



CALIFORNIA SCHOOL TO WATCH VISITOR'S GUIDE



Alondra Middle School



Designated in 2014

Alondra Middle School • Paramount Unified School District •
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2016 - 2017 School Statistics

(Sources: 2009 -2013 API Growth Report; CDE)

Community: Paramount, Suburban (Los Angeles)
Enrollment: 966
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Traditional Calendar

Student Demographics:

- 88% Hispanic
- 1% White
- 6% African American
- 0% American Indian
- 1% Filipino
- 1% Asian
- 2% Pacific Islander
- 98% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 24% English Learners
- 15% Students with Disabilities

2009 Base API: 729 2013 Final API: 823
(gain of 94 points over a 4 year span)

Statewide Rank of 6
Similar Schools Rank of 10

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- During collaboration and Structured Teacher Planning Time (STPT) teachers are provided quality professional development regarding site and district initiatives to keep us current and further our learning.
- Students are held accountable to high academic standards in all content areas in preparation for college and career readiness.
- Content area teams collaboratively plan grade level expectations and prepare engaging lessons which include district initiatives that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards.
- The use of common instructional strategies (Thinking Maps, Close Reads, Text Dependent Questions, Inquiry, Accountable Talk, SMPs, and the ACE strategy) provide scaffolds and structures that support a deeper understanding.
- The implementation of student-centered classrooms has enabled teachers to become facilitators that promote students to be independent and collaborative thinkers.

Academic Excellence *(continued)*

- Teachers consistently engage in the cycle of inquiry focusing on data and best practices to ensure that students are motivated to learn and achieve at the highest level.
- Through the use of a co-teaching model, both resource teachers and instructional coaches push in and team teach with general education teachers to maximize the support for targeted students.
- Students are taught how to set goals, monitor their progress, and take ownership of their learning.
- Content area teams have restructured their assessments to include selected response questions, constructed responses, and end of unit performance tasks which are aligned to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).
- Students have learned how to self-assess using tools such as portfolios, rubrics, peer editing, and error analysis.

Developmental Responsiveness

- Classroom environments are extremely structured and organized, yet inviting and nurturing.
- The Safe and Civil program is designed to increase student connectedness through positive relationships and individual support.
 - The use of CHAMPS procedures helps establish clear academic and behavioral expectations in all classrooms.
 - Incorporating the 3:1 ratio of interaction model (three positive interactions for every one redirection) assists in preventing classroom disruptions and establishing a positive learning environment.
 - The Safe and Civil reporting system also gives students an avenue in which they can obtain assistance for themselves or their peers (in person or anonymously).
 - Administration, teachers, and support staff are visible greeting students at the front gate every morning and provide a friendly presence during non-instructional time so students feel comfortable in approaching all staff.
- Our PLC leaders meet to discuss ways to bring about instructional shifts needed to be successful with the Common Core State Standards.
- Teachers deliver well-planned lessons that integrate activities using technology based applications, visual representations, and organizational tools (notebooks) to perk student interest.
- By housing students in blocked classes, teachers are able to create trusting relationships, build learning communities, offer opportunities for accelerated students, and provide extra time and support for students when needed.
- Eighth grade students utilize an A-G progress report which brings awareness to promotion readiness, high school graduation requirements, and future educational pathways.
- Both RSP teachers pull small groups into the Learning Center for additional math support on a weekly basis.

Developmental Responsiveness *(continued)*

- Students also benefit from a wide range of extracurricular activities that foster social skills and team building such as Project Lead The Way, AVID, MESA, athletics, band/orchestra, and student council.
- Students also have the opportunity to access the library during lunch to work on projects, share books, and/or socialize through games.
- Our behavior mentoring program is a voluntary program that allows students to connect with a caring adult, learn new strategies to curb certain behaviors, engage in small group discussions, and uses weekly grade checks to track behavior and academic progress.
- Both counselors also deliver guidance lessons to each grade level, which include lessons on bullying prevention, cyber bullying, conflict resolution, coping skills, and sexual harassment.
- Alondra takes pride in providing bi-monthly parent education workshops which are based on parent requests.
 - Some of the topics include Common Core, SBAC testing, drug/alcohol prevention, diabetes, bullying awareness, and Mental Health resources.
 - We also train our parents on how to use ParentVUE which is an online program designed to inform parents of their child's class performance, attendance, report cards, and test scores.

