



# California

## Schools to Watch – Taking Center Stage

### Principal’s Checklist

Your school may be a high performing, high impact middle school, but is it ready to be designated as a model for others? Making an application is not an easy process, so before you begin, here are a dozen items to consider. If you have some **Not Yets**, you may want to rethink or postpone making application at this time. (Refer to the suggested timeline on page 3 and 4 for guidance if you decide to postpone).

	<b>The STW-TCS Deliberative Dozen</b>	<b>We’re There</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>
1	<p>Our school meets the minimum academic achievement eligibility requirements in one of these two ways?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Median middle school API<sup>1</sup> or above for most recent data year <u>and has met overall growth target</u> with good indication that the current year will also show expected growth</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Below median middle school API, but has <u>met overall and subgroup targets for the past three years</u> with good indication that the current year will also show expected growth.</li> </ul>		
2	Our school is not in Program Improvement, is not being state monitored, and does not have any unanswered or ongoing civil rights violations.		
3	Our school’s programs are replicable by schools with challenging and diverse populations.		
4	Our school has an operational, school wide progressive discipline plan. All students receive consistently fair and equitable treatment. The suspension data reflects that no subgroup is being unreasonably suspended.		
5	Our school actively supports the mental, physical, emotional, and social health, welfare and safety of our students with counseling, health services, adult advocacy, developmentally responsive activities, and positive incentives. Cognitive and non-cognitive programs are designed and implemented to encourage, motivate, resolve conflict, and build character, resiliency, attendance, and achievement for all students.		
6	<p>The district (superintendent and school board) provides strong support for its middle schools to meet the needs of young adolescents with financial resources, highly qualified teachers, administrators, and counselors, curriculum and instructional materials, and professional development for its teachers ( i.e., time, opportunities AB 75, AB 466, coaching).</p> <p><i>Explicitly, the middle school is not an island operating successfully with limited district support.</i></p>		
7	<p>The school has an operational and formalized structure of distributed leadership that embraces a clear and current vision and mission for the school. Groups meet independently and regularly with a clearly articulated system of norms, collaborative purpose, communication, and ability to make meaningful decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District wide teacher-leadership in curriculum-instruction-assessment-data and budget groups.</li> <li>• School wide leadership team with representation from key individuals</li> <li>• Department curriculum-instruction-assessment-data groups</li> <li>• Grade-level department groupings</li> <li>• Grade-level interdisciplinary teams of teachers with common set of students and mutual accountability for student behavioral and academic success.</li> <li>• Student study team for at risk students</li> </ul>		

<sup>1</sup> K-8, 5-8 schools use the elementary median API.

	<b>The STW-TCS Deliberative Dozen</b>	<b>We're There</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Site Council with student voice</li> <li>• English Language Advisory Council</li> <li>• Parent or Parent/Teacher association</li> <li>• Student council</li> </ul> <p><i>Explicitly, the school leadership is not just the administration or a small group of teachers, nor is it “all the teachers buying in to top-down decisions.” It is an organized system of learners and leaders.</i></p>		
8	The school is an integral part of the community. It seeks support from the community (universities, colleges, businesses, non-profits) and provides support to the community in terms of student volunteer services, facilities, and joint projects.		
9	The master schedule of the school is a reflection of students’ needs and school mission. It is flexible and innovative in providing time and opportunity for coherent, rigorous, standards-based instruction for all students within the school day. It provides students with curricular opportunities in core subjects, targeted intervention opportunities, electives, and physical education. It provides common planning time for teacher teams in the school to work collaboratively on the behalf of their students. It creates smaller, closer learning communities for students. <i>Explicitly the master schedule gives priority to students’ needs over adult needs.</i>		
10	Students are heterogeneously placed on teams and in classrooms to the fullest possible extent. Instruction is differentiated for interventions and enrichment opportunities. Resource specialists collaborate or co-teach. Additional intervention or content specific classes are provided for students with specialized needs that cannot be met in the regular classroom (i.e. math intervention, beginning and early English language development, remedial reading). Enrichment and leadership opportunities are accessible by all and not determined on the basis of IQ and test scores. Advanced content classes (algebra, geometry) may have prerequisite standards and support classes for student success. All classes have high expectations and high levels of student engagement. <i>Explicitly, there is no tracking of students <u>throughout</u> the day in classes with lower expectations and rigor or with less qualified teachers.</i>		
11.	Curriculum, instruction, school-wide strategies, pacing, assignments, homework, assessment, grading and reporting, enrichment projects and activities (i.e. History Day, Science Fair, field trips) in each subject area is consistent and coherent across the school. <i>Explicitly, each and every student has equal access, opportunity, and challenge in any classroom to which they are assigned.</i>		
12.	By the time application is submitted, the <b>entire administration and faculty</b> will have participated in an extensive and ongoing discussion of the <i>Schools To Watch-Taking Center Stage</i> Self-Rating, the <b>Taking Center Stage</b> document, and the development of the application. If selected, we will be prepared to honorably fulfill the obligation of sharing with others statewide and nationally what it takes to be a high performing, high impact middle school that is on its own continuous journey of improvement.		

