



June 1, 2026

Dear Community Day School Principals and District Superintendents:

Model Community Day School Recognition Program

I invite you to participate in the Model Community Day School (MCDS) Recognition Program co-sponsored by the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Continuation Education Association Plus (CCEA Plus).

The MCDS Recognition Program identifies and recognizes outstanding programs. In addition to celebrating excellence, a major goal of this program is to create and maintain a resource of exemplary programs for school visitations and other forms of peer mentoring to support other community day schools to adapt successful approaches and practices of these model schools in their communities.

California's MCDSs provide comprehensive services to students whose needs and strengths can be better met within these specialized settings using exemplary asset-based positive instructional strategies and social, emotional, and mental health and guidance and support services.

The application primarily consists of five narrative statements, addressing the following topics:

1. School Profile
2. School Management
3. Educating "The Whole Child" (Instruction)
4. Educating "The Whole Child" (Social, Emotional, and Mental Health and Development)
5. School Evaluation of Effectiveness

Each narrative statement includes several components for applicants to write to (please note that a number of the components are either new or have been revised from previous years as part of our standard updating).

June 1, 2026

Page 2

The self-nomination application packet is available on the CDE's [MCDS Recognition Program web page](#) and on the CCEA Plus [Model School Recognition Program web page](#). The packet includes instructions for completing the application and required forms and instructions for submitting the application via the CDE exFiles File Transfer System. Applications are due on Wednesday, July 15, 2026.

The CDE will be hosting a webinar for prospective applicants. The date and time are listed below.

- Thursday, June 4, 2026, from 1:00–3:00 p.m. (PST)

Any principal interested in applying may participate. The principal may also designate someone else to attend additionally or in their place. The webinar will provide information regarding the application and the application process. To sign up for the webinar and receive the required login information, check for scheduling and details on the CDE's [MCDS Recognition Program web page](#).

Successful applicants will be identified through an application evaluation and site visit process. Representatives from the CDE and CCEA Plus will honor and present awards to 2026–27 MCDS Recognition Program awardees at the annual CCEA Plus State Conference.

If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact Dan Sackheim, Education Programs Consultant, High School Innovations and Initiatives Office, by phone at 916-323-2183 or by email at CommunityDaySch@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Erika F. Torres, Deputy Superintendent
Student Success and Career Readiness Branch

EFT:ds