

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.



DARTMOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

Designated 2009, Re-designated 2012, 2018

Union School District

Santa Clara County

Randy Martino, Principal

5575 Dartmouth Drive, San Jose, CA 95118

Tel (408) 264-1122

<http://dartmouth.unionsd.org/home>

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: Large city. Enrollment: 808. Grade Levels: 6-8. Schedule: Six periods; optional zero period; late-start Wednesdays for common planning time.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Free/Reduced Lunch: 16%; English Learners: 8%.

REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- Instruction focuses on writing across the curriculum, academic vocabulary, literacy, and interdisciplinary instruction; all staff are trained in 6-Traits Writing.
- All departments use pacing guides and common assessments to inform instruction.
- Assessment is the focal point of instruction and collaboration, with each department developing its own common assessments.
- Researched strategies for teaching academic vocabulary are used in all classes; the entire school participates in the Word of the Week.
- Advanced placement classes are offered in mathematics.
- Cornell note-taking and Thinking Maps are used schoolwide, along with using essential questions, checking for understanding, and Socratic seminars to promote academic discussions.
- Teacher teams have common planning time with late-start Wednesdays.
- Students have opportunities to meet with teachers before school, during break and lunch, and after school in the homework center, computer lab, and individual teacher classrooms.
- Team teachers serve as adult mentors.
- Student Leaders are trained mentors for 6th graders as part of the WEB student orientation program.
- Students are placed in interdisciplinary teams for high-quality teacher-student relationships.
- Over 40% of the school is enrolled in the Instrumental Music Program.
- Designated classrooms are open at break and lunch to provide space for students having difficulty with socialization and navigating the large campus.
- Students with incomplete homework and classwork meet after school for teacher supervised completion.
- Character education is taught by campus-wide focus on a character trait each month.
- Campus-wide zero-waste program, Go Green, keeps students focused on recycling and waste reduction.
- Parents participate in Art Vistas (of art instruction which correlate with social studies content standards).
- Electives include: Study and Organizational Skills for College Bound Students, Spanish, Speech and Debate, Communications, Exploring Cultures, Cornerstone Thrive, Project Lead the Way, Coding,
- Technology, Kitchen Chemistry, Botany, Ecology, Drama, and Leadership.

- The sports program includes track, cross-country, wrestling, soccer, volleyball, basketball, and cheer.
- Special education classes are scheduled to allow students to move between RSP (Resource Specialist Program), SDC (special day class), and mainstream classes as needed.
- Students with spectrum-based deficits may participate in the daily and weekly Social Cognition classes to improve their social interactions and communications.
- 8th Grade WEB leaders and teachers orientate incoming 6th graders on the day before school begins to assist them with navigating middle school, making healthy choices, managing time, and making friends.
- Three computer labs as well as ten portable carts of iPads, Chromebooks, and Mac Books are available for embedding technology into instruction.
- Classes give students opportunities to interact, share, and collaborate with peer/teachers in the Cloud.
- Community Service events provide students with opportunities to help others locally and at the global level.
- The Drama Department produces a musical yearly including students from all academic ability groups.
- Parent involvement includes serving on Site Council, Home and School Club, attending workshops on STEM learning, Cornerstone Character Development, and Second Language Community Involvement.
- Teaming and professional learning communities are the dominant organizational pattern along with adherence to the response to intervention pyramid.
- The administration fosters multiple forums for shared leadership around scheduling, curriculum issues, and school climate through team leaders, department meetings, team meetings, and student study teams.
- Self-reflection informed by data analysis is the norm. Staff is committed to continuous improvement and collaboration. Regular “walk-throughs” give teachers feedback and build upon others’ good ideas.
- The use of Curricular Maps shows how to present curriculum in an interdisciplinary manner.
- Staff development is centered on the developmental needs of adolescents and effective instructional strategies for the middle grades: Stanford’s EPGY program for Special Education, Step Up to Algebra
- program through Silicon Valley Education Foundation, the Kahn Academy program in regular education
- classes, literacy strategies by Kate Kinsella, and training by Kathy Glass in “Backwards Design.”
- Staff reading includes Teach Like a Champion (Lemov), Checking for Understanding (Fisher, Frey), Fair
- Isn’t Always Equal (Wormeli), and articles by Reeves and Marzano.
- Interaction and collaboration with professionals in the community is an integral component of college and career goal setting for all 8th grade students.
- Dartmouth maintains close relationships with local universities to recruit high quality teachers through rigorous student teaching assignments.