



CALIFORNIA SCHOOL TO WATCH

VISITOR'S GUIDE



Union Middle School



Designated in 2013, Re-designated 2016

Union Middle School • Union Elementary School District •
Santa Clara County • Todd Feinberg, Principal • 2130 Los
Gatos Almaden Road, San Jose, CA 95124 • Tel (408)
371-0366, Fax (408) 371-1217 •
<http://www.unionms.unionsd.org>

2016 School Statistics

(Sources: CDE Enrollment report 2015)

Community: Suburb, Large City
Enrollment: 1004
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Six periods with a flexible
"Enrichment" period

Student Demographics:

62% White
5% Two or More Races
16% Hispanic
14% Asian
1% Filipino
1% African American
<1% American Indian/Alaska Native
<1% Pacific Islander

9% Free/Reduced Lunch
3% English Learners

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- Intervention on a Page (IoAP): Designed to provide all adults working with a student the necessary information in an easy-to-read confidential page, it includes the strengths, needs, goals, accommodations, testing information, etc.
- Collaborative Approach to Service: Involves melding all reform efforts into one streamlined vision of diagnostics, instruction, and support;
- Teachers and paraprofessionals provide meaningful, timely feedback on daily and long-term assignments, allowing students to reflect and revise their work as necessary;
- Learning goals are on the white board and announced verbally to students at the beginning of the lesson;
- Rigorous instruction and involved activities demonstrate a variety of educational techniques: group projects are broken down and scaffolded for all students, science classes weekly laboratory experiments, students create iMovie to show their work in ELA, and after-school Mouse Squad students work with CreaTV (www.creatvsj.org) to practice production and video creation.
- Collaboration with the destination high school prompts standardization and duplication of the end of year tests so that eighth grade students take the same final as their high school counterparts;
- Implemented a Chromebook 1:1 Take Home program so that every 6th and 7th grader is provided a Chromebook for their exclusive use during the school day and at home.
- Currently ranked a 10/10 on GreatSchools.org due to comparable rankings and parent satisfaction.

Developmental Responsiveness

- U-Turn Behavior Program: Strengths-based, positive behavioral intervention program serving students who are being compromised by their choices and behavior—consists of three “tiers” wherein students have the opportunity to earn more independence—staffed by mental health therapist and a behavior support provider.
- THRIVE Elective: Special elective for students whose organization, healthy choices, and social emotional well being have proven to be a challenge. Based around the “40 Developmental Assets” for teens, students engage in success-building strategies;
- Meeting in a Memo: A short, half page weekly update sent digitally every Wednesday at Staff Collaboration, provides details on upcoming special schedules and events that are of interest to students;
- The school has contracted with a counseling service (Almaden Valley Counseling Services) for additional support. Also students can be referred for free counseling sessions.
- Bridge Builders is an after-school program that offers a two-hour block of mentoring by local high school and college students;
- Champions offered after school from 3 pm to 6 pm five days a week for students to focus on academic and social skills.
- A wide variety of electives include Ceramics, Art, Jazz Band, Symphonic Band, Service Learning, Leadership, Intro to Leadership, Environmental Studies, Technology, Spanish, Digital Journalism, Project Lead The Way, Minecraft, Study Skills, Writer's Workshop, Debate, MouseSquad, Journal Junkies, and Design Thinking.

Social Equity

- Collaborative Courses: At each grade level, special education/select 504 students are fully mainstreamed in these courses that guarantee an RSP specialist or instructional aide to support;
- Unique standards-based semester-long course for *all* students to have access to hands-on, active learning science and social studies instruction even when scheduled for many intervention classes;
- Homework Center is staffed by a credentialed teacher and at least two high school tutors Monday through Thursdays for all students;
- Flexible schedule allows students to promote from intensive to collaborative throughout the year;
- Mathematics Intervention and Writing Intervention are offered as elective choices for students needing extra academic support;
- Math Clinic before school for 30 minutes two times a week is offered to all students;
- ELA Clinic before school for 30 minutes two times a week is offered to all students;
- Parents are welcome on campus and dozens are seen having lunch with their child, presenting Art vistas in social studies classrooms, or presenting during the parent-led mPower presentations, holding difficult conversations around Project Cornerstone’s 41 developmental assets for teenagers;
- Students are recognized throughout the year: weekly “positive referrals” (labeled “Kudos!”) for caught being good, student of the month by team teachers, honor roll certificates for good grades.
- Added an additional annual "Tiger Pride" event (called Pawsitive Breakfast) where staff members select one student to recognize for their first semester efforts and encourage to continue their growth for the remainder of the school year.

Organizational Support

- Vertically, teachers collaborate by subject during shared prep periods; horizontally, teachers collaborate weekly during Wednesday late-start time in their cross-curricular teams (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) who serve the same students;
- Collaboration and professional development are provided on a rotating basis on Mondays;
- Team Leaders meet and serve as the “think tank” on school and student issues on Tuesday mornings;
- Administrative Leadership Team meetings to discuss calendar, student concerns, staff issues and requests on Fridays;
- The district created and implemented Union University, a series of after-school courses tied to district initiative—best teaching practices.