



SCHOOLS TO WATCH – TAKING CENTER STAGE

MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE



Bernice Ayer Middle School



2009 School Statistics

(Sources: 2009 API Growth Report; 2009 AYP Report)

Community: Urban fringe of a large city
Enrollment: 767
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Modified block with zero period

Student Demographics

- 70% White
- 23% Hispanic/Latino
- 3% Asian
- 2% Filipino
- 1% African American
- 1% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 0% Pacific Islander

- 20% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 8% English Learners

2008 API Base: 866

2009 API Growth: 883 (up 130 points since 1999-00)

2009 AYP: Met 20 of 21 criteria

(Visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ar/index.asp> to view this school's data for prior years.)

Designated 2005, Re-Designated 2008

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School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- A rotating block schedule two days a week supports differentiation and teaming.
- The weekly Articulation and Collaboration for Excellence (ACE) period allows teachers to collaborate.
- An Educational Support Period (ESP) facilitates an end-of-day study skill session.
- Spanish/English dual immersion classes benefit all students.
- Rigorous standards-based, hands-on projects provide an engaging curriculum.
- Integrated academic-technology projects keep students involved.
- Consistent practices—such as Cornell Notes, SchoolLoop, and the student planner—support student learning in all classrooms.
- School staff analyzes the schools longitudinal California Standards Test data to assess how the achievement gap is closing.

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Developmental Responsiveness

- Individual, group, and family counseling address the emotional needs of students.
- PAL (Peer Assistance Leaders) students are trained in conflict mediation for student issues.
- At-risk students are regularly reviewed by teacher teams.
- Students broadcast daily editions of Breaker News as well as student-created short feature films.
- Exploratory classes in art, music, drama, technology, and foreign language enrich the curriculum.
- The school is a safe, clean, supportive, and friendly campus.
- Student activities program is extensive and highly inclusive.

Social Equity

- All students get scheduled into rigorous classes.
- Systematic approaches to interventions for struggling students—outlined in the Pyramid of Success—provide for mastery of the curriculum.
- Special education students are mainstreamed into classes with co-teachers.
- The dual immersion program hosts cultural evening events.
- Recognition of all students for “as many reasons as we can create” is a priority.
- The school has developed a “safe to be smart” environment.
- An effective behavior support team monitors discipline data and provides direction for school climate decisions.
- The AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program supports student success.

Organizational Support

- The principal fosters high levels of teacher involvement in the shared leadership professional learning community.
- Effective routines and systems allow teachers to focus on student data and learning.
- Teams of teachers use the ACE period to analyze data and strategize about how to close gaps and minimize discrepancies.
- Teacher common planning teams hold themselves accountable for student achievement.
- Teachers conduct professional development sessions for their peers during ACE and at the annual staff retreat.