

Superior Court of California County of Santa Clara

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Ida Jew Academy & Valle Vista Elementary (IJAVVE) Wins Highest Civic Learning Award in Only Its Second Year

SAN JOSÉ, Calif. (October 1, 2025): Ida Jew Academy & Valle Vista Elementary (IJAVVE) has achieved a remarkable milestone in civic education. In only its second year applying, the school has earned the Civic Learning Award of Excellence from the Judicial Council of California. This is the highest honor offered by the state for schools promoting civic engagement. Last year, IJAVVE was recognized with a lower-level award, making this rapid ascent a major accomplishment.

“This award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our students, staff, and community,” said Dr. Anthony Alvarado, Principal of IJAVVE. “From Math Club and Green Club initiatives to an expanding Robotics program, our school is committed to fostering the academic, social-emotional, and civic growth of every student. Every day, I see the extraordinary effort of our students and staff in action.”

IJAVVE’s practices span elementary and middle school grades, emphasizing problem-solving, student engagement, and civic participation. Teachers like Ms. Alyssa Friend, recognized as IJAVVE Teacher of the Year, are leading the way in innovative approaches to civic learning, and will be presenting these methods to inspire educators across the county.

The award was presented by Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero during an event held for students and parents, teachers and administrators, school staff, and judges. The award is co-sponsored by the Chief Justice and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond.

The school’s accomplishment adds to a growing list of awards earned by IJAVVE staff and students, including recognitions from the Santa Clara County Office of Education, Region 5 California League of Middle Schools, First LEGO League Tournament, Santa Clara County Alliance of Black Educators, and the Krause Center for Innovation Empowered Leader Award for Dr. Alvarado.

“We hope IJAVVE’s success encourages other schools to prioritize civic learning,” said the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara’s Hon. Julia Alloggiamento, Chair of the Court’s Community Outreach Committee and Vice Chair of California’s Power of Democracy Steering Committee. Educators interested in applying for the Civic Learning Award can visit www.powerofdemocracy.org to learn more about the program and submission process.

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About Power of Democracy:

The **Power of Democracy** initiative is a statewide program dedicated to advancing civic learning and engagement in K–12 schools. Through the **Civic Learning Award**, Power of Democracy recognizes schools that demonstrate excellence in teaching students the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to be active, informed participants in a democratic society. The initiative encourages educators to implement innovative programs, share best practices, and inspire students to become civic leaders in their communities. Schools of all sizes and grade levels are encouraged to apply, with the goal of fostering a culture of civic responsibility across California.



Figure 1- Dr. Anthony Alvarado, Principal of IJAVVE, Hon. Julia Alloggiamento, Chief Justice of California Patricia Guerrero, and members of the Milpitas Unified School District Board of Education



Figure 2- Student Body Leadership taking their oath, administered by Chief Justice Guerrero.



Figure 3- Hon. Julia Alloggiamento congratulating IJAVVE for their outstanding achievement.



Figure 4- Students eagerly waiting for the awards assembly to begin.



Figure 5- Student leadership delivering speeches.



Figure 6- Dr. Anthony Alvarado, Principal of IJAVVE



Figure 7- Chief Justice Guerrero presenting the Civic Learning Award.



Figure 8- A celebratory photo opportunity upon the completion of the awards ceremony.