

SCHOOLS CHIEF JACK O'CONNELL ANNOUNCES 2009 CALIFORNIA DISTINGUISHED SCHOOLS

SACRAMENTO – State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell today announced that 261 California middle and high schools have been selected as 2009 California Distinguished Schools, an annual award that recognizes some of the state's most exemplary public schools.

The list of 136 middle schools and 125 high schools may be viewed at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/>.

“California Distinguished Schools must meet the challenge of providing all their students with a rigorous education and to fully prepare today’s students for success in postsecondary education or the workforce,” O’Connell said. “In an increasingly competitive global economy, it is important that the academic success of all of today’s students is directly linked to the effectiveness, competitiveness, and resiliency of our not-too-distant future workforce.

“In addition, these extraordinary middle and high schools have shown they are able to increase the achievement of all their students and have provided evidence that they are closing the achievement gaps that, unfortunately, exist at many schools. The Distinguished Schools program always identified schools that are leaders in academic achievement. It now also recognizes schools that are leaders in helping all students succeed, and highlights the best practices that are effective in closing the gap.”

O’Connell called each school’s principal this morning to personally share the good news. “Each principal I spoke to was excited and overjoyed at their recognition for this prestigious award. All of our Distinguished Schools awardees are incredible schools with dedicated teachers, hard-working principals, and successful students.”

This year, the selection process required schools to provide an in-depth description of two “signature” practices implemented at the schools that are replicable, and directly related to the success of their students. During an intensive site visitation by a trained team of external educators, additional evidence about the effectiveness of the “signature” practices was gathered and analyzed. Information about these successful signature practices will be shared through the CDE Web site and other venues including

an upcoming Web tool for educators called the Brokers of Expertise to become operational later this year.

The selected middle and high schools represent about 10.9 percent of California's nearly 2,400 middle and high schools. Of those, only 341 schools met the eligibility criteria based on their student achievement and were chosen from 170 school districts in 46 counties. An awards ceremony honoring the Distinguished Schools will be held Friday, May 29 at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim. The Disneyland Resort is a major corporate sponsor of the event.

For more information about the California School Recognition Program, including a list of corporations, foundations, and associations whose generous contributions along with registration fees from the attending schools make the awards ceremony possible, please visit: www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/.