



# SCHOOLS TO WATCH – TAKING CENTER STAGE

## MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE



### John F. Kennedy Middle School



#### Designated 2005, Re-Designated 2008

John F. Kennedy Middle School • El Centro Elementary School District • Imperial County • Juan Cruz, Principal  
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<http://www.ecsd.k12.ca.us/education/school/school.php?sectionid=12&>

### 2009-2009 School Statistics

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

Community: Mid-sized city  
Enrollment: 664  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: Sevens; modified Mondays, block Tuesdays and Wednesdays

#### Student Demographics

- 96% Hispanic/Latino
- 2% African American
- 1% Asian
- 1% White
- 0% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 0% Filipino
- 0% Pacific Islander
  
- 83% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 52% English Learners

2008 API Base: 716

2009 API Growth: 706 (up 170 points since 1999-00)

2009 AYP: Met 9 of 17 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

- All teachers provide high quality, student-focused direct instruction using standards-aligned assessment materials.
- A flexible schedule is designed to meet learning needs of students.
- Strong, coordinated supports are in place for students learning English.
- Technology is actively used to facilitate learning.

### Development Responsiveness

- Connections across the curriculum and to students' cultural background and interests abound in every classroom.
- Parent involvement is key; the PULSE Parent Academy: My Child's Road to Success program is designed to give parents the skills they need to support learning.
- Many enrichment activities are offered after school and on selected Saturdays to connect and motivate students.

(Continued)

**Development Responsiveness** *(continued)*

- Physical education classes stress healthy lifestyles and promote exercise; physical education is connected to other disciplines.
- School is the center of the community.
- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens and the Second Step (anti-bullying program) are in place during advisory period.
- After-school enrichment and safety program is in place to ensure a rich and safe environment for students.

**Social Equity**

- The school has created a safe haven for students and has transformed the culture of the local neighborhood.
- Every teacher is committed to ensuring that each student succeeds.
- Discipline referrals have been declining. A strong student-centered culture gets students involved and connected, thus reducing discipline issues.
- Suspensions are down 50 percent.

**Organizational Support**

- The school has created a data-driven school culture.
- The school seeks to identify learning issues early and quickly to provide a means for support and remediation.
- There are strong community and family connections.
- Many of the current teachers are former students from the school.
- Teacher empowerment is everywhere. Many teacher-leaders take positive decision-making roles.
- Teachers coach and support each other; professional development is led by teachers.
- A culture of continual improvement exists at the school.
- A Monday morning in-service provides time for department collaboration and data analysis.
- A reading support teacher provides help with lesson planning, data analysis, and professional development.