



The National Association for Magnet and Theme-based Schools

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### 2020 Merit Awards Recognize Our Nation's Most Prominent Magnet Schools

Washington, DC, July 1, 2020 - Magnet Schools of America (MSA) is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2020 national merit awards. These 137 Magnet Schools of Excellence and 247 Magnet Schools of Distinction are recognized for their commitment to high academic standards, school diversity, specialized curricula and instruction, family engagement, and community partnerships. This makes 2020 the most competitive year in the award program's history.

"National merit awards are presented annually and are only given to the most prominent magnet schools in the country," said MSA Executive Director, Todd Mann. "These extraordinary schools have been through a rigorous process and adhere to the five pillars of magnet school excellence. Merit awardees embody the best in public education and should be celebrated as such in their community."

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

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 38th National Conference on Magnet Schools in April 5-9, 2021 in Clark County, Nevada.

The highest ranked magnet schools in the excellence category are eligible to receive monetary awards. The Ronald P. Simpson Magnet School of Excellence Award is considered the most prestigious award for magnet schools in the nation and includes a \$5,000 cash award. This award recognizes the work of Dr. Ronald P. Simpson, one of the founding members of Magnet Schools of America and MSA President. The second highest award is the Donald Waldrip Magnet Schools of Excellence Award and includes a \$2,500 cash award. This award recognizes Dr. Waldrip as the first Executive Director and a founding member of MSA. The Elementary Magnet School of Excellence and the Secondary Magnet School of Excellence both include cash awards of \$2,500. The Presidents' Magnet School of Excellence honors all MSA Presidents and includes a cash award of \$1000. The New and Emerging Magnet School of Excellence Award is recognized nationally for its leadership and commitment to magnet schools and includes a \$1,000 cash award.

Magnet Schools of America (MSA) was founded in 1986 as a nonprofit education association dedicated to providing vision, leadership and support for the innovative programs that promote choice, equity, diversity, access, and excellence for all students of the 4340 magnet schools throughout the country.

To learn more about the national merit awards program, please visit [www.magnet.edu](http://www.magnet.edu)

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