



# SCHOOLS TO WATCH – TAKING CENTER STAGE

## MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE



### Vista Verde Middle School



#### Re-Designated II in 2017

Vista Verde Middle School • Val Verde Unified School District • Orange County • Esperanza Arce • 25777  
Krameria Street, Moreno Valley, CA 92551 •  
Tel 951-490-4690, Fax 951-490-4695 •  
<http://vistaverde.valverde.edu/>

### 2016 School Statistics

(Source: 2016 API Growth Report)

Community: Suburban  
Enrollment: 917  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: Six-period day; 54-min. classes; homeroom, and Wednesday Advisory

#### Student Demographics

- 56% Hispanic/Latino
- 26% African American
- 8% White
- 4% Filipino
- 2% Asian
- .3% Pacific Islander
- 3.5% Two or more races
- 0.6% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 80% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 6% English Learners

2011 API Growth: 806

2012 API Growth: 826

2013 API Growth: 830

Spring 2017: ELA-Green

Spring 2017: Math-Yellow

(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

- ALL Students engage in Cross-Curricular STEAM PBLs once per semester that focus on specific themes and engage students in DEEPER LEARNING.
- STEAM Teams collaborate and prepare Cross-Curricular lessons by following “THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS GUIDE” to engage students in deeper learning.
- There is a clear focus school-wide on STEAM Instruction which follows 7 KEY ESSENTIALS.
- Teachers use rigorous standards-based education process that involve Common Core Standards, NGSS, Engineering by Design Process, and Problem-Based Learning.
- WICOR, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, Essential Question, Content Objective, Language Objective, and Checking for Understanding are the instructional focus in every class.
- The “BIG 5” Strategies are rotated every week which include FNT, CfU, TPS/GS, SLD, and QW.
- Teacher meet in their PLCs and use the collaborative lesson plan which include the Essential Skills Guide.
- Moving from “interventions” toward “first best practices,” teachers use AVID strategies, reciprocal teaching, hands-on learning through experimentation, re-enactment and multimedia presentations.
- Teachers focus on checking for understanding and modifying instruction to ensure learning.
- Students assess their learning through student response systems (technology), Cornell notes, and rubrics.
- GATE, STEAM, AVID, Jr. Scholars, Universal STEAM, and college preparation classes offer opportunities for extended learning.
- An instructional coach help teachers develop SMART goals and focus instruction based on data.
- Wednesday and Monday afternoons are used for staff development and analyzing assessment data.
- Teachers have common prep periods and collaborate throughout the week on different areas.

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## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- At the beginning of every semester, VVMS engages all students in a comprehensive SKILLS/COLLEGE Day and 2 full college weeks (Oct. and March).
- VVMS PRIDE Program is a comprehensive intervention/PBIS program that addresses behavior and academic deficiencies.
- Teachers use three levels in Response to Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) and MTSS as a school: universal screening of all students, development of academic and/or behavioral concerns, and services/resources are matched to student needs.
- There are clear school-wide expectations and all students work towards being on “TASK”: Trustworthy, Accountable, Safe, and Kind. The PBIS focus!
- There are four sport seasons that include cross country, volleyball, flag football, soccer, and basketball.
- Teachers offer “Beyond the Classroom” STEAM classes after school such as, Newsletter Club, leatherworking, edible arrangements, video production, dissection, DJing, Engineering, Robotics, Coding, and more!
- Counselors offer mentoring program for various groups of students, peer mediation for conflict resolution, and peer tutoring.
- Every Wednesday, students engage in Bullying Prevention Lessons and activities during Advisory.
- Once per semester, there is a school-wide Rally highlighting VAPA and sports programs.
- Associated Student Body presents the school’s monthly activity report to the board of education.
- Climate and Culture Walkthroughs take place throughout the year in collaboration with the district’s PBIS committee.
- All teachers engage in the 10x2 model, Give’em Five, and Culturally Responsive Teaching throughout the year.
- The VVMS PLUS (Peer Leaders Uniting Students) program conduct forums throughout the year.

## **Social Equity**

- English learners, special education students and gifted and honor students participate in heterogeneous classes with high academic and behavioral expectations.
- Students have access to electives that include Band, Marching Band, Spanish, STEAM, AVID, Art and Digital Art, PLUS, ASB, and Yearbook.
- Special education students are mainstreamed through the collaborative teaching model.
- Students receive support and mentoring from a dedicated AVID counselor and college preparatory and AVID teachers.
- Teachers use a wide variety of tools to maximize student learning: addressing learning styles, differentiated instruction, and the use of technology.
- Interest-based classes include computers, band, art and AVID.
- Focus on the elements of humanity and civility is done through thematic lessons, schoolwide positive behavior support, rewards systems.
- With city support and the THINK Together Program, students are offered after-school tutoring, STEM enrichment, and extended day care for the parents who work outside the community.
- Peer mediation and counseling interventions keep suspensions low.
- Our PBIS Database allows teachers to collaborate and document all interventions for our students. Data from this database allows site leadership to target and provide focused School-Wide Interventions.
- Special Education students are part of the Universal STEAM program.
- All students have access to integrated and designated STEAM Instruction through school-wide Cross-Curricular PBLs.
- Every program (AVID, Jr. Scholars, ELD, Special Education, and GATE) attend STEM-based field trips.

## **Organizational Support**

- Site leadership team works with administrative team to reach the shared vision.
- Wednesday and Monday afternoons are dedicated for staff development, data analysis, team meetings, department meetings, and vertical and horizontal articulation.
- Teachers in the same and cross-curricular subject have common prep periods for continual collaboration.
- Schoolwide focus is on professional development in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and cross-curricular collaboration.
- Collaborative Coaching and Learning includes classroom visitations, peer observations/feedbacks, and demonstration lessons.
- Impact Substitute Teacher lends time for teacher-coach collaboration.
- Vertical/horizontal articulation between elementary and middle schools is accomplished through principal clusters and instructional coach clusters.
- Through district-wide data management system, teachers collect and analyze data as the basis for instructional decisions.
- Mentoring programs for teachers and administrators pair new with experienced educators.
- Student, staff, and parent surveys inform decision-making and governance to support school improvement.
- Staff approach is looking into the mirror to solve problems rather than looking out the window for answers.
- Action Walks happen often where the leadership team visits different classrooms and focuses on instructional strategies and calibrates the qualitative data.
- Cluster Action Walks happen several times in the year where middle school principals visit each middle school to calibrate and collaborate on best practices.
- WICOR and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills are the main instructional focus throughout the campus.