

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mira Costa Principal Ben Dale Named ACSA Region XIV Secondary Principal of the Year



Manhattan Beach, CA, May 5, 2019

The Manhattan Beach Unified School District is pleased to announce that Mira Costa principal Dr. Ben Dale has been named the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Region XIV Secondary Principal of the Year for 2019. This honor is given to a principal who shows strong support for the school management team, demonstrates exceptional leadership in managing school programs, has a commitment to educational quality and student achievement, a commitment to professional growth, and creativity and innovation in dealing with issues and problems facing public education.

Dr. Dale is an advocate for constant improvement at Mira Costa High School. Mira Costa is already one of the top performing high schools in the nation, and Dr. Dale has always sought to make Mira Costa even greater than it is. He is a strong proponent of student-centered teaching. He loves seeing students active and talking in the classroom. There has been a dramatic increase of students engaged in science labs every day. When he started back in 2010, technology for teachers was in substandard and there was little to no technology for students. Now, Mira Costa has an incredibly robust infrastructure for technology, teachers are equipped with

high-quality technology, and students come to school ready to use technology with the Bring Your Own Device policy instigated by Dr. Dale.

The physical layout of Mira Costa High School has also changed significantly under Dr. Dale's tenure. He was an instrumental leader in making sure that the Measure BB project, passed in 2008, finished everything it promised and was on time. The result was a beautiful new 21st century Math and Science building, new Visual and Performing Arts facilities, completely renovated classrooms, and a spacious central quad that makes Mira Costa feel like a college campus. Dr. Dale was also an essential part of the Measure EE campaign to fund the new gym. The athletic program at Mira Costa has been recognized as one of the finest in the nation, and the new athletic complex will reflect the excellence and serve students and the Manhattan Beach community for decades to come.

Under Dr. Dale's leadership, the campus has focused on improving the social and emotional health of students. He helped create and implement a new bell schedule incorporating Office Hours on Wednesdays, where students can meet with teachers, make up tests, complete homework, or meet with student groups. Likewise, teachers have time to collaborate with each other. He also helped create a policy that limits the amount of AP classes a student can take in one semester, limiting students from pushing themselves in an unhealthy manner.

District Superintendent Dr. Mike Matthews, who recommended that the Board hire Dale in 2010, said, "Being a principal of a 2,500-student school can be especially difficult in today's climate. During Dr. Dale's nine years, he has dealt with bomb threats, on-line threats, tragic losses, student protests, and contractual disputes. These difficult events require different styles of leadership every time. Dr. Dale has been strong, compassionate, present, and has communicated effectively during all of these times." He added, "When he interviewed for the job, he made it clear that being principal of Mira Costa was his dream job. He wears green and gold almost every day, and will talk to anybody about why Costa is the greatest high school in the country. He lives and breathes Costa, and that permeates through everything he does as principal."

Robyn St. Germain worked with Dr. Dale as co-president of Mira Costa's PTSA from 2016-2018. Ms. St. Germain noted, "Dr. Dale's commitment, devotion and passion he puts into everything he does to advance the well-being of our students. It's something to see! His rapport with the student body is one of mutual respect. He is dedicated to each and every student's ultimate success. His partnership and cooperation with the PTSA, through his role as Principal, was unsurpassed. For that partnership, I will always be grateful."

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ABOUT THE MANHATTAN BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

MBUSD serves approximately 6,800 students from preschool to twelfth grade at eight school campuses—one preschool, five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Robinson Elementary School and Grand View Elementary School were recently recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2013. Six MBUSD schools have been honored as California Gold Ribbon Schools since 2015. In 2012, Grand View Elementary was named a National Green Ribbon School, joining just 77 other schools in the United States so honored that year. In 2016, MBUSD was named as a National Green Ribbon District. MBUSD's Michael Hayden and Maggie Mabery were the *California* Teachers of the Year in 2015 and 2016. In addition to outstanding students and excellent teachers, MBUSD is extremely fortunate to have a high level of parental involvement in the schools and very strong partnerships with community partners such as the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation, PTAs/PTSAs, MBX—Beyond the Classroom, the City of Manhattan Beach, Chevron, the Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce, and other local organizations and businesses. More information about MBUSD is available at www.mbusd.org.