



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



DOWNTOWN COLLEGE PREP ALUM ROCK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Designated 2017; Re-Designated 2020

Santa Clara Office of Education

Santa Clara County

Leticia Villa-Gascon and Brandon Jones, Principals

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DCP.org

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: Urban Charter School; Enrollment 363; Grade Levels: 6-8; School Schedule: All students have 4 block periods of 70 min. each 4X week with 70 minute elective class and advisory class, Wednesday early release with 4 block periods of 60 minutes and a 46 minute assembly at the end of the day.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

85% Hispanic, 4% White, 1% Pacific Islander, 3.3% Filipino, 2% African American, 4% Asian; 87% Free/Reduced Lunch; 40% English Learners.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- Instruction is supported by ten days of staff development, an instructional coach for math, early release time for collaboration on Wednesdays, extensive administrator coaching, and emphasis on workshop approach, Understanding by Design, design thinking, and highly personalized blended learning.
- Students benefit from four days per week in advisory class focused on specific curriculum for each grade level designed to discover strengths, identify interests, and explore school/career options.
- During the summer, enrichment courses are offered, and “College Camp” at the University of Santa Clara campus is available to all sixth graders.
- Believing in “culture within curriculum,” staff participates in common grade-level planning, department planning, administrative teaching conferences, and collaborative decision-making regarding curriculum and school culture.
- Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year and as needed. In addition, parents participate in the hiring process, the School Site Council, and many activities at the school. Parents feel they have a strong voice in the school.
- Building school culture is reflected in the daily schedule, as well as a strong emphasis on culture building at the beginning of each school year.
- All classes emphasize the instructional strategies in the “DCP Toolkit” (a grouping of 20 best practices), and have a white board set up featuring a “do now,” an agenda, and objectives or essential questions for the day.
- Students are provided strong social-emotional support through advisory and “family meetings” within their grade levels and cohorts.
- Informational literacy is embedded into all curricular areas by citing evidence from the text, and close reading as schoolwide strategies.