



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# NEWS RELEASE

**JACK O'CONNELL**  
State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

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## **STATE SCHOOLS CHIEF JACK O'CONNELL CONGRATULATES CALIFORNIA'S 2009 "SCHOOLS TO WATCH-TAKING CENTER STAGE" MODEL SCHOOLS**

SACRAMENTO — State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell today recognized three high-performing California schools—two middle schools and, for the first time, a K-8 school—for meeting the distinctive needs of their middle grades students, building a strong record of student achievement, and significantly narrowing the achievement gap.

"I am proud to name Clark Intermediate School, Dartmouth Middle School, and Tinchler Preparatory School as California's 2009 Schools To Watch-Taking Center Stage model schools," O'Connell said. "Congratulations to all the students, their teachers and administrators, and the parents who are working hard to make these schools examples of educational excellence."

Specifically, the schools were recognized for their success in four areas: implementing best practices focused on academic achievement; responding to the developmental needs of young adolescents; offering a fair and equitable education for all students; and instituting organizational processes and procedures that foster and sustain academic growth.

Clark Intermediate School is in the Clovis Unified School District in Fresno County. The school's overall Academic Performance Index (API) score rose 42 points during the last three years. The API is the state's accountability model. Of Clark's 1,400 student population, 29 percent is Latino. This subgroup of students showed marked gains and narrowed the achievement gap between it and higher performing students by 33 points. Also, almost half of the school's student population is designated as socioeconomically disadvantaged. This subgroup raised its API score by 47 points in the same time period. Clark joins two other middle schools in the same district as

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School to Watch—Taking Center Stage model schools. The principal is Scott Steele, who can be reached at 559-327-1445.

Dartmouth Middle School is in the Union School District in Santa Clara County. Dartmouth's school-wide API score rose 40 points over the past three years. Of the school's nearly 800 students, 22 percent is Latino. This subgroup narrowed the achievement gap by 19 points. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students make up 20 percent of the student population. This subgroup raised its scores by 70 points. The principal is Carole Carlson, who can be reached at 408-264-9332.

Tincher Preparatory School is in the Long Beach Unified School District in Los Angeles County. Tincher Preparatory is the first K-8 school recognized as a Schools To Watch—Taking Center Stage model school in California. The API score rose 46 points school wide in the past three years. The African American subgroup narrowed the achievement gap by 88 points, and Latinos by 26 points. Tincher is a very diverse school with more than 50 percent of its 1,139 students designated as socioeconomically disadvantaged. This subgroup has improved by 53 points over the same time period and its API score stands at 795. California sets a statewide target of 800 on the API. Tincher has a distinct and vibrant middle grades program, with 429 students enrolled in grades six, seven, and eight. The principal is Bill Vogel, who can be reached at 562-493-2636.

The three schools named today join 21 others selected in previous cycles since 2003 as Schools To Watch—Taking Center Stage designees. They will be formally recognized at the California League of Middle Schools annual conference in San Diego, March 13-15, 2009. The designees will have their first opportunity to showcase their accomplishments and network with other middle grades educators from around the state at the conference.

In order to be named a Schools To Watch—Taking Center Stage designee, the schools must have had a 2007 Base API of at least 730, met all API growth targets for the previous three years, and not be state monitored or in Program Improvement. For K-8 schools, a 2007 Base API score must be at least 768. The schools also conducted an extensive self-study, available through the California League of Middle Schools Web

site, and completed a narrative application. Each site selected for a visitation was reviewed by a team of middle grades experts during December 2008.

The process also gauged each applicant's understanding and implementation of the 12 recommendations that form the basis of Taking Center Stage—Act II: Ensuring Success and Closing the Achievement Gap for All of California's Middle Grades Students program. Taking Center Stage—Act II is an innovative Web-based project built by, and for, middle grades educators. Selected schools must also be high-performing middle school as defined by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. California is one of 17 states working with the National Forum to designate and promote model middle schools throughout the country.

STW–TCS is a collaborative effort of 12 organizations that form the California Middle Grades Alliance. The organizations includes AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination); the Middle Grades Council of the Association of California School Administrators; the Middle and High School Improvement Office of the California Department of Education; the California League of Middle Schools; the California Middle Grades Partnership Network; the California School Boards Association; the California Schools to Watch–Taking Center Stage Program; the California State Parent Teacher Association; the California Teachers Association; the Secondary Subcommittee of the Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee of the California County Superintendents Education Services Association; GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs); and United Way of Greater Los Angeles.

For more information about the Schools To Watch–Taking Center Stage model school program, please visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gm/stw.asp>.

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