



# SCHOOLS TO WATCH – TAKING CENTER STAGE

## MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE



### Kastner Intermediate School



#### Designated in 2008

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### 2009 School Statistics

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

Community: Urban fringe of a large city  
Enrollment: 1,156  
Grade Levels: 7-8  
School Schedule: Six periods with a two-period academic block

#### Student Demographics

- 47% White
- 27% Hispanic/Latino
- 15% Asian
- 6% African American
- 2% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 1% Filipino
- 0% Pacific Islander
  
- 32% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 6% English Learners

2008 Base: 852

2009 Growth: 848 (up 47 points since 2000-01)

2009 AYP: Met 27 of 29 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

- Students have a two-period academic block (English language arts and history/social studies) with the same teacher.
- Math classes have strategic intervention labs and double math periods for eighth grade students.
- Anywhere, Anytime, Anyone Learning (AAAL) laptop program utilizes technology in academic block classrooms to access the Internet, complete assignments, and prepare presentations to show mastery learning of a given standard.
- Lessons are student-centered with standards-based activities.
- There are cross-curricular lessons and projects and vocabulary building in all subjects.
- Writing is emphasized through challenging, project-based lessons—resume, research, narratives, and script; in science, students use the scientific method format.
- Cornell note taking is used schoolwide.
- Academic Seminar is a support class provided during the regular scheduled day.
- Intervention classes are held before and after school and during lunch.

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## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- Academic block classes provide smaller learning communities; the teacher is the student's advocate.
- Individualized School Health Care Plans (ISHP) are developed by the school nurse.
- Mathematics Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) grant provides laptop computers for all math classes.
- Individual learning plans called Teacher Grade Level Expectations (TGLE) are prescriptions for interventions.
- Peer mediators are trained by school psychologist and are pro-active in facilitating conflict-resolution techniques between students.
- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) classes are offered to students.
- There are many age-appropriate co-curricular activities including yearbook, Math Counts, Science Olympiad, cultural dance groups, poster contests, essay contests, athletics, pep and cheer squad, intramurals, color guard, and clubs—Asian, Muslim, Christian, Genesis, and Where Everyone Belongs WEB).
- Students can explore a rich variety of electives which include choral music, instrumental music, drama, art, ceramics, leadership, school service, WEB, mythology, teen living, and journalism.

## **Social Equity**

- Loaner laptops are available to all students.
- WEB students help connect incoming students to a buddy and give lessons to help them in academic life.
- Rewards are given for academics, athletics, and music, and include Students of Success, Student of the Month, Principal's Medallion, and CST (California Standards Test) recognition.
- Rewards for community service include President's Council, Rotary awards, and the Kastner Thunderbird Award.
- Special education students organize the Frisbee Golf Tournament every year.
- The school rules are clear and fair; contracts are made for behavior and academics.

## **Organization**

- The school is divided into small learning communities (clusters); cluster learning directors loop with the students in their clusters.
- A culture of continuous improvement, learning, and support is developed through schoolwide reflective conversations on data collection and analysis.
- The Climate Survey is used as a platform for professional development strategies.
- The leadership team plays the role of learning leaders, monitoring the progress of student learning and mastery of essential standards.
- The principal, cluster directors, and department chairs (named the Academic Senate) meets once every six weeks.
- Teachers meet every Friday for Teacher Professional Growth (TPG) to analyze data and share best practices.
- Partnerships with parents are provided by various committee seats.