



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.



DESERT SPRINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Designated 2017

Palm Springs Unified School District

Riverside County

Dr. Kiela Snider, Principal

66755 Two Bunch Palms Trail, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240

www.psusd.us/DesertSprings

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Community: Rural/Urban Fringe; Enrollment: 948; Grade Levels: 6-8; School Schedule: Six period day with sixth grade two-hour content block. Students are scheduled into “houses”/teams. Early release day on Wednesday to provide time for collaboration.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

83% Hispanic, 5% African American, 8% White; 96% Free/Reduced Lunch; 36% English Learners.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- Learning targets are posted and referred to at the beginning, middle, and close of every class to make learning visible to students. Targets are monitored by administration and teaching staff walkthroughs.
- Staff training in close reading and thinking maps has encouraged shared strategies for literacy in all subject areas.
- The school’s professional development model assures monthly staff development where promising practices are shared and followed up by discussion of results after implementation.
- Intervention for struggling students is provided via differentiation of instruction, pull-out tutoring, co-teaching with special education staff, and after school tutoring. Students may request tutoring with a teacher during their PE or elective class.
- In addition to PLC’s, teachers are supported by two instructional coaches and one curriculum coach who observe teachers, co-teach, plan lessons, mentor new teachers, and provide support to all teachers.
- Students are explicitly taught to work collaboratively with peers using visuals; oral and written sentence frames; and group roles. All content area teachers incorporate play-acting and art into their lessons.
- In addition to a robust elective program offering art, history, music, drama, and robotics, students benefit from an after-school program that offers engineering and quilting to students after school five days per week.
- Honors classes are offered in all core subjects and fluent Spanish speakers can access high school Spanish classes.
- Teams work to give common assessments that are analyzed during weekly collaboration to improve instruction and student learning.