



PRESS RELEASE

Poway Unified School District

15250 Avenue of Science ■ San Diego, California 92128-3406 ■ www.powayusd.com

Phone (858) 521-2707 ■ FAX (858) 485-1075

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CONTACT: Christine Paik, Chief Communications Officer
PHONE: (858) 521-2707 **EMAIL:** cpaik@powayusd.com

Poway Unified’s Oak Valley Middle School designated as 2023 Purple Star School

(San Diego, CA) – State Superintendent Tony Thurmond announced on Wednesday that 59 California schools have been designated as 2023 Purple Star Schools. Poway Unified’s Oak Valley Middle School is included among that list, in recognition for the school and staff’s commitment to meeting military-connected students’ and families’ unique needs.

Purple Star Program schools seek to reduce the burden of military-connected students and their families during the transition to a new school and often, a new city. At Oak Valley Middle School, counselor and military-liaison Kayla Matthews carries out this commitment to military families in many ways, including intentional connection points during the transition to or away from Oak Valley, regular check-ins on students’ academic and social-emotional wellbeing, and small group facilitations.

The focus on these families doesn’t stop with the counselor. Oak Valley student leaders organize opportunities for veterans and active duty servicemembers to visit campus and share stories. Oak Valley staff attend trainings for how to support military-connected students including input from students about “what they wish their teachers knew about the challenges unique to military life.” Making military families feel welcome, included, and supported is a campus-wide effort.

The Purple Star Program was designed to help mitigate the challenges of military families by setting standards for and publicly designating military-friendly schools. Poway Unified is proud of Oak Valley Middle School for going above and beyond to meet the needs of military-connected students in PUSD!

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