



KERN COUNTY INNOVATIVE & IMPACTFUL SCHOOLS
Academics | Engagement | College & Career Readiness

Kern County Innovative & Impactful Schools (I²S) is a county wide program implemented by Kern County Superintendent of Schools to acknowledge schools who are high-performing and improving student outcomes based on these three pillars of success.

Norris Middle School

**Award based on 2019 CAASPP ELA and Math
Based upon 3-year average**

ELA: 24 points above Distance from Standard

Math: 9.1 points above Distance from Standard

Norris Union School District

Kern County

Principal: Ryan Carr

6990 Calloway Dr., Bakersfield, 93312

661.387.7060

Website: <https://nms.norris.k12.ca.us>

Date: Sept. 28, 2020

Email: ryan.carr@norris.k12.ca.us



“Our success as an educational institution is measured primarily by the success and achievement of our students.”

School Profile

Norris Middle School has roots in the community dating back to 1880. The well-established school supports 47 teachers and ensures classroom sizes in English and math are under 30 students. In addition to classroom teachers, the support staff includes: a counselor, librarian, psychologist, nurse, speech pathologist, and two resource specialists. The electives offered include: art, band, film production, fitness, introduction to theatre, sports buffet, and theatre performance. Norris Middle School has developed a culture of parental involvement and positive school culture through the opportunities for community involvement. Norris Middle School pride is extended to families through invitations for participation, involvement, and providing tips to ‘ensure the success of your child’.

School Demographics

The ethnicity of the 982 students of Norris Middle School is as follows: 55.2% White and 31.4% Hispanic/Latino. The additional student groups from this population include: 1.9% English Learners, 23% Students with Disabilities, and 25.9% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students.

Self-Identified Contributing Factors

- A school wide focus on *Impact Teams* ensures staff is trained and a systemic involvement is ubiquitous from kindergarten through the middle school:
 - The roll out of [Impact Teams](#) included a pilot project with a few teams and outside consultants which supported implementation over a 3-year period. This occurred through a pilot group of teachers from collaborating districts working together to write the success criteria and unwrap the standards to find the gift of tasks for student success, as learned from the *Impact Team* consultants.
 - All teachers are trained in *Impact Teams*. New teachers go through a “crash course” with sustainable support from colleagues.
 - Evidence of the tenets of *Impact Teams* were a focus during ‘evidence walks’.
 - Administrators and individual departments were also trained in specific programs (i.e., special education and after school program).
 - Intensive training continued throughout the year with Barb Pitchford, author of “*Leading Impact Teams*”.
 - A calibration of tiered intervention from grade level to grade level improved the success of the process.
 - Student responsibility/ownership included peer-to-peer feedback using success criteria. Students would reflect on their work and then help a teammate reflect on their work.

- Positive School Culture:
 - Student clubs engage students in activities that are aligned with PBIS and school pride.

- Impact Teams, also known as Professional Learning Communities, are based upon six to eight week learning cycle and utilizes the Cycle of Inquiry (See [Impact Team Notes](#)):
 - Common prep period is used daily for collaboration through teacher planning and Impact Teams.
 - Every three weeks, the late start time is designated for articulation between departments within the Impact Teams.
 - Teachers (department/grade) select a common assessment or common assignment reflective of school focus through *Impact Teams*.
 - Teachers utilize a common rubric created through *Leading Impact Teams*.
 - Teachers select student examples of high, medium, low or a 1-4 rating. This begins at the elementary schools in Norris School District.
 - Teachers use the ‘Unpacking for Success’ template to research and discuss implementation of :

- Standards
- Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and rationale
- Learning progression
- Relevance and big idea
- [Success criteria](#)
- Intervention is accomplished through differentiation within the classroom. When the success criteria is set and students are missing the concepts to move to the next level of success, the adults ask ‘What’s missing?’ From there, a plan is developed with the parents on how to get to the next level of success.
- The level rating is as follows: Level 4 is GATE and Level 1 is intervention.
- 6th Grade Articulation: Because Norris School District is a K-8, practices that began in the elementary grades are continued into the middle school. This includes the writing and math rubrics. Students look for the ‘success criteria’ in every detail, whether it be the writing rubric, ASB meetings, or math project.
- The master schedule includes 2 periods for ELA and 1 period for math.
- The method for the cycle of inquiry includes setting the success criteria for the assignment/task, assessment, reteach/refocus, and repeat.
- The *Assessment Calendar* includes a teacher created Interim Assessment Block (IAB) from the pacing calendar.
- Professional development is centered on *Impact Teams*. All other professional development was not approved for attendance by the district. This prevented fragmentation of focus.