



For Immediate Release

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FULLERTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

D. Russell Parks Junior High School Named 2021 California Distinguished School

(Fullerton, CA) – Parks Junior High School has been named a 2021 California Distinguished School by the California Department of Education. This is the state’s top honor for public schools and recognizes outstanding education programs and practices. Statewide, 103 schools received the honor for closing the achievement gap and achieving exceptional student performance. Fullerton Schools District has one of only 11 schools recognized in Orange County.

The state Department of Education awards eligible schools based on how well they performed against key indicators on the California School Dashboard, which is the state’s accountability system. Indicators include test scores, suspension rates, and conditions and climate. Amid a global pandemic that led to campus closures, this year’s recognition is considered particularly significant. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, middle and high schools who met 2021 eligibility criteria have been named as California Distinguished Schools without having to go through the full application process.

“These schools are great examples of California’s commitment to provide outstanding public education for all students, and their data-driven efforts have helped ensure that their students leave with the tools and skills they need to be successful after graduation,” State Superintendent Tony Thurmond said in a news release.

“Our thanks go to the entire communities surrounding these schools, including the teachers, administrators and classified employees as well as the students and their families who, through teamwork, all accomplished this impressive achievement together,” the state superintendent said.

Sponsored by the CDE and presented by California Casualty, the Distinguished Schools Program recognizes schools in two categories — those that were able to successfully close achievement gaps and those that demonstrated exceptional student performance overall. Elementary schools and middle and high schools are recognized in alternate years, and awardees hold their titles for two years. Parks Junior High School will be part of a California Distinguished Schools virtual awards ceremony in the near future hosted by the California Department of Education.

The Fullerton School District is located in northern Orange County, California and serves over 12,100 students in grades TK – 8th. The Fullerton School District includes 20 schools, 15 elementary schools, two K-8th grade schools, and three middle schools. The mission of the Fullerton School District is to work collaboratively with the community to provide an innovative, high-quality educational program for all students in a safe learning environment. The District motto, “*Great Schools - Successful Kids*” exemplifies the belief that all students will achieve academic excellence, acquire interpersonal skills, and develop technological expertise to contribute as productive citizens in a democratic society. For more information, call 714/447-7400 or visit www.fullertonsd.org.

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For more information, please feel free to contact Laura Makely/Principal, Parks Junior High School at 714/447-7785