



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.



WASHINGTON ACADEMIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Designated in 2011; Re-Designated 2014, 2017, 2020

Sanger Unified School District

Fresno County

Jamie Nino, Principal

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[washington.sanger.k12.ca.us](http://www.washington.sanger.k12.ca.us)

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: Rural; Enrollment: 1,827; Grades: 6-8. School Schedule: Six Period Day. Late start on Thursday allowing two hours for learning community collaboration. Daily Advisory class.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

79% Hispanic; 10% Asian; 7% White; 2% African American; 2% Two or more; 1% Filipino. 87% Free/Reduced lunch. 16% English Learners.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- Professional Learning Communities are the cornerstone of the program at Washington Academic. The highly-developed teams meet weekly to establish norms for accountability, analyze student results, and engage in ongoing collaboration between their departments both vertically and cross-curricular. Instructional coaches take teachers to observe their peers in the classroom
- Every student at WAMS has an iPad. Used as a tool grounded in pedagogy, the staff adopted Universal Design for Learning to give students access to learning at high levels utilizing technology.
- Built on the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports system, school culture benefits from the PRIDE system of rewards, Advisory program to mentor students, Peer Advisory with peer assistance, "Extended Lunch Homework Lab" three days per week as well as Period 7 where students needing support work with staff ninety minutes three days/week after school. Placement is reviewed in three week intervals.
- As a prevention program and alternative to suspension, Washington's counselor facilitates a "Restorative Justice" program which students attend for a full day, participating in reflective lessons as well as working on classwork and homework missed. Students may also be recommended to attend as a preventative measure.
- Following the research of Robert Balfanz, the school hired Parent Student Advocates to target and monitor students that fail to meet one or more of his criteria putting students at risk of failure and not graduating. (Grades, Attendance, Referrals) While in the program students spend two lunches per week with their advocates. Students needing additional support may progress with their advocates to "After School Success" held daily after school for 75 minutes.
- English Learners, especially Long-Term English Learners benefit from a tiered, data based intervention program starting with staff identifying their levels of English acquisition, focusing on them in classes and Core teachers developing an "Individualized Learning Plan" for each student. Students access a variety of interventions including an eight-week course for parents offered by the school and the Parents Institute for a Quality Education.
- Washington's "Warrior Within" program is a powerful two-day event led by the leadership class and the activity director during which students participate in a variety of experiences geared at helping them empathize and experience what other students may experience at school creating deeper bonds between students.