



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Edison Language Academy  
Named One of the Best Schools in the Nation**

**Santa Monica, CA** -- Edison Language Academy has been named a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School, announced today by the U.S. Department of Education. Edison Language Academy, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's Dual Immersion School of Choice, is one of 279 public and 50 private schools receiving this honor in the nation.



Schools are nominated for the award by the state department of education, and then complete a comprehensive application about school practices. Edison was recognized as an Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing School — schools making the fastest progress in their state in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

This year marks Edison's 30<sup>th</sup> year as a dual immersion school, where all students learn to understand, speak, read and write in both English and Spanish. Edison is the first step in SMMUSD's Language Academy and its students can continue studying in two languages at John Adams Middle School and Santa Monica High School. The school follows the same state curriculum frameworks and grade level content standards as all public elementary schools in California – with the addition of also learning a second language and learning about the cultures of the Americas.

One of the many factors that Edison was evaluated on was the performance of third, fourth and fifth graders on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) in English and math. Edison has shown tremendous growth in state assessment exams over the last decade, with particularly strong scores for its fifth grade students. This mirrors national research showing that it takes 7-9 years of systematic instruction to approximate native-like proficiency in a second language. The fact that Edison, a schoolwide Title 1 school, has been able to achieve this growth while at the same time dedicating so much instructional time to Spanish is especially noteworthy.

Edison Principal Lori Orum has led the school for the past 11 years and is proud of the entire Edison staff who are dedicated and determined to provide every student with a pathway to success.

“What we have accomplished at Edison takes artful, skillful teaching and a focused and collaborative effort by all teachers and staff,” Orum said. “While we work really hard at academic growth in two languages and all subjects, we also provide an enriched arts program, build awareness of and respect for the cultures of the Americas, intentionally teach students to be bridge builders, focus on social and emotional development, and offer parents meaningful opportunities for involvement. We are so fortunate to have a school district that has provided resources and steady support for our program for 30 years!”

Edison is a school of choice for all students in SMMUSD with an application process. The school enrolls approximately equal numbers of students of English and Spanish speaking students in order to create the language balance needed for a successful dual language program. Permit applications from neighboring communities are also considered based on space available. Tours for next year’s kindergarten and Bridges transitional kindergarten programs will be starting in October. The school also offers the Seaside preschool program.

“Edison is a great example of a school where the principal, teachers, staff and parents all work together toward student success and closing the achievement gap,” said Dr. Sylvia Rousseau, SMMUSD co-interim superintendent. “We are proud that they have been recognized nationally as an exemplary school while serving as a great model within SMMUSD as we implement our Equity through Excellence plan across all schools.”

A two-day awards ceremony will be held in Washington, D.C. in November to celebrate these hard-won achievements. For more information about the National Blue Ribbon Schools program, please visit <http://nationalblueribbonschools.ed.gov/>

*Photo caption: Edison Principal Lori Orum and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Carlos Morales with students gathered in front of Edison mural “Together Through Two Languages.” Mural painted by Edison teacher Martha Ramirez Oropeza.*

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