



The National Association for Magnet and Theme-based Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2016 Merit Awards Recognize Most Accomplished Magnet Schools in the Nation

Washington, DC, March 4, 2016 - Magnet Schools of America (MSA), the national association for magnet and theme-based schools is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2016 national merit awards. These 258 public magnet schools and programs located in 19 states are recognized for their commitment to high academic standards, school diversity, specialized curricula and instruction, family engagement, and community partnerships. This year, 371 schools applied for national merit awards, making 2016 the most competitive year in the award program's history.

"The announcement of our national merit awards is an extraordinary time for the magnet school community," said MSA Executive Director, Todd Mann. "This is a way for our association to recognize the most accomplished magnet schools in the country. These schools are making a lasting, positive impact on the lives of children. They are preparing them for the challenges of the future by providing them with unique learning experiences that give them the critical skills needed to be workforce and college ready."

To receive a national merit award, MSA member schools must submit a detailed application that is scored by a panel of educators. These schools are judged on their demonstrated ability to raise student academic achievement, promote racial and socioeconomic diversity, provide integrated curricula and instruction, and create community partnerships that enhance the school's theme.

There are two categories of merit awards: (1) *Magnet Schools of Excellence*, the top merit award given to a select group of magnet schools and (2) *Magnet Schools of Distinction*, the second highest award of recognition. Principals and representatives from each of the winning schools will receive a merit award plaque during an awards ceremony held at the 34th National Conference on Magnet Schools in Miami, Florida May 3-7, 2016.

The highest ranked magnet schools in the excellence category are eligible to receive monetary awards and the chance to be named the nation's top Elementary, Secondary, or New & Emerging Magnet School. One of the schools of excellence will also be selected to win \$5,000 for the Dr. Ronald P. Simpson Distinguished Merit Award, which is considered the most prestigious merit award.

Magnet Schools of America (MSA) was founded in 1986 and authorized as a 501(c)3 nonprofit education association in 1994. It sponsors a national awards program, hosts professional development activities, and provides technical assistance through the National Institute for Magnet School Leadership (NIMSL). MSA supports the leaders and teachers of magnet and theme-based schools, while promoting the development of new magnet programs and public schools of choice.

To learn more about the national merit awards program, please visit www.magnet.edu

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MISSION STATEMENT

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