



SCHOOLS TO WATCH – TAKING CENTER STAGE

MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE



La Paz Intermediate School



Designated in 2011

La Paz Intermediate School • Saddleback Valley Unified School District • Orange County • Jean Carroll, Principal • 25151 Pradera Drive, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • Tel 949-830-1720, Fax 949-830-3320 • http://www.svusd.k12.ca.us/schools/la_paz/

2010 School Statistics

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

Community: Mid-sized city
Enrollment: 1,084
Grade Levels: 7-8
School Schedule: Six-periods daily with homeroom

Student Demographics

- 65% White
- 20% Hispanic/Latino
- 8% Asian
- 3% Filipino
- 2% African American
- 1% Pacific Islander
- 0% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 0% Two or more races

- 13% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 7% English Learners

2009 Base: 885

2010 Growth: 891 (up 110 points since 1999)

2010 AYP: Met 20 of 25 criteria

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

Academic Excellence

- The academic culture is steeped in the tenets of *Taking Center Stage—Act II*.
- Teachers work collaboratively through Interdisciplinary teaming at the site and district level, developing SMART goals, common assessments, and standards-based curriculum maps that drive instruction.
- Instructional strategies are data-driven, research-based, and differentiated, which include AVID strategies, think-pair-share, academic word walls, interactive bulletin board, and thinking maps.
- Research, reading, writing and speaking are emphasized across the curriculum. = with essential questions bring real-world connections to the forefront.
- Project- and community-based learning permeates the school culture.
- Teachers know student mastery by pre-testing, checking for understanding, learning styles, exit tickets, student reflection, portfolios, student multi-media projects and trimester benchmark tests.
- Targeted Intervention includes fix-it tickets, peer tutoring, small group re-teaching, additional practice and extended learning time before, during and after school.
- Rubrics and standards-based scoring guides are provided as guidelines for academic achievement.

(Continued)

Developmental Responsiveness

- Students are grouped into heterogeneous communities that form bonds by establishing its own rewards and recognition, provides support systems for its struggling students, and designs its own community t-shirt.
- Students gain a sense of belonging through Where Everybody Belongs (WEB), Positive Behavioral Support (PBS), peer mediation, ASB and the classroom greeter program.
- Peer mediators are trained to reach positive solutions for both parties.
- Students sit on the PBS and AVID teams.
- Differentiated instruction is based on readiness, interest, and learning styles of each students.
- Wide variety of electives include music, drama, art, video productions, ASB, Yearbook, AVID and Spanish; the two-year sequenced elective wheel includes Oceanography, Marine Biology, Science and Technology, Art of Writing, Journalism, Careers, Digital Photography, Clay Animation, and Art—Ceramics, Painting, Drawing, Cultural Art.
- The assistant principal, counselor and opportunities clerk form a team to address academic and behavioral concerns on multiple levels.
- The communities using the Minor Incident Report handle the vast majority of student concerns.

Social Equity

- Special education students are included in boyth academic and elective classes.
- English learners are clustered in one community with support systems and development curriculum.
- The “La Paz Way” trains students to the school’s routines and procedures.
- “La Pazitives” rewards students as a positive reinforcement of the schools motto, Respect, Responsibility, and Readiness with Integrity.
- Students use technology across curricular areas.
- PBS team reviews disciplinary data and implements the positive behavior program by setting expectations, communication the expectations, and rewarding positive behavior at the individual, classroom and school level.
- The consistency and fairness of rules is reinforced through student training days and regular meetings of the PBS team.

Organizational Support

- Leadership is distributed across teams of teachers, classified staff, parents and students.
- Leadership teams read and discuss key educational books seeking ways to improve practices.
- Dufour’s Professional Learning Community is used as a foundational model.
- Research, best practices, data, and reflection drive instructional practices.
- Monday Early Release Days for are used for collaboration.
- All staff continually reflect on how things can be improved by research, best practices, and data; debriefing comes from “Praise and Polish” format.
- SMART goals are developed from the analysis of STAR test results.
- Parents have many avenues to support programs and school goals.