



# SCHOOLS TO WATCH – TAKING CENTER STAGE

## MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE



### Canyon Middle School



#### Designated 2007, Re-Designated 2010

Canyon Middle School • Castro Valley Unified School District • Alameda County • Mark Croghan, Principal • 19600 Cull Canyon Road, Castro Valley, CA 94552 • Tel 510-538-8833, Fax 510-247-9439 •

<http://www.canyon.cv.k12.ca.us/>

### 2009 School Statistics

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

Community: Suburban  
Enrollment: 1,344  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: Six-period, modified block (Tuesday through Friday); daily zero period

#### Student Demographics

- 33% White
- 29% Asian
- 19% Hispanic/Latino
- 11% African American
- 4% Filipino
- 1% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 1% Pacific Islander
  
- 23% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 8% English Learners

2009 API Base: 859

2009 API Growth: 851 (up 96 points since 1999-00)

2009 AYP: Met 29 of 33 criteria

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

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- A zero period provides instructional time for AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), Spanish, interventions, music, and enrichment.
- A modified block schedule (Tuesday and Wednesday) is in place.
- The California standards drive expectations and the curriculum.
- Teachers use Step Up To Writing and Prime Numbers programs to enhance instruction.
- Language arts and math teachers are coached by a district coordinator; the coaching program has enhanced rigor in the classroom and orchestrated articulation with the elementary schools.
- Inquiry labs in science enhance student understanding of concepts.

### Developmental Responsiveness

- An advisory period allows for informal time to address student concerns; students participate in a daily student-facilitated advisory broadcast.

(Continued)

### **Developmental Responsiveness** *(continued)*

- Sixth grade students are grouped into small, family-like teams to provide positive personal connections between students and teachers.
- Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to excite and motivate students; strategies include projects, games, simulations, group activities, partner activities, hands-on activities, field trips, and student-directed learning.
- The school offers a strong program of electives and exploratory classes such as video journalism, wood shop, technology, and over five types of music classes.
- Thirty percent of students participate in music classes.
- Technology is used daily—computer lab, mobile computer labs, i-Movies, PowerPoint, LCD projectors, and Quizdom clicker systems.
- Emphasis is placed on applying school work to real-world issues.
- Many services assist students in socio-emotional growth through individual and group counseling, Youth to Youth, a Castro Valley Community Action Network counselor, and peer mediation.
- The school has many supports and actively works to keep at-risk students from becoming lost during the transition from middle to high school.
- Rules and expectations are made clear to students; a peer mediation process effectively engages students in positive behavior.

### **Social Equity**

- The Renaissance reward system is designed to value diversity, civility, service, democratic citizenship, good attendance, behavior, team sports, and academics.
- The student Diversity Council addresses cultural differences, tolerance, and bullying.
- Many opportunities exist for students' voices to be heard.
- Students have access to adult and high school mentors.
- The library has a wide selection of materials and technology.
- Community-Based English Tutoring (CBET) classes are given to teach parents ways they can assist their children with schoolwork.
- Families are offered many ways to become involved at the school site, such as the Canyon Parent Patrol to augment supervision.

### **Organizational Support**

- The Canyon leadership team regularly meets with administrators to discuss the effectiveness and focus of the school.
- Every Tuesday, staff members gather to engage in professional development, book studies, and collaborative discussions about specific teaching practices and student achievement.
- School staff members actively gather and analyze data from a wide array of sources.
- An active PTA and community fundraising groups help the school meet additional student needs.
- The Castro Valley Parent Project—a ten-week series designed to change destructive adolescent behavior—is hosted on Canyon's campus and facilitated by Canyon's eighth grade guidance counselor.
- The district-wide Homestead independent study program is an alternative education program for K-8 students housed on the Canyon campus; middle school students must apply and receive district permission to attend this program.