

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.



WILLIS JEPSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Designated 2016; Re-Designated 2019

Vacaville Unified School District
Solano County
Kelley Birch, Principal
580 Elder Street, Vacaville, CA 95688
(707) 453-6280
<https://jepson.schoolloop.com/>

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: Suburban; Enrollment: 935; Grades: 7-8

School Schedule: Six instructional periods daily, with flexible study hall embedded throughout the week. Teamed teachers share students. Early release day once per week for department, grade-level, or team collaboration.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

1% American Indian/Native American; 5% Asian/Asian American; 4% Black/African American; 33% Hispanic/Latino; 0.3% Pacific Islander; 52% White; 4% Other; 43% Free/Reduced Lunch; 9% English Learners

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- Common formative assessments are given in core classes to inform instruction and identify students for intervention.
- Study hall period during the school day provides for intervention, re-teaching, and enrichment on a timely basis. The needs of ELLs, special education students, and students assigned to Homework Tank are addressed during this period.
- The master schedule allows for core teachers to share a common prep period with grade level colleagues facilitating discussion of curriculum and lesson planning.
- Teachers benefit from district staff development days, department, team, and grade-level collaborative time, as well as full release days for unit planning. Twice yearly, the school provides collegial coaching where teachers observe their colleagues.
- Jepson utilizes the CDE Early Warning and Intervention System to identify potential dropouts.
- Students are supported by one counselor per grade level, a youth resource officer from the local police department, and counselors from The Children's Nurturing Project which provides in-depth counseling.
- Student leaders provide a program entitled PRIDE SESSIONS, which involves peers teaching other students organization and study skills.
- Staff trained in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) meet during planning days to focus on embedding ELD standards, explicit vocabulary instruction, and integrating reading strategies into instruction.
- In addition to using ELAC meetings to reach out to Hispanic families, Jepson partners with the local Catholic Church to send a representative to the Spanish mass to present information and answer questions.