



Carlsbad Unified School District

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For Immediate Release

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VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL NAMED A 2008-09 CALIFORNIA DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL – ONE OF 261 IN THE STATE

Carlsbad, CA ... Valley Middle School has been named a 2008-09 California Distinguished School by the State Department of Education. It is one of only 261 elementary, middle and high schools throughout California to earn this recognition. The award is based on improvement in the Academic Performance Index (API). Valley's API rose from 812 in 2007 to 830 in 2008.

Prior to this year, Valley was named a California Distinguished School in 1992-93 and 2001-02. It also was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2001-02.

Principal J. César Morales took the helm at Valley in Fall 2008, after serving as Assistant Principal since 2006. He began his teaching career in 1999. Morales believes, "Effective teaching and learning are embedded in a campus such as ours that fosters positive, caring relationships among staff and students." He promotes a cohesive strategy that answers three vital questions: "What do we want students to learn? How will we know if they learned it? What will we do if they don't learn?"

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Morales states, “The California Distinguished School Award highlights the fact that Valley Middle School is making gains in closing the achievement gap between our highest and lowest performing students. This specific outcome is something that we are extremely proud of and will continue to work on providing an exceptional academic experience for each one of our students. Receiving this award underscores that Valley offers a school experience that is focused on rigorous academics while providing students many opportunities to develop individual interests. Valley students can participate in an extensive electives menu and a variety of extra-curricular activities. They can take a course in our nationally recognized broadcasting program, undertake course work in our stellar Visual and Performing Arts curriculum, develop their interest in science by joining our Science Olympiad team, and among many other opportunities, participate in an after-school sports activity.”

CUSD District Superintendent John A. Roach, Ed.D., notes, “Valley Middle School’s recognition as a California Distinguished School caps a year of great achievements for Carlsbad Unified School District sites. Earlier this year, Hope, Kelly and Pacific Rim Elementary schools were named to the California Business for Education Excellence 2008 Honor Roll. The Carlsbad Seaside Academy’s Independent Study Program was named one of the nation’s 1,925 (out of 21,000) high-performing high schools by *U.S. News and World Report*. Jefferson Elementary was heralded as one of five exemplary California elementary schools in the book, ‘Sustaining Extraordinary Student Achievement’ for its success as a Title 1 school in achieving and maintaining significant improvement in meeting academic targets.”

Dr. Roach believes, “Much of our schools’ successes can be attributed to the culture of collaboration fostered at each school and District-wide. Administrators and staff work closely with families and the entire community to support teaching and learning in the classroom.”

For a list of all 2008-09 California Distinguished Schools, visit www.cde.ca.gov.

For information on CUSD schools, visit www.carlsbadusd.k12.ca.us. #30