



PRESS RELEASE – ORANGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

For immediate release

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Three OUSD Sites Named 2013 California Distinguished Schools

ORANGE, Calif., April 15, 2013 – Cerro Villa Middle School, El Rancho Charter Middle School, and Villa Park High School have each been named a California Distinguished School by the California Department of Education.

Superintendent Michael L. Christensen offered congratulations to Principals Kenneth Miller, John Besta, Michele Walker, and Ed Howard, as well as all members of their staff for receiving this highest of honors. State Schools Chief Tom Torlakson made the official announcement April 11, 2013.

The 2013 California Distinguished School Award program focuses on the right of California's students to an equitable and rigorous education and recognizes those schools that have made progress in narrowing the achievement gap. The application process consists of a written application, including a comprehensive description of two of the school's signature practices, and a county-led site validation review process which validates the implementation of those signature practices.

"The California Distinguished School Award is a direct reflection of the hard work and dedication of all of our teachers, staff, students, parents and the entire school community and we are all very honored to receive this third recognition as a California Distinguished School," stated Cerro Villa Principal Kenneth Miller. Cerro Villa Middle School first received this honor in 1994 and again in 2005.

El Rancho Charter Middle School was first named a California Distinguished School in 2005. "Congratulations to the El Rancho Team for dedicating themselves to ensure all students are learning! Without the support of the staff, parents, and the hard work from the students, this wouldn't be possible, and we are so very honored to receive this second recognition as a California Distinguished School," stated Principal Michele Walker.

“At Villa Park we are very proud of the progress of our students and the effort they have put into their future. Our dedicated staff of professionals come to work every day to positively impact the lives of our students and provide this community a quality educational experience. This distinction will serve as a motivator for us to continue to get better at what we do,” said Principal Ed Howard about Villa Park High School’s first recognition as a California Distinguished School.

Site visitations were completed in March and schools selected for recognition will be honored at award ceremonies in May. Each school will be presented with a 2013 Distinguished School plaque and flag by Torlakson himself.

To be invited to apply for Distinguished School honors, schools must meet a variety of eligibility criteria including designated federal and state accountability measures based on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Academic Performance Index requirements. Once schools are deemed eligible, the California Department of Education invites them to apply to be recognized as a California Distinguished School.

Cerro Villa is located at 17852 Serrano Ave., Villa Park; El Rancho Charter Middle School is located at 181 S. Del Giorgio Dr., Anaheim Hills; and, Villa Park High School is located at 18042 Taft Ave., Villa Park.

The Orange Unified School District is located at 1401 North Handy Street in Orange, California.

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