



# SCHOOLS TO WATCH – TAKING CENTER STAGE

## MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE



### Calavera Hills Middle School



#### Designated in 2011

Calavera Hills Middle School • Carlsbad Unified School District • San Diego County • Catina Hancock, Principal • 4104 Tamarack Avenue, Carlsbad, CA 92010 • Tel 760-331-6400, Fax 760-729-3040 • <http://calavera.schoolloop.com/>

### 2010 School Statistics

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

Community: Urban fringe of a large city  
Enrollment: 588  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: Modified Block with Advisory

#### Student Demographics

- 51% White
- 27% Hispanic/Latino
- 7% Asian
- 7% Two or more races
- 4% African American
- 3% Filipino
- 1% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 1% Pacific Islander
  
- 29% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 8% English Learners

2009 Base: 854

2010 Growth: 834 (up 10 points since 2005)

2010 AYP: Met 14 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

- Students use rubrics, standards and exemplars to evaluate their own progress and their peers toward learning goals.
- Six-week progress reports include comments from teachers that relate to the social/emotional components of the school experience.
- Routine analysis of Data Walks monitors the learning environment, student engagement, and students' understanding of learning objectives, as well as the importance of what they are learning.
- Cross-curricular connections in core subjects are promoted through collaboration and common release periods.
- Environmental Science gives sixth grade students experience in working with local agencies, using local preserves, and applying what they have learned in the classroom and field.
- Effective communication skills are taught in all subjects through speaking and writing activities.
- A modified block schedule provides opportunities for students to access extended, intensive periods of instruction.
- Interventions include Homework Academy, peer tutors, before-, during and after-school time with teachers, Zeros Aren't Permitted (ZAP), and access to the Learning Center, which provides small group instruction.

(Continued)

### **Developmental Responsiveness**

- In a daily advisory period, students learn social skills, conflict resolution, bully-prevention, team building, character education, and develop school pride to promote student connectedness.
- School guidance department arranges resources to support students and their families with difficulties with tutoring, counseling, and mental health related services.
- Parent education classes are available along with an on-site parent library.
- Expectations are clearly articulated and the rules are SURE: Safety (S), Understanding (U), Respect (R) and Effort (E).
- Teachers foster curiosity, creativity and the development of social skills using current technology and incorporating the arts across the curriculum.
- Clubs foster curiosity and creativity during lunch and after school: sports, Lego Robotics, Science Olympiad, Environmental Club, meteorology, and video game club.
- Coyote Crossroads program: Student assistants to support students in the autism classroom.
- Coyote Recycle Crew: Students collect and sort the recyclables during lunchtime.
- Coyote Cavern Productions: Students from third to eighth grades work together performing Broadway musicals.
- Where Everybody Belongs (WEB): Eighth graders mentor small groups of sixth graders.

### **Social Equity**

- Students are placed in heterogeneous classes that reflect the demographics of the school.
- Differentiation instruction occurs based on learning style, ability, desired outcome and language proficiency.
- A wide variety of 18 electives is offered: Spanish I and II, Broadcasting, Band, Drama.
- Career Week promotes awareness and exposes students to jobs and skills necessary to work.
- Coyote Compliment program: Recognizes the positive character traits and other successes at weekly recognition assemblies—Coyote Community.
- Community-building events: Haunted Bingo Night, Coyote Roundup Carnival, Coyote Dads Camp Out, Monday Night Football.

### **Organizational Support**

- The leadership team has the responsibility to ensure the goals of the school come to fruition.
- The schoolwide strategies of integration, differentiation, safe/orderly environment, service learning, collaboration, and multicultural awareness are reflective of the complex, multi-dimensional developmental needs of middle grades students.
- Vertical Teams align priority content standards (K-12) with the California High School Exit Exam.
- Teachers are trained to recognize and handle student problems through staff development programs on site.
- Partnerships with the community allow free dental care, glasses, and other health-related needs for the families.
- Coyote Speak is a forum that gives voice to parents.
- Coyote Watch program gives parents and other caring adults the opportunity to help maintain a highly energized yet peaceful atmosphere during lunchtime.