state-level by state leaders for its academic excellence, its responsiveness to the needs and interests of young adolescents, and its commitment to helping all students achieve at high levels. In addition, Serrano Middle School has strong leadership, teachers who work together to improve curriculum and instruction, and a commitment to assessment and accountability to bring about continuous improvement. Serrano is now being acknowledged and recognized at the National level.

Selection is based on a written application that required schools to show how they met criteria developed by the Forum. Schools that appeared to meet the criteria were then visited by state 2 teams who observed classrooms, interviewed administrators, teachers, students, and parents, and looked at achievement data, suspension rates, quality of lessons, and student work. Schools are recognized for a three-year period; and at the end of three years, schools must repeat the process in order to be re-designated. Seventy-seven schools of the 116 recognized have maintained or increased their levels of excellence and are being re-designated. The schools vary in size from several hundred to several thousand students and represent urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Board of Trustees President Elvia M. Rivas commented, "The Board of Trustees is extremely excited that the outstanding Serrano School staff is being recognized for their on-going dedication to providing students with a world class education that focuses on the whole child."

Launched in 1999, Schools toWatch began as a national program to identify middle-grades schools across the country that were meeting or exceeding 37 criteria developed by the Forum.

"Our Community, Our Children, Our Commitment, Our Future"

The Forum web site (<http://www.middlegradesforum.org>) features detailed information about the selection criteria. The STW process provided the framework for the successful Investing in Innovation (i3) Development grant received in October 2010 from the U. S. Department of Education.

The National Forum sponsors the Schools to Watch state program with the support of its members and the State Schools to Watch programs. Schools will convene at the Schools to Watch Conference in the Washington, DC area June 26- 28, 2014, where Serrano Middle School will be recognized at the National level.