



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

December 12, 2014

Dear County and District Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, and Middle and High School Principals:

2015 CALIFORNIA GOLD RIBBON SCHOOLS AWARD LAUNCH

I am pleased to announce the launch of a new California School Recognition Program, the California Gold Ribbon Schools Award. I will be presenting the California Gold Ribbon Schools Award while the California Distinguished Schools Award goes on hiatus for 2015 and 2016.

The California School Recognition Program, presented by California Casualty, includes awards programs honoring exemplary students, teachers, classified employees, and schools for advancing excellence in education.

The California Gold Ribbon Schools Award was created to have a program focused on honoring schools while the California Distinguished Schools Program is on hiatus during the period of time required for California to transition to new assessment and accountability systems. The new award will recognize middle and high schools in 2015 and elementary schools in 2016.

The focus of the California Gold Ribbon Schools Award will be to recognize California schools that have made tremendous gains in implementing the academic content and performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education for all students, including English learners. These include, but are not limited to, the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, California English Language Development Standards, Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, and Next Generation Science Standards.

Schools will nominate themselves for the award based on a Model Program they will describe in their application. Model programs should include standards-based activities, projects, strategies, and practices that schools have adopted and that can be replicated by other local education agencies.

Similar to the California Distinguished Schools Program, each school's application will be reviewed by a team of educators based on a scoring rubric. The schools with the highest scoring applications will receive a site visit by a team to validate the implementation of the Model Program. The site visit team will then make a final recommendation to my office. I will announce the awardees in the spring of 2015.

Schools that apply for the California Gold Ribbon Schools Award are also eligible to apply for Exemplary Program awards. Schools may apply for one or more awards in these areas:

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Career Technical Education, Arts Education, and Physical Activity and Nutrition Education. Applying for these additional exemplary awards is optional.

Since the California Gold Ribbon Schools Program is new, I request that schools interested in applying for the award complete and e-mail an Intent to Apply form by Tuesday, December 23, 2014, so we have an idea of which schools would like to participate. Completing this form is optional.

Applications for the 2015 California Gold Ribbon Schools Award Program and any exemplary programs must be **postmarked on or before Tuesday, January 20, 2015**, in order to be eligible for consideration.

Information about the California Gold Ribbon Schools Program, including the Intent to Apply form, award application, and instructions, is available on the CDE Schools Recognition Web page at www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/gr/.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact Cynthia Henninger, California Gold Ribbon Schools Program Coordinator, Awards Team, Superintendent's Initiatives Office, by phone at 916-319-0842 or by e-mail at awards@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson

TT:ccc