

**For Immediate Release
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Fullerton School District Makes History Again: All 20 Schools Earn PBIS Platinum for Second Consecutive Year



FSD's Trustees join Woodcrest Elementary leaders and educators for a photo at the district's PBIS recognition event.

(Fullerton, CA) - For the second year in a row, the Fullerton School District (FSD) is celebrating an impressive milestone: all 20 schools across the district have earned the prestigious Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Platinum distinction from the California PBIS Coalition. This back-to-back achievement places FSD among the highest-performing PBIS districts in the state and reflects the district's commitment to fostering student wellbeing, inclusion, and positive school culture.

PBIS is a research-based framework designed to proactively teach, reinforce, and support positive behaviors of students in all school settings. The goal behind these strategies is to create a multi-tiered system that ensures academic success through strengthening social, emotional, and behavioral skills.

The district recently celebrated this historic achievement with recognition from its Board of Trustees, where Amy Sotolongo, a Teacher on Special Assignment who oversees the district's PBIS work, shared, "PBIS is

grounded in the belief that positive behavior flourishes when students experience clarity, consistency, and connection. Just as we teach academic skills, we also teach the behaviors and expectations that help students feel successful and supported in our schools.”



FSD's SEL team, from left to right: Rossana Fonseca, Michael Klein, Amy Lees, and Amy Sotolongo

Amy Sotolongo emphasized that PBIS is not a single program but a comprehensive, research-based framework that empowers FSD schools and students with proactive strategies to teach, model, and reinforce positive behavior.

“Earning Platinum recognition for our PBIS work across all of our campuses for a second consecutive year is the direct result of every person on our team dedicating their work to ensuring student success,” Deputy Superintendent Dr. Chad Hammitt said. “We are so proud to be able to give students skills above and beyond academics that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.”

FSD's PBIS journey began nearly a decade ago with just two schools earning recognition. This school year, the district is not only celebrating continued implementation success but also its status as one of the few districts in California with 100% of schools receiving Platinum honors—the highest level of PBIS distinction. In addition, recognition in back-to-back years denotes FSD's systems are not only successful but sustainably embedded across campuses.

The PBIS awards annual evaluation process sees schools evaluated on rigorous statewide standards, including:

- Alignment of classroom expectations with schoolwide PBIS systems

- At least 80% of students with zero or only one major behavioral referral
- A score of 70% or higher on the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI), a national PBIS fidelity tool
- Data showing effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports for students needing additional assistance
- Evidence of positive academic growth, including i-Ready progress

And for FSD, PBIS doesn't stop in the classroom—these practices are also extended to our transportation department and found on every bus..

Amy Sotolongo shared that FSD bus drivers are trained in the PBIS framework, using a dedicated bus matrix, and reinforce positive behaviors with “bus bucks.” FSD is the only known school district in Orange County that is currently implementing PBIS on the bus. Bus drivers receive ongoing training and support in addressing student needs.

“Our transportation team’s willingness to help us implement PBIS not only supports safer and more predictable bus environments, but it also reinforces that every adult in FSD plays a part in student success,” Dr. Hammitt said.



FSD has trained its bus drivers in PBIS strategies to go the extra mile in supporting student growth.

PBIS in FSD operates within a broader Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), which includes restorative practices, trauma-informed strategies, counseling supports, and other research-based interventions.

Under the MTSS framework:

- Tier 1 supports provide clear expectations, positive reinforcement, predictable routines, and social-emotional learning for all students.

- Tier 2 supports offer targeted small-group interventions such as mentoring, Lunch Bunch groups, and counseling circles.
- Tier 3 supports deliver individualized, intensive interventions—including behavior plans, wraparound supports, and trauma-informed care.

These integrated supports help ensure that approximately 75–85% of students succeed with Tier 1 alone, while Tiers 2 and 3 meet the needs of students requiring additional care.

As Fullerton School District celebrates this second consecutive year of districtwide Platinum distinction, leaders emphasize that the achievement reflects far more than an award. It symbolizes a deeply ingrained culture focused on students, relationships, and hope.

FSD continues to set a statewide standard for what is possible when a district commits to whole-child wellness and empowers every student to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. For more information on California’s PBIS Coalition, visit pbisca.org, and to learn more about PBIS in FSD, visit fullertonsd.org.

The Fullerton School District (FSD) is located in northern Orange County, California, and serves over 11,400 students in transitional kindergarten (TK) through eighth grade. FSD is home to 15 elementary schools, two TK through eighth-grade schools, three junior high schools, and a distance learning and home school program. FSD features unique programs for students, including a Dual Language Academy for Spanish and Korean languages; a Performance Academy Sports Program that offers a traditional in-person learning experience with time for advanced athletic training integrated into the school day; and robust before, after, and summer school programs. The mission of the Fullerton School District is to work collaboratively with the community to provide an innovative, high-quality educational experience for all students in a safe learning environment. FSD’s motto, “Great Schools - Successful Kids,” signifies that all FSD students will be given the tools and instruction to achieve academic excellence, hone interpersonal skills, and develop technological expertise to contribute as productive citizens in a democratic society.

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For more information, please feel free to contact Amber Cline/Public Information Officer, Fullerton School District at 657/706-3774 or amber_cline@myfsd.org