



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Lodi USD Honored by California Department of Education**

### *Middle College High School Receives Distinguished School Designation*

LODI, CA (February 26, 2019)—Middle College High School (MCHS), a dual-enrollment model program offered by Lodi USD and the San Joaquin Delta College (SJDC), has been designated as a 2019 “Distinguished School,” as part of the California Department of Education (CDE) Distinguished Schools Program (Distinguished Schools).

Distinguished Schools recognizes outstanding education programs and practices. Schools are awarded for “achieving exceptional student performances for two consecutive school years or closing the achievement gap between two school years.” Distinguished School awardees represent examples of “excellent teaching, learning, and collaboration” as well as “highly successful school climate efforts,” which ranges from “real-time conflict resolution to positive behavior intervention.” Awardees hold the title for two years.

MCHS was eligible and applied based on their performance and progress on the State indicators in the California School Dashboard (Dashboard), including graduation rates and test scores, among others.

MCHS provides a unique learning opportunity for students seeking an alternative to a traditional high school.

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As an early college model, students are enrolled in both high school and college courses. The school provides individualized support to students, many of whom are the first in their family to attend college.

Jim Davis, Principal of MCHS, is exceptionally proud of this designation. He noted that “students are the reason we exist and this is proof that our students are making the most of this opportunity.”

The mission of MCHS is to provide a supportive, academically challenging environment where students are able to successfully complete 30 to 60 transferable college units in order to directly apply to a four-year college. Over the last three years, 100 percent of MCHS students have attained at least 30 transferable credits.

Davis went on to say that “the staff of MCHS is second to none. They continue to make strong connections with students and provide the direction for students to pursue their dreams and future careers.”

Jeff Palmquist, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, echoed Davis’s sentiments. Palmquist shared, “MCHS offers rigorous coursework and an outstanding education to students. Staff prepare students for their futures so they can continue to pursue postsecondary education and career pathways in high paying job sectors. This honor speaks to the efforts and achievements of both MCHS staff and students.”

The graduation rate at MCHS has remained at 100 percent over the last three years, with 67 percent of graduates earning one or more Associate’s Degrees from SJDC. In the fall 2018 semester, MCHS students collectively took 504 college courses, of which 88 percent of the grades from these courses resulted in a letter grade of an “A” or “B.” Even more impressively, 70 percent of these courses resulted in a letter grade of “A.”

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Fred Cochran, a County Coordinator for Distinguished Schools and a Coordinator in the Continuous Improvement and Support Division of the San Joaquin County Office of Education, worked with Davis and Palmquist to submit the Distinguished School application to CDE. Upon hearing of MCHS's designation, Cochran was excited. He shared that it was a "well-deserved honor for MCHS" and that "students, families, staff of MCHS and Lodi USD should be so proud of this recognition."

This is yet another exciting designation to add to the school's list of accomplishments. MCHS received the California Distinguished School Award in 2008 and 2011. MCHS was also recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2015.

### **About Lodi Unified School District**

Lodi Unified School District is located in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. Home to 49 school sites, Lodi USD provides high-quality education to a diverse population of 29,000 students. Lodi USD encompasses more than 350 square miles, including the Cities of Lodi and Stockton as well as the rural communities of Acampo, Clements, Lockeford, Victor, and Woodbridge.

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