



# SCHOOLS TO WATCH – TAKING CENTER STAGE

## MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR’S GUIDE



### R. H. Dana Middle School



#### Designated 2006

R.H. Dana Middle School (RHDMS) • Wiseburn Elementary School District • Los Angeles County • Matthew Wunder, Principal • 13500 Aviation Boulevard, Hawthorne, CA 90250 • Tel (310) 643-6165, Fax (310) 643-0208 • [www.wiseburn.k12.ca.us/Dana/default.htm](http://www.wiseburn.k12.ca.us/Dana/default.htm)

### 2005-2006 School Statistics

(Sources: 2006 API Growth Report; 2006 AYP Report)

Community: Urban fringe of a large city  
Enrollment: 769  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: Six periods; block with three periods every other day

#### Student Demographics

- 55% Hispanic/Latino
- 19% African American
- 17% White
- 3% Asian
- 3% Filipino
- 3% Pacific Islander
- 0% American Indian/Alaska Native
  
- 42% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 3% English Learners

2005 API: 767

2006 API Growth: 768 (up 70 points since 2001-02)

2006 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 provides a balanced, comprehensive, standards-based curriculum.
- A block schedule provides extended learning time in all curricular areas.
- Effective team meetings focus on increasing student achievement and on using data to monitor student progress.
- An inclusive instructional model allows special needs students to access the curriculum in all academic, exploratory, and elective classes.
- A coordinated cross-curricular writing program is in place to help students acquire knowledge and skills addressed in state standards.
- Technology is used to create an online faculty community, engage students, and communicate with families and the community.
- RHDMSI has a hybrid online/face-to-face Spanish class.

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### **Developmental Responsiveness**

- Sixth graders experience a gradual transition guided by core teachers.
- Students enjoy an active voice in school governance issues; a leadership elective provides a way to be involved and connected to daily life on campus.
- Many avenues exist where parents can become collaborative partners in student learning such as Homework Hotline, Family Symposium, Parent Strategies Training, and an e-newsletter.
- Many examples of links between academic disciplines exist.
- Trained Peer Mediators (students) help students solve personal and peer problems.
- A team of students trains and competes in the Los Angeles Marathon.
- All AVID students participate in e-mentoring; students are connected to online mentors who work in aerospace and other local industries.

### **Social Equity**

- A culture of respect and support encourages all students to do their best.
- Strong caring relationships between students and adults create positive connections and involvement.
- The cultural diversity of the student population is valued and appreciated; Multicultural Day is a school celebration.
- A strong inclusion program supports special education students.
- Positive behavior is rewarded in many ways and on many occasions; the school participates in community service and has a reward program in place.

### **Organizational Support**

- A strong connection exists between the community and the school; the school uses e-newsletters and a content-rich Web site to encourage communication.
- A well articulated district-school vision provides direction.
- Strong connections are in place between the school and local businesses, community organizations, feeder schools, and destination high school districts.
- Continued professional development is comprehensive, long-range, and aligned with state standards; RHDMS received a California Math and Science Partnership grant and a Teaching American History grant.
- Data is actively used in team decision-making and class placement.
- The staff is flexible and open to new ideas.
- A school-wide emphasis on the writing process is being put into action.
- The school hosts a night for exploring high school options and preparing for college.
- Faculty uses an intranet, a password-protected Web site to communicate and collaborate.
- Community partners (e.g., Raytheon, Booz Allen Hamilton, Northrop Grumman) provide tutors for AVID and struggling math students; the school utilizes Math Counts (which is sponsored by major corporations including Raytheon and Northrop Grumman) to promote math achievement.
- A private high school located nearby offers advanced math courses (Geometry, Honors Algebra II) to Dana students as well as professional development and shared facilities.