



# SCHOOLS TO WATCH – TAKING CENTER STAGE

## MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE



### Alvarado Intermediate School



### 2010 School Statistics

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

Community: Urban fringe of a large city  
Enrollment: 987  
Grade Levels: 7-8  
School Schedule: Six periods with rotating schedule

#### Student Demographics

- 46% Asian
- 40% Hispanic/Latino
- 4% White
- 7% Filipino
- 2% Two or more races
- 1% African American
- 0% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 0% Pacific Islander
  
- 50% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 19% English Learners

2009 API Base: 853  
2010 API Growth: 859 (up 133 points since 1999-00)  
2010 AYP: Met 16 of 21 criteria

(Visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ar/index.asp> to view this school's data for prior years.)

#### Designated 2004; Re-Designated 2007, 2011

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## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Core subjects follow a common pacing calendar and teachers administer standards-based benchmarks.
- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) strategies, writing across the curriculum, Write for the Future, Thinking Maps, and My Access are used across the curriculum.
- Academic interventions include CHAP (Completing Homework Assistance Program), before/after-school tutoring, skill-based short-term mandatory academies, individual academic improvement plans, and intensive reading/math interventions (Read 180 and Mind Institute).
- A rotating schedule accommodates learning needs by allowing students to attend class at different times throughout the week
- Interdisciplinary teams share daily common preps and meet weekly to analyze data from benchmark tests and reflect on teaching goals and instruction.
- High school prerequisite courses—Algebra II, Geometry, Chinese I, and Spanish I—are offered.
- Interdisciplinary units like the Toy Fair reinforce key concepts across core subjects and provide opportunities for real-life applications.

(Continued)

## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- A summer orientation for incoming seventh graders ensures a smooth transition.
- Both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades are organized into interdisciplinary teams that engage in friendly competition, build camaraderie, and develop a sense of belonging.
- Lunch Buddies and SPEAK (Students Practicing English and Kindness) pair honors students with ELL newcomers to help with conversation skills and adjustment to a new culture.
- Latino Family Resource Center and Asian Pacific Resource Center provide on-campus counseling and parent education workshops.
- The Student Service Center provides guidance counseling for academic and behavior issues.
- Age-appropriate, after-school enrichment activities and clubs include Math Counts, FHA (Future Homemakers of America), HERO (Home Economics-Related Occupation), Drill Team, Dance Team, Drumline, Intramural Competition, Scrap-Booking Club, Needle Arts, Ping-Pong, Essay Contests, Computer Club, Radio Drama, and Career Day.
- Engaging elective choices include: AVID, Yearbook, Strings, Chorus, Marching Band, Music Appreciation, Computer Technology, Clothing, Teen Living/Foods, and Art.
- Schoolwide implementation of Character Counts focuses on character education with monthly awards chosen by teachers for students who exemplify the character traits.
- College Night, College Fair, and the University Field Trip all promote a college-going culture.

## **Social Equity**

- English language learners (ELLs) at all levels receive access to rigorous core content standards through common teams, small class size, primary language support, and SDAIE (specially designed academic instruction in English) strategies.
- Rewards are given on each team for academic, positive behavior, perfect attendance, and athletic achievement.
- ELLs have access to mainstream electives, clubs, and appropriate math classes based on content knowledge, not language ability.
- Translation services are available on site in Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Spanish for parent conferences and communications.
- Social service partnerships provide life-skills training for parents with daily access to the Internet.
- The Student Service Center keeps students on campus and focused on their academic work and is widely used to support parents and students.
- A positive discipline program creates student responsibility; a peer culture of mutual respect prevails throughout school; rules and expectations are clear—student/teacher/parent contracts.

## **Organizational Support**

- Student Achievement Committee (SAC)—department chairs, team leaders, counselors, administration—meets monthly to discuss schoolwide issues in teaching and learning.
- Departments meet monthly to analyze data, review pacing calendars, develop curriculum, and share best practices.
- Shared decision making occurs on an ongoing basis through SAC, staff meetings, team leaders, management meetings, and interdisciplinary team meetings.
- Parent communication tools used are Teleparent, Homework Hotline, Connect Ed, Webblockers, and teacher web sites.