

# MVJH up for national honor

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**MOHAVE VALLEY** — For the second consecutive year, a Mohave Valley Elementary School District campus has been nominated for a federal recognition program.

The Arizona Department of Education, the National Association of State Title I Directors, and the U.S. Department of Education have given the nod to Mohave Valley Junior High School for 2014-2015.

The Title I Distinguished Schools Recognition Program identifies schools that excel at helping Title I students, a term frequently applied to students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, meet academic goals.

MVJH can now apply for a Distinguished School Award. Fort Mojave Elementary School was nominated

for the award last year.

Based on the application, a judging committee may decide to visit the campus and review programs the school has in place for helping students who need intervention support, Principal Christina Stahl said.

She said she was shocked to get the news.

"I wasn't thinking we'd made such improvements," Stahl said. "We just looked at the students and their needs and focused on specifics to move them forward. I didn't realize that our growth was that significant."

One way to be named a "Reward School" is to significantly close the achievement gap between Title I students and other students, according to the agencies behind the program.

The junior high was recognized as an "A"

school last year by the state education department, based on the results of Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards. That grade slipped to a "B" this spring, when MVJH scored two points fewer than the "A" threshold.

Stahl and district Supt. Whitney Crow said the nod from the Distinguished Schools Recognition Program affirms that MVJH is on the right track.

Stahl said the results are indicative of an employee group that has stepped up in recent years to create a more positive campus environment, dividends of which have been paid off in the classroom.

"If someone sees something that shouldn't be," she said, "they share it, without worries about anything coming back on them. It helps our

kids tremendously."

Gear Up, a program promoting the idea of postsecondary education for every student, also helps, she said.

Crow called the nomination "recognition of the hard work the staff puts in in moving those kids."

He said it helps to take some of the sting out of MVJH losing its "A" from the state.

"It helps us see that what we're doing for our intervention is working teachers," he said, adding that teachers and reading interventionists were particularly to the school's success. "I'm proud of the work we're doing."

Last year, 115 campuses were chosen as Distinguished Schools, including Nautilus Elementary in Lake Havasu City. Each received a \$5,000 cash award and an invitation to the National Title I Conference.