Social Equity

- Support staff analyzes schoolwide data and strategically places all students in appropriate courses based on their individual behavior and academic needs.
- Support staff utilizes the master schedule to capitalize on teachers' strengths, which in turn, provides flexibility to meet specific instructional needs.
- Knowing our students helps to formulate a useful seating chart that highlights academic needs/strengths and strategically places students where they are academically challenged.
 - Teachers are aware of individual needs and advocate for students who need additional support by seeking assistance from the Student Success Team (SST).
- Throughout each lesson, teachers routinely check for student understanding by using leveled questioning and active participation strategies in order to master a challenging curriculum.
- All departments continue to modify common assessments and adjust pacing to accommodate diverse needs and the rigorous demands of Common Core.
- During collaboration and Structured Teaching Planning Time, teachers discuss learning outcomes, organize content, and plan lessons using various strategies which address multiple learning modalities.
- Technology has also enhanced our instruction in all departments and has provided students with an alternative method of researching and analyzing information.
- Teachers incorporate lessons that celebrate the cultural diversity found within the school and its community.

Social Equity *(continued)*

- In our special education department, teachers collaborate and decide which students have the ability to be mainstreamed or blended and embed life skills into daily curriculum for students on a non-diploma track.
- Alondra strives to reinforce both the demonstration of Safe and Civil behaviors and academic achievement throughout the year.
 - We host monthly Principal’s Awards Breakfast to recognize academic, citizenship, and improved student effort.
 - During our Semester Awards Assemblies, we celebrate all Honor Roll recipients, Safe and Civil champions, and students with perfect attendance.
 - Each morning we start the day with inspiring Safe & Civil announcements and every Friday individual students and staff members are recognized for their positive contributions.
 - School-wide incentives such as dolphin dollars, free dress, and fast passes are utilized both in and out of the classroom to inspire positive behaviors.
 - Expectation assemblies are scheduled throughout the year where support staff model and review Safe and Civil behaviors.
- Our doors are always open as we want our community to feel included by giving them a voice in the decision making processes of the school through involvement in PTSA, ELAC, School Site Council, and the district’s DELAC program.

Organizational Support

- Common Vision: Alondra Middle School is focused on the success and growth of each child by cultivating a learning community rooted in a challenging academic curriculum and supported by a positive, respectful, and nurturing environment.
- School-wide and department goals are set and then communicated to all certificated and classified employees, parents through parent involvement meetings, as well as to students during our expectation assemblies.
- Tracking our progress and celebrating small improvements remains a vital component in achieving our desired results.
- Alondra has designed strong leadership teams such as Safe and Civil, Dolphin Leadership, CADT, and an Instructional Leadership Team to nurture and support the school’s culture and focus areas.
 - Team leaders are responsible for creating collaboration agendas, facilitating meetings, recording minutes, and submitting team commitments to administration for review.
- At the district and site level, quality professional development opportunities are continually offered to increase student achievement and provide a common language across disciplines.
- Alondra provides support and opportunities for staff to view demonstrations, engage in peer coaching, and witness new initiatives in practice during structured learning walks.
 - District cohort visitations are utilized to observe other middle schools and high school campuses.
 - In our efforts to build coherence, we continue to partner with our surrounding schools to increase our horizontal and vertical articulation.

Organizational Support (*continued*)

- Teachers use OARS to analyze and evaluate their assessment data to make informed decisions that drive their instruction.
- Paramount Unified School District partners with various colleges and universities to recruit and mentor new teachers.
 - The district provides support through an induction program called Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA).