



SCHOOLS TO WATCH-TAKING CENTER STAGE

Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage is a statewide program implemented by the California League of Middle Schools, California Department of Education, California Middle Grades Alliance, National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform and the Schools to Watch™-Taking Center Stage Model Schools

For more information, visit www.clms.net/stw.



THURSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Designated 2013; Re-designated 2016, 2019

Laguna Beach Unified School District

Orange County

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<http://tms.lbusd.org>

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: Suburb, Large City; Enrollment: 771; Grade Levels: 6-8

School Schedule: Six periods, modified block schedule with optional "0" period, Educational Study Period (ESP) every Thursday

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

82% White; 9% Hispanic; 3% Asian; 2% African American; 2% Two or More Races; 1% American Indian/Alaska Native; 0% Pacific Islander; 0% Filipino; 10% Free/Reduced Lunch; 3% English Learners

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- 4CLE Initiative (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity) drove assessment and alignment of professional development, best first instructional practices, resources, and innovative classroom learning environments. Classrooms were upgraded for 21st century learning experiences.
- Thurston provides a multi-tier system of support for all students including: emphasis on best first teaching, collaboration classes, Read 180, mandatory academic support, and CORE Academy an elective course targeting reading, writing and math instruction as well as goal setting, note and test taking strategies, study habits and digital competencies.
- Zero period is offered to allow all students opportunities for enrichment and academic support.
- Teachers benefit from weekly teacher collaboration time for departments to design and integrate instruction and develop their teaching skills. In addition routine "learning walks" provide opportunities for teachers to observe other staff.
- Monthly in-service has developed into 4CLE: Menu of Offerings learning rotations targeting 21st century competencies such as: Google Docs, Kagan Strategies, Haiku Web Design, Hour of Code, etc.
- The school has successfully launched a Bring Your Own Device initiative which is supported by extensive classroom upgrades to support technology as well as intense and on-going staff development in the utilization of technology in instruction.
- District support of the initiative is evident in the hiring of TOSAs to support technology, literacy standards and in-service planning.
- The district offers teachers summer professional growth courses in technology, standards based instruction, and curriculum planning.
- Best First Instruction strategies across departments and grade levels is demonstrated by strategies such as "I do, We do, You do," cooperative learning, hands-on approach, creating life-sized simulations, project-based learning, podcasts, speeches to families, and writing across the curriculum.