



# SCHOOLS TO WATCH – TAKING CENTER STAGE

## MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE



### Frank Wright Middle School



#### Designated in 2007; Re-Designated 2010

Frank Wright Middle School • Imperial Unified School District • Imperial County • Diego Lopez, Principal • 885 North Imperial Avenue, Imperial, CA 92251  
• Tel 760-355-3240, Fax 760-355-3256  
<http://fwms.imperial.k12.ca.us/>

### 2010 School Statistics

(Sources: 2010 API Growth Report; 2010 AYP Report)

Community: Small city  
Enrollment: 883  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: Five 50-minute periods and one 105-minute period

#### Student Demographics

- 75% Hispanic
- 19% White
- 2% African American
- 1% Asian
- 0% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 0% Filipino
- 0% Pacific Islander
- 0% Two or more races
  
- 38% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 25% English Learners

2009 API Base: 804

2010 API Growth: 818 (up 179 points since 1999-00)

2010 AYP: Met 21 of 21 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

- The school was recently recognized in a Standard & Poor's report for being in the top 2 percent of schools in California in closing the achievement gap in language arts and mathematics.
- The school schedule is built on a seven-period day:
  - Sixth grade students receive 155 minutes of language arts daily.
  - Seventh and eighth grade students receive 105 minutes of language arts and English language development daily.
- Every teacher is responsible for student literacy and the development of vocabulary in their subject.
- A collaborative teacher-designed rubric describes what an engaged performance-based classroom should look like.
- All math and language arts teachers receive AB 466 training followed by a year of coaching.
- Math, reading and writing interventions are available throughout the school day.

(Continued)

**Academic Excellence** *(continued)*

- English language arts development and mathematics placement are course-specific, not grade-level specific and determined by teacher input, work samples, and California Standards Test data.
- The art program and technology classes use innovative interdisciplinary activities.
- The use of portfolios to demonstrate student learning is widespread across the school.

**Developmental Responsiveness**

- All students have an adult advocate.
- A strong teaming structure provides opportunities for teachers to connect with students daily.
- Students actively participate in parent-teacher conferences.
- Students are offered an array of electives (art, band, music theory, music appreciation, computers, computer graphics, publications, and Advancement Via Individual Determination [AVID]).
- Parents are partners in the school’s educational process.
- After-school activities include:
  - Seasonal sports for both boys and girls, and
  - A variety of clubs.

**Social Equity**

- There are multiple opportunities for all students to achieve grade-level standards.
- Every student has a team “study buddy” to call when he or she needs to clarify notes.
- There is one full-time counselor and one full-time student-assistance representative who works with students on a referral basis.
- Parents are involved in the school’s positive discipline policies which have significantly reduced suspensions.

**Organizational Support**

- The school has created a culture of common vision and shared decision-making.
- Each team of teachers has a common prep time to facilitate planning, communication, and coordination.
- Teams collaborate and use assessment data to develop intervention programs.
- Coaching (both formal and informal) is a school-wide norm.
- The school schedules interventions daily both during and after school.
- The leadership team members act as instructional coaches for the other members of the staff.
- A distributed leadership team meets once per month, trains one day per month, and coaches other staff members as needed.
- Grades are updated in student planners every two weeks.