

# NCUST



## National Center for Urban School Transformation

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### **TWELVE SCHOOLS TO RECEIVE NATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN URBAN EDUCATION AWARD**

SAN DIEGO – (Monday, March 16, 2009) — At a time when some question whether or not there is reason to be hopeful for urban education in the United States, twelve urban schools are receiving national recognition for their academic excellence. The National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) at San Diego State University is awarding these schools the 2009 National Excellence in Urban Education Award. The twelve winners of the 2009 National Excellence in Urban Education Award are:

- James B. Bonham Elementary, Dallas, TX
- Fallon Park Elementary, Roanoke, VA
- Ira Harbison Elementary, National City, CA
- Montebello Gardens Elementary, Pico Rivera, CA
- KIPP Adelante Academic Preparatory Middle School, San Diego, CA
- Franklin Towne Charter High School, Philadelphia, PA
- Bursch Elementary, Compton, CA
- Golden Empire Elementary, Sacramento, CA
- Highland Elementary, Silver Spring, MD
- World of Inquiry Elementary, Rochester, NY
- Kearny International Business High School, San Diego, CA
- Lawndale High School, Lawndale, CA

Winners receive complimentary travel and registration for two people to the NCUST High Performing Urban Schools Symposium on May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at the Westin Gaslamp in downtown San Diego, where they will present and discuss their strategies for success. In addition, winning schools receive an award check for \$1,000 and a large banner for their school, as well as a commemorative photo album and a profile on the NCUST website. Also at the symposium, selected leaders from urban districts with winning schools will present sessions that detail the role school districts can play in supporting and encouraging academic excellence in urban schools.

Although hundreds of urban public schools and public charter schools expressed interest in the award program, only 42 applicant schools met the award criteria and were placed on the NCUST 2009 Honor Roll. (For lists of Honor Roll and Finalist schools please visit [www.ncust.org](http://www.ncust.org).) The Honor Roll includes many National Blue Ribbon Schools, National Title I Distinguished Schools, and schools that have earned multiple state-level distinctions.

## NCUST PRESS RELEASE March 16, 2009

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The 24 award finalists were selected based on their successful academic performance data with every demographic group of students, including all racial and ethnic groups, students from low-income homes, English learners, and students with disabilities. “Every finalist school should be congratulated for demonstrating to the nation the outstanding potential of urban educators who work together to change children’s lives,” said Dr. Joseph F. Johnson, Jr., executive director of NCUST. The finalist schools received on-site visits from teams of researchers and educators, and the 2009 Excellence in Urban Education Award winners were chosen based on the additional supporting evidence and observations from the site visits. At the winning schools researchers found impressive evidence of:

- Students learning challenging academic content.
- Students learning reading, writing, science, mathematics, and social studies content and skills to a level that often exceeded typical grade level expectations.
- Students benefitting from excellent support structures that helped ensure their success in learning the challenging content.
- Teachers using engaging instructional methods that helped students perceive learning as interesting, relevant to their lives, and fun.
- Students (and their parents) reporting that they felt respected and valued by the schools’ teachers.

Similarly, teachers reported that they felt respected and valued by their administrators. As well, many of the schools offer excellent programs in art, music, drama, foreign language, and physical education that help students become enthusiastic about school. Another outstanding feature of winning schools is the commitment of their teachers and administrators to continue to set and pursue more challenging academic goals, even though these schools already have achieved results that far exceeded state or federal expectations.

Public schools and public charter schools could apply for the NCUST award if most of their students met low-income criteria, the school was in an urban area, and the school did not use any selective admissions criteria. Eligible schools met and exceeded all No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and maintained high student attendance rates and low suspension rates. Schools were considered only if achievement results exceeded state averages and exceeded the average for 90 percent of schools with similar demographics. As well, the schools showed other indicators of academic and non-academic success, including school-wide awards, high percentages of students in advanced courses of study, and high graduation rates.

**NCUST PRESS RELEASE March 16, 2009**

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Generous sponsors that are contributing funds to help cover the travel expenses for the 2009 winners and finalists presenting at the symposium include: SRA/ McGraw Hill; Renaissance Learning; Measured Progress; Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; Pearson; ACT, Inc.; and Gallup, Inc. Additional participating partners include AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), the San Diego County Office of Education, and the City Heights Educational Collaborative. NCUST's founding and sustaining sponsors are the San Diego State University College of Education and QUALCOMM, Inc.

For further information on the Excellence Award, finalists, and Honor Roll Recipients, or the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual NCUST Symposium, please visit <http://www.ncust.org/> or call (619) 594-7905. NCUST is a component of the QUALCOMM Institute for Innovation and Educational Success at San Diego State University. By identifying, studying, and promoting the best practices of high-performing urban schools, NCUST strives to support urban districts nationwide as they work to transform their schools into institutions that promote academic proficiency, foster enthusiastic learning, and prepare students for a successful, productive future.