FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Newport-Mesa Named a District of Distinction for its Student Support Services Program

Newport-Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) was named a District of Distinction for its Psychological Support Services programs. In addition to providing support for educationally related mental health services these programs also serve to support the social and emotional well-being of students by providing support to students struggling with homelessness, drugs, bullying and other related circumstances.

Districts of Distinction is a national recognition program created by District Administration Magazine to honor school districts that are leading the way in establishing initiatives that yield quantifiable benefits, and that could be replicated by other districts.

The focus of NMUSD’s Psychological Support Services is to provide multi-tiered systems of support and interventions in order to encourage positive mental health that in-turn leads to positive learning and behavior. A unique aspect of NMUSD’s program is that it falls under the auspices of the Student Services Department, which allows a natural connection between both general education and special education.

“The mental, emotional, psychological, and social well-being of our students’ is essential to learning,” said Sara Jocham, assistant superintendent of student services. “By providing dynamic psychological support services, we are fostering student’s abilities to pay attention, concentrate, focus and learn,” Jocham added.

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Newport-Mesa Named a District of Distinction, Continued…

Part of the success of the Psychological Support Services programs is due to the partnerships with parents, other school-based professionals, and more than 30 community partners who work collaboratively to provide a continuum of services that meet the needs of the whole child. During the 2015-16 school year, the District hosted 12 master’s level social work interns from the University of Southern California School of Social Work.

Additionally, the District is one of 11 school districts selected, nationwide, to participate in a Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (CoIIN), focused on the implementation of best practices, policies, and financial strategies that support access to and the expansion of high-quality and sustainable school-based mental health services. As part of the CoIIN initiative, the District is developing a first-ever national performance framework for measuring and publicly reporting outcomes in the area of school-based mental health.

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