

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.



BERNICE AYER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Designated 2005, Re-Designated 2008, 2011, 2014, 2018

Capistrano Unified School District

Orange County

Nick Stever, Principal

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SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: Urban fringe of a large city. Enrollment 894. Grades 6-8. Schedule: Modified block schedule with longer periods two days per week and additional "Educational Support Period" three times per week. "0" Period interventions offered.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Free/Reduced Lunch; 15%; English Learners: 13%.

REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- Bernice Ayer teachers have collectively identified priority standards, "unwrapped" the standards, created learning targets, and designed common formative assessments which can be analyzed during one hour per week of embedded collaboration time as well as during professional development days and released time.
- Reading, speaking and listening skills are integrated into all content areas including physical education and elective classes.
- Teachers, trained in reflective learning walks, visit classrooms, gather data, and engaged in reflective discussions about promising practices.
- Students are provided extended learning time with the modified block schedule two times per week facilitating project-based learning, hands-on exploration and labs, and researched based inquiry.
- Student in need of additional support benefit from the co-teaching model with the special education teacher as well as the "Educational Support Period" which allows for priority standards to be re-taught as well as enrichment.
- School counselors work with interns and partner with the local Soroptomists to provide specialized mentoring and counseling and support services to groups of students on a regular basis. Support groups include Transforming Power, Brain Waves, Stress Reduction, and the Happy and Healthy Lunch Group. Additionally, in the Peer Assistance Leadership class students are trained as mentors and share relevant issues and skills with all students as well as supporting the "New Student Lunch Program".
- Working with the Orange County Sheriff's Department, staff partner with local law enforcement to mentor and support families. Families participate in educational presentations provided by the school counselor, sheriff deputies, and the PTA on topics such as suicide prevention, drug awareness, and general parenting strategies.
- "Book Break" is a literacy program provided twice weekly which focuses on providing students with structured time for reading as well as tutoring.
- A Dual Immersion Program offers students teaching in the core content in both English and Spanish.