



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Edison Language Academy Named One of the Best Schools in California

Edison Language Academy in Santa Monica has been recognized as a 2020 California Distinguished School by the California Department of Education.

Edison Language Academy, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's dual immersion school, is one of 324 elementary schools receiving this honor in the state. Edison earned this same honor in 2018, and was awarded the prestigious National Blue Ribbon School award in 2016.



A component of the California School Recognition Program, the Distinguished Schools program recognizes schools based on performance and progress on the state indicators as specified on the California School Dashboard. Indicators include test scores, suspension rates, and conditions and climate. Elementary schools and middle and high schools are recognized in alternate years; therefore, awardees hold the title for two years.

This year marks Edison's 34th 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 seven to nine 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 14 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 more than 30 years!”

Edison is a school of choice for students in SMMUSD with an application process. The school enrolls approximately equal numbers of students natively speaking English and Spanish 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 in progress. The school also offers a preschool program. Interested parents should contact the school at 310.828.0335, ext. 61348. More info: <http://bit.ly/312GXua>

“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,” Dr. Ben Drati, SMMUSD superintendent said. “We are proud that they have been recognized in California and nationally as an exemplary school while serving as great option for parents in our school district.”

An awards ceremony will be held in Anaheim in February to celebrate this hard-won achievement. For more information about the program, please visit the CDE [California School Recognition Program](#) webpage.

Photo caption: Edison Principal Lori Orum and 5th grade teacher Carlos Morales with students gathered in front of Edison mural “Together Through Two Languages.” Mural painted by Edison teacher Martha Ramirez Oropeza. (2016).

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