**Whether you plan to apply or not, please:**

- 1) Download the STW-TCS School Self-Study and Rating Rubric and get started on the road to continuous improvement <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gq/mg/documents/criteria.doc> and 2) visit a STW-TCS model physically or virtually [www.clms.net](http://www.clms.net) 3) Have questions? Contact a STW-TCS principal or STW-TCS Director, Dr. Irvin Howard at [STWCAL@aol.com](mailto:STWCAL@aol.com).

## Not quite ready to apply?

### Follow this suggested two-year timeline for the *Schools to Watch™ – Taking Center Stage* School Self-Study and Application Process

Time Frame	Activity	Who?
Year 1		
Spring	<p>Download and read all materials pertinent to the STW-TCS program and application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications and procedures are posted at: <a href="http://www.clms.net/stw">www.clms.net/stw</a></li> <li>• <i>Taking Center Stage – Act II Recommendations</i> are posted at: <a href="http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/mg/tcsiirecommend.asp">http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/mg/tcsiirecommend.asp</a></li> <li>• School Self-Study and Rating Rubric are posted at: <a href="http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/mg/documents/criteria.doc">http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/mg/documents/criteria.doc</a> and at <a href="http://www.clms.net/stw">www.clms.net/stw</a></li> </ul>	Principal and School Site Leadership (PASSL) Team
Spring	Principal's Check list from <a href="http://www.clms.net">www.clms.net</a>	Principal
Late Spring	Initial staff discussions regarding school improvement process and readiness of completing a STW-TCS application in the fall of Year 2	PASSL and whole staff
Summer	PASSL develops timeline and structured learning community activities for School Self-Study and Rating Rubric. PASSL develops other surveys for parents and students to gather key information that corresponds with National Forum Criteria.	PASSL and district office personnel
Fall (continues through winter).	Staff begins self-study and rating process, analyzes data and its relationship to practice and programs.	All faculty
Winter	Parents and students are given perception surveys.	PASSL, ASB, Site Council, PTC

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Who?</b>
<b>Year 2</b>		
Spring	<p>Discussion focuses on STW-TCS application. Complete data charts, outline and refine evidence for narratives, discuss in earnest the last three pages of the application narrative :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readiness can be determined by the average of the self-study ratings, which should be consistently in the 3+ range.</li> <li>• Candid reflection of data, self-study, and willingness to commit to improvement endeavor.</li> <li>• Principal reviews and refines Principals Checklist.</li> </ul>	PASSL, staff, district
Late Spring	Determine whether to submit application in the fall or continue to work another year towards focused improvements before applying.	PASSL and faculty
Summer	Preparation for Year 2 of study or application writing for fall submission.	PASSL and/or writing committee
August-September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review summer’s work with staff.</li> <li>• Get August release API growth data to make sure minimum eligibility requirements can still be met.</li> <li>• Refine and finalize application. Gather all data.</li> <li>• Complete application checklist.</li> <li>• Seek assurances and signatures.</li> <li>• Send application packet to the California League of Middle Schools so that it arrives before 5:00 p.m. on the First Friday of October.</li> </ul>	PASSL  Principal PASSL
First Friday in October	<p>Applications due to CLMS Office by 5:00 p.m.</p> <p>Confirmation of receipt sent via e-mail.</p>	Applicant Schools

**PASSL - Principal and School Site Leadership**