



CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS TO WATCH

California Schools to Watch™ is a statewide program implemented by the California League of Schools, California Department of Education, California Middle Grades Alliance, National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, and the California Schools to Watch model schools. For more information, visit www.leagueofschools.org.



TWENTYNINE PALMS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Designated 2020

Morongo Unified School District
San Bernardino County
Stacy Smalling, Principal
5798 Utah Trail, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277
(760) 367-9507

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: rural. Enrollment: 495. Grade Levels: 7-8. School Schedule: A modified block schedule features all classes on Mondays followed by A and B days with students attending periods 1-4 or 5-8.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Free/reduced lunch: 62%. Students with disabilities: 15%. English learners: 8%.

REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- Teachers have 90 minutes per day during instructional time to engage in professional development and meet in grade-level and department teams to plan cross-curricular and problem-based learning experiences as well as interventions.
- A block schedule, combined with year-long and vertically articulated courses, allows students the time they need to delve into hands-on STEAM learning.
- All students are placed in one of three Success Strand courses (AVID, Leadership, or Study Skills) to learn to establish goals for themselves, plan and pace their work to achieve their goals, and build capacity for success in education and life.
- The STEAM initiative offers two electives, STEAM exploration and CELL, as well as STEAM practices that are integrated into all classes; ongoing STEAM professional development; and a problem-based learning culminating STEAM night for the community.
- Ongoing site-level professional development goals are supported by administrative walkthroughs, a PBIS coach conducting collaborative teacher observations, guided self-reflections on classroom supports and interventions, and teachers-visit-teachers weeks.
- There is a strong focus on articulation as the school serves just two grades; the school partners with the local high school for CyberPatriots, Robotics, Saturday Academy, and visitations.
- An inclusive and collaborative push-in model for students with disabilities ensures one special education teacher is free each period to observe students and provide general education teachers with guidance as needed.