



**SAN MATEO
COUNTY
OFFICE OF
EDUCATION**

Excellence and Equity in Education

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three San Mateo County Schools Receive 2019 California Distinguished School Award

Redwood City, CA—The California Distinguished Schools Program recognizes three San Mateo County middle schools this year for achieving exceptional student performance for two consecutive school years:

- Ralston Intermediate (Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary School District),
- Borel Middle (San Mateo-Foster City School District),
- Bowditch Middle (San Mateo-Foster City School District).

The Distinguished School program was renewed in 2018 to honor schools based on their performance and progress on the state indicators, as described on the California School Dashboard. The program alternates recognitions between elementary schools and middle and high schools every other year, with awardees holding their title for two years. Six elementary schools in San Mateo County were recognized last year.

Ralston Intermediate (Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary School District)

Ralston Intermediate School's model math program provides a number of classes designed to support all learners, including a Common Core class, accelerated Advanced Standing class, and additional math support classes that scaffold student learning. Ralston's math department provides students with many opportunities for advancement, sets high expectations for all students, and uses formative and summative assessments to inform instruction and placement. The data from the 2018 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment show that all student groups increased their performance, especially students with disabilities (+20.3 points) and African American students (+51.5 points).

Borel Middle (San Mateo-Foster City School District)

To meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, Borel Middle School established several professional learning communities, developed multi-tiered supports for students performing below grade level, and implemented restorative practices to promote a healthy school climate. As a result, the 2018 Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment showed increased student performance in English Language Arts and Mathematics, particularly for socioeconomically disadvantaged students (+10.9 and +10.4 points, respectively) and Latino/Hispanic students (+13.4 and +14.5 points, respectively). Overall student engagement and school climate increased while discipline referrals and absenteeism decreased.

Bowditch Middle (San Mateo-Foster City School District)

To reach its goal of minimizing suspensions and increasing student attendance, Bowditch Middle School adopted a model restorative practices program, recognizing that student

wellness is a key component to overall achievement. The school incorporated multiple layers of social, emotional, and mental health support into its practices, and focused on building empathy and repairing relationships between students. Bowditch improved its counseling services, trained teacher leaders to facilitate restorative circles, and contracted with the Youth Service Bureau to provide additional support for students who may be vulnerable. According to the 2018 California School Dashboard, Bowditch's suspension rates decreased 1.1 percent since 2016.

“Our schools are deeply committed to supporting all students by personalizing learning, prioritizing positive school climate, and working collaboratively to implement engaging instruction to best meet students where they are,” said San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools Nancy Magee. “It is invigorating to know the hard work of our classroom teachers and site principals is directly impacting positive student outcomes as reflected on the California School Dashboard.”

The San Mateo County Board of Education will recognize the three San Mateo County schools at an upcoming meeting in May. The State will honor all recipients at the California School Recognition Program Awards Ceremony on April 5, 2019. To view a list of the 2019 California Distinguished Schools, please visit the California Department of Education's website at www.cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/cs/yr19distschools.asp.

The San Mateo County Office of Education is committed to ensuring excellence and equity in education by inspiring students, investing in teachers, invigorating leaders, and involving communities.