



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.



PIONEER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Designated in 2013; Re-Designated 2016, 2019

Tustin Unified School District

Orange County

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<http://www.pioneerwildcats.org>

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: Small City; Enrollment: 1,281; Grade Levels: 6-8; School Schedule: Seven periods, departmentalized/Grade-level program.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

39% Asian; 38% White; 14% Hispanic; 3% Filipino; 2% African American; 2% Two or More Races; 0% American Indian/Alaska Native; 0% Pacific Islander; 9% Free/Reduced Lunch; 6% English Learners

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- Designated as an Apple Demonstration School, Pioneer provides an iPad for every student and upgraded classrooms. Technology is supported by district Digital Learning Coaches and in-house Digital Learning Fellows.
- Informed by online common assessments, and district benchmark assessments administered three times per year, teachers utilize bi-weekly tutorial periods to re-teach and re-assess essential concepts.
- The "Banking Minutes" model allows teachers to have seventy minutes weekly for PLC, department and faculty meetings, as well as four professional planning days a year.
- Social studies and science teachers provide students with a "20% project" (modeled after Google's 20% time) to allow students to pursue projects of choice investigating, responding and engaging in complex, real world problems. The results are shared during two community evening events.
- Students set quarterly Respect, Explore, Achieve & Lead (REAL) Wildcat goals for academic achievement, extra-curricular involvement, exploration, leadership, and service.
- Trained student mentors meet with sixth grade students weekly to support them and teach them the "Wildcat Way."
- Academic Olympics is the school's signature PBL. Every student in every class creates a standards based activity designed to showcase and measure a particular skill which they demonstrate on the student planned Olympic Day
- Core signature instructional practices are evident school wide including academic vocabulary, talk-time, daily instructional goals, sentence frames, Cornell Notes, thinking maps, and marking the text.
- An extensive elective program connected to the high school college to career pathways program includes: guitar, web design, robotics, Project Lead the Way, and numerous electives in the visual and performing arts.
- The Coffee with the Counselors program meets monthly to offer programs for parents on such topics as: middle school transition, bullying, drug and alcohol awareness, standardized testing, transitioning to high school, and career planning.
- Recognized as a National Model Professional Learning Community by Richard DuFour, PLCs identify essential standards, share best instructional practices, create common assessments, and analyze student assessment data in both grade level and department teams.