

PRESS RELEASE

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The California Campaign for Biliteracy is Launched and Two School Districts are Honored with a New Prestigious Award

Anaheim – In front of 3,500 teachers, administrators, parents and board members at the annual California Association for Bilingual Education Conference, Californians Together announced the beginning of the California Campaign for Biliteracy. “It is time for a new campaign across California to develop preschool through high school programs that will prepare students with proficiency in two or more languages so they may speak to, from and across multiple communities and nations” said researcher and board member, Dr. Laurie Olsen.

The California Campaign for Biliteracy seeks to engage educators, policy makers, parents and students who share the vision for multilingualism, and also understand the enormous benefits to individuals, society and the economy. “Together we hope to inspire the development of strong dual language programs, multiple opportunities and comprehensive pathways enabling all students to reach the goal of high levels of proficiency in two or more languages,” explained Shelly Spiegel-Coleman, Executive Director.

As part of the campaign and building upon the success of over 21,000 graduating seniors receiving the State Seal of Biliteracy last June, Californians Together is presenting the first Multiple Pathways to Biliteracy District Recognition Award. This award identifies and celebrates districts that are leading the way to world-class language education with the 21st century communication skills of multiple languages. The first winners of this award are San Francisco Unified School District and Glendale Unified School District.

San Francisco Unified School District([hot link](#)): On December 16, 2006, the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education formalized their commitment to multilingualism with a historic resolution, “Preparing all students for a Multilingual/Multicultural World.” The resolution called for taking full advantage of the rich “linguistic and cultural diversity and assets” of San Francisco to provide the opportunity for every student, prekindergarten through twelfth grade, to become

multilingual and multicultural and to graduate fluent in English and at least one other language.

By 2013, the district had built a wide range of world language programs, PreK-12, articulated across grade levels, and placed accessibly throughout the city.

"The San Francisco Unified School District sees multiculturalism and multilingualism as an asset to be nurtured. We are committed to creating comprehensive pathways to biliteracy -- ensuring that English Learners acquire high levels of English and home language proficiency along with the academic and other skills that will help them succeed in life," stated Superintendent Richard Carranza upon hearing of their recognition.

Glendale Unified School District(hotlink) : Glendale Unified School District developed and pioneered the Bilingual Competency Award in 1992 served as the model for the State Seal of Biliteracy. Students wishing to receive the Bilingual Competency Award submit application forms during the spring semester of their graduation year. They may apply for as many language awards as they desire. The Bilingual Competency Award began with only in Spanish. Then Armenian, Korean, Russian, Tagalog, Arabic, and Japanese followed. In the last four years over 1,500 students earned the Bilingual Competency Award.

This celebration of biliteracy led Glendale Unified School District to begin one Spanish dual language program in 2003. Responding to popularity and success of the program, and with a Foreign Language Assistance Program grant, the district added programs. Five years later, sites were added to include a total of seven Dual Language programs.

"The Glendale Unified School District is committed to preparing students for their futures which will include 21st century careers necessitating academic proficiency in multiple languages and multicultural competencies. The bilingual, biliteracy pathways that students are afforded in Glendale through our seven dual immersion language programs in Armenian, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish truly prepare students to compete on an international level," commented Dr. Richard Sheehan upon learning that about their award.

Besides the awards, Californians Together is sponsoring new legislation, AB 2303 (Bloom) (hotlink). The intent of AB 2303 is to honor school districts who have invested in and designed articulated and comprehensive multiple pathways to biliteracy. This would be an award issued by the California Department of Education.

AB 2303 (Bloom) includes the following:

- Establishes a state recognition and award program for school districts with articulated and comprehensive multiple paths to biliteracy.

- Sets criteria for achieving a multiple pathway biliteracy district recognition award.
- Provides descriptions of program models and language learning opportunities that can be combined into comprehensive pathways, preschool through high school.

A new Californians Together publication, *The California Campaign for Biliteracy (hotlink)*, provides details on the campaign, multiple pathway program descriptions, guidance for districts to develop comprehensive language programs, award eligibility criteria and projections for moving California forward as an example for the nation in preparing students for college and the careers of the future.

Profiles and more information about the honorees can be found at www.californianstogether.org

For more information or to set up interviews, please contact Shelly Spiegel-Coleman, Executive Director, Californians Together at 562-756-0493 or Shelly@californianstogether.org

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Californians Together is a statewide coalition of 26 parent, teacher, education advocates and civil rights organizations committed to securing equal access to quality education for all children. Californians Together founded in 1998 as a non-profit organization after the passage of Proposition 227. Californians Together, in conjunction with many of its affiliates, strive to foster full participation in a democratic society through quality education for children and parents from underserved communities. <http://www.californianstogether.org>