

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.



HIGH DESERT SCHOOL

Designated 2012, Re-Designated 2015, 2018

Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District

Los Angeles County

Giselle Bise, Principal

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SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: Rural. Enrollment: 278. Grade Levels: 6-8. Schedule: Eighty-minute block schedule for English/Mathematics for seventh and eighth grade with four core classes, one P.E, Class and one elective. Sixth grade self-contained schedule with elective/PE rotations.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Free/Reduced Lunch: 42%; English Learners: 16%.

REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- High Desert has multiple methods of assessment and student recognition including GPA, reading and math growth, and character recognition through the lens of the Medal of Honor Character Development program.
- Students choose from a variety of STEAM elective courses including: Robotics/Forensics, TV/Video Production, Google Apps and Coding, Game Design, Visual and Performing Arts, Journalism, Hands-on Environmental Science, ASB and Yearbook.
- Professional development and common prep times provide opportunities for teachers to meet in grade level and department teams to analyze student data and performance, and plan for timely interventions.
- To assure student success at each grade level vertical articulation between elementary, middle and high schools teachers meet two-three times per year to discuss trends, identify needs and share promising practices.
- The introduction of Google Classroom, new Chromebook carts for every classroom, technology-based adoptions, and extensive staff development has resulted in a more student centered learning environment focused on academic vocabulary, reading comprehension and interactive inquiry and reflection.
- Intervention programs such as lunchtime learning labs, after school tutorial assistance, Learning Lab assistance, and one to one small group support within the general education classroom support student learning.
- A robust video production elective allows students to explore video editing, gain technical knowledge by running video equipment, experience public speaking, and set a positive example.
- Sixth grade students participate in a rotation of dance, piano, and science lessons weekly while seventh and eighth graders self-select electives.