

EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY

California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

For immediate Release

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2006-07 CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS AWARDS ANNOUNCED 6 California Schools Cited for Work in Civic Education

Los Angeles, CA....The Constitutional Rights Foundation announced the winners of its first Civic Mission of Schools Awards Program. The program is part of *Educating for Democracy: the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools*, a project of Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) in collaboration with the Center for Civic Education and the Alliance for Representative Democracy. Convened by CRF and funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Annenberg Foundation and the Hearst Foundation, The goal of the coalition is to strengthen civic education in California's public schools.

"The future of democracy in California depends on knowledgeable and engaged citizens. It is the goal of the California Campaign to draw attention to this need and make sure that every student in our state receives a quality civic education so that they understand their constitutional heritage and the rights and responsibilities of effective citizenship," states Todd Clark, Executive Director of CRF.

To promote this goal, the Campaign has created an awards and recognition program that will help create interest and support for the civic mission of the schools at the district and school site level. Schools that elect to systematically review and improve their current efforts to develop engaged citizens are being recognized by the Campaign with one of two designations of excellence:

- Those carrying out a school-wide assessment and planning process to identify strengths and weaknesses of present practice will be designated **Schools of Merit**.
- Schools that implement a plan to strengthen current practice and/or that already have programs that operate at a high level of excellence will be designated **Schools of Distinction**.

The following schools have received recognition:

Schools of Merit

Afflerbough-Paige Camp School

Los Angeles County Office of Education

Afflerbough-Paige Camp School in Los Angeles County serves adjudicated youth, and those under the protection of the Children's Court, by building their success in school. Under the principal's leadership, the school's leadership team of teachers, administrators, students and community members, have developed a plan for strengthening civic education school-wide. Included in the plan are: strengthening instruction in government, history and law by providing teacher professional development in the Center for Civic Education's We the People curricula; strengthening student voice in Probation and other policy through their Camp Advisory Committee; and collaborating with Pitzer College to run voting simulations, and to register students to vote.

Richard Henry Dana Middle School

Richard Henry Dana Middle School is a *California Distinguished School*, and a nationally recognized *School to Watch*, offering a challenging academic curriculum in greater Los Angeles County. A cross-disciplinary group of teachers, school and district administrators came together to examine the six promising practices in civic education and created a plan and timeline that includes enhancing current events instruction with more structured debates, and having students take action to respond to local current events in their community; and strengthening service-learning by deepening their partnership with their local *Partners for Partners* program.

Schools of Distinction

Amador Valley High School

Amador Valley High School, a suburban high school at the edge of the San Francisco Bay Area, was a pilot school with the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. As such, Amador Valley convened teachers, students, parents and administrators to examine their practice in the six promising areas; to develop a plan for strengthening their practice; and to implement their plan. Highlights of their school's activities in all six areas include newly implementing Project Citizen in all civic classes; strengthening the civic component of extra-curricular clubs by requiring each them to have elected officials, to participate in Leadership representative council meetings; and increasing student voice in school governance through a Principal's Council comprised of diverse students who advise the principals on critical issues at the school.

John F. Kennedy High School

John F. Kennedy High School was also a pilot school with the California Campaign. Organizing their planning and implementation through the school site council, with the leadership of one of their Small Learning Communities, JFK has infused civic education into many dimensions of this diverse student body's experience. For example, teachers now use the *History Alive* curriculum in World and US History, which integrates the promising practices simulations and current events discussions. Service-learning is now the focal point of senior projects. And student leadership at the school has been revamped to have two branches: Student Government, which organizes school activities such as rallies and dances, and School Senate, which meets to discuss and work on school issues with the administration.

Irvington High School

Irvington High School exemplifies the six promising practices throughout the students' four-year experience. During freshman year, all students do civic-style service-learning through their English and Science classes; they choose an issue from their community, research it, and provide a service that contributes to the resolution of that issue. In the sophomore year, all students participate in a mock UN simulation. And in the senior year, all government teachers use the *We the People* curriculum, and all seniors complete a civic-style senior project. The school is well known for its success in state-level We the People competitions as well. In addition, the ASB is an active policy and decision-making body, and there is a rich array of civic-based clubs.

Special Recognition

Emery Secondary School

Emery Secondary School has implemented an exemplary program called Y-Plan Community Project that involves students in city planning and policy. In conjunction with the Center for Cities and Schools at UC Berkeley, 9th and 10th grade students participate through their world history classes, by meeting with elected and bureaucratic government officials, as well as other community leaders to examine local planning issues. Under the mentorship of UC Berkeley mentors students in urban planning, students then participate in city planning projects. The whole process involves promising practices such as discussion of current events; combining service and learning; and learning about the functions and principles of government.

For more information about *Educating for Democracy: The California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools*, please visit our website at www.cms-ca.org