

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.



CASTAIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Designated 2003, Re-Designated 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018

Castaic Union Elementary School District

Los Angeles County

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SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: Urban fringe of large city. Enrollment: 542. Grade Levels: 7-8. Schedule: Rotating block schedule with shortened day on Wednesdays for staff collaboration. Advisory to attend to the academic and social-emotional needs of students.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Free/Reduced Lunch: 29%; English Learners: 6%

REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- Career pathway classes dominate the exploratory program at Castaic including: Culinary Arts, beginning and advanced Video Production, Drone technology and Sports Medicine.
- Students at Castaic regularly work with technology for both individual and group assignments often collaborating online using Google Apps. Eighth grade students create a digital portfolio that demonstrates their 21st Century learning skills, critical thinking, and collaboration.
- Using the iReady diagnostic tool and teacher assessment students receive intervention support through Advisory, and “Academic Advisory Support Time”, in addition to each teacher committing to provide 15 to 20 minutes of academic support during blocked periods.
- Instructional units are designed around “essential questions” based on relevant topics in order to engage students in meaningful inquiry and collaboration on a wide variety of topics.
- Physical Education classes have incorporated Wooden’s “Pyramid of Success Character Education” program into the department’s philosophy making character development part of the student’s grade.
- English Learner students are clustered by CELDT level in their history, science and math classes to facilitate the designated EL instruction blended into the regular education English classes.
- For six years Castaic has supported a “Safe School Ambassadors” program on campus. Students are given training in how to help prevent bullying and violence on campus. Skills taught include the ability to resolve conflicts, diffuse incidents, and support isolated and excluded students.
- Castaic supports an award winning student television network class which successfully completes nationally and offers students a weekly news broadcast on campus.
- Students benefit from “Career Seminars” held throughout the year to highlight career pathways. Students select which seminars they participate in and include the career path that they are considering in their eighth grade digital portfolio presentation.