

## **School Culture-Creating Sophisticated Learners**

### **Signature Practice-Narrative**

#### **1. Rationale/Basis of the Practice**

Frank Wright Middle School's culture consists of an inviting and engaging school climate that allows students to explore a variety of classes and skills while focusing on maintaining a rigorous learning environment. In addition to creating a strong learning environment, our school community centers on creating a well rounded individual that is equipped to make the transition from middle school to high school. In an attempt to develop sophisticated learners, the staff offers a variety of programs, available through our elective course options, that allow students to widen their scope of interests. For students that are in need of additional academic assistance, the campus offers a range of intervention classes to mainstream students back in to the CORE class schedule.

The teachers and staff at Frank Wright Middle School work with our students academic and social needs in mind. Students are placed with teachers that are on the same team and share the same prep. This allows teachers to come together to discuss student needs and concerns and meet together with parents during the common prep period to create an individualized plan for success for each of our struggling students.

Parents input and support is very important to the success of our students. Through various volunteer opportunities and forms of communication, our students and staff benefit tremendously from the support of parents and community members.

To paraphrase goal three of our district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), as a district we are committed to providing students with an educational experience in which students receive a variety of courses taught by fully credentialed teachers. Students at Frank Wright receive this educational experience and as a staff, we are always looking for services that will add value to the Frank Wright experience and contribute to developing sophisticated learners.

#### **2. Description of the Practice**

##### **Academically**

The basis for the success of Frank Wright Middle School students continues to be the philosophy of placing students in the center of teaching and learning. We believe proper placement of students is an essential component for student success. Counselors and teachers make modifications as needed to students' schedule to meet their needs.

All students have a double block for language arts classes. This allows students to master skills they will apply in all content areas. For example, all teachers integrate writing into their lessons. Students are expected to meet the highest academic standards and this is a responsibility they accept willingly. Our students are very competitive in nature and they strive diligently to maintain our status as a high performing, high impact middle school. The school's curricular offerings are rigorous and work is demanding. Students who transfer from other schools notice the difference immediately and their parents frequently advise us of this fact. The high academic achievements at Frank Wright Middle School are evident at our Semester Academic Award Ceremony. A high percentage of our students receive the Honor Society Award and Honor Roll Award. Students who show the six pillars of success (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship) are recognized during the ceremony. At our year-end awards night, students are recognized for their continued excellence earning the Presidential, Perfect Attendance, and Departmental Awards.

Students are offered advanced classes in language arts and mathematics. Students in the advanced mathematics classes have the opportunity to follow a four year high school plan to enroll in calculus as a senior. The classes we offer at Frank Wright Middle School have a clear focus to help students succeed in higher education. To achieve this goal, teachers in the Art, Band and Mathematics department are involved in vertical articulation with high school teachers. Our language arts teachers have high expectations for students to become lifelong readers. Students have an individualized Accelerated Reader goal based on their reading level. Reading is essential to all classes and, therefore, all teachers support the students in reaching their semester reading goal. All students are given time to read in school and are expected to read at home. As students transition to the high school, they have a clear understanding of expectations.

Our School's mission is for all students to reach their highest potential and master core classes. To achieve this goal, we offer academic support classes for all students who have not mastered at grade-level standards. At FWMS we have in place an easy to transition English Learner Program that offers students the support they need to be successful and challenges them at the same time. Students in these classes receive individualized instruction due to the class size. We have a high transition rate from English support classes to CORE. These classes are set up to allow students to make fluid transitions throughout the year as their needs and skills develop. Due to our high transition rate these students are better prepared to be successful at the high school than they were before.

Because FWMS teachers work in academic, cross curricular teams, important concepts across the disciplines are reinforced. Students are reminded that concepts learned in one area re-appear in other areas. Teachers are well versed in linking the concepts together to provide a deeper understanding of the subject matter. For example, when science teachers cover pure substances, compounds and elements, they make references to historical figures which students have been exposed to in social studies. The social studies teachers reinforce this concept by touching on the development of the atomic theory. In addition, working in teams allows the teachers to be aware of specific students, academic and personal, needs being met in all classes. Teachers in the team have the same prep period and as needed during this time they meet to discuss students needs, plan or participate in Student Service Team Meetings. Counselors set up SST meetings with the team, student, parent and counselor to create a plan for success for the child. These meetings are conducted as soon as someone notices a student needs extra support. Teachers understand students master skills at different times and some may need extra time or support, so teachers are available for tutoring before school, during lunch, or after school depending on the teachers' schedule.

In an effort for our students to become sophisticated learners, we offer our students Band, Music Appreciation, Art, Literacy with Technology, MESA, College and Career Readiness, Yearbook, Study Skills, and Journalism. In addition to empowering practical skills, electives courses help students find talents and passions they did not know they had. All students regardless of language level and academic performance are enrolled in an elective course. As incoming eighth graders, students submit an application to their elective class of interest. We value our students interest and know giving them the ability to choose a class is meaningful, and this tends to keep the students highly motivated to learn. Eighth graders are given the opportunity to choose their elective course from the options previously listed. Students in Yearbook class go beyond designing the school's yearbook, they create a monthly newsletter for all staff and students. They provide surveys, articles, interviews relevant to the month. The MESA program integrates mathematics and science into enrichment hands-on activities. Our students compete and earn awards at MESA competitions. College and Career Readiness class offers students numerous opportunities to explore possibilities for their future. Students in this class get to experience University of California, San Diego on a fieldtrip. College and Career Readiness course not only prepares students for college but to care about the environment and understand that resources are not limitless. They have a recycling group collect and sort the recycled items from the school. Students involvement in elective classes provide them with skills and knowledge to be critical,

problem solving, thinkers who demonstrate good character and become healthy, productive, responsible citizens.

### **Extra Curricular**

The Frank Wright Middle School staff offers a variety of extracurricular activities that allows our students to shine outside of the classroom. The range of activities available to our students allows them to develop many character building traits. The campus offers several spirit activities on a weekly and quarterly rotation that encourage students to celebrate their Tiger Pride. In addition, our Youth Service Club gives students an opportunity to serve others in the community. These students collaborate with our local Salvation Army and Humane Society to bring service opportunities to our campus allowing students to practice becoming good citizens. Furthermore, students at Frank Wright are encouraged to roll up their sleeves and become good stewards of the environment. We offer several unique environmentally related programs that become a learning experience for the students. In 6th grade, classes sign up to participate in a Duck Project where they hatch ducks that are eventually released to a local wetlands area. The students learn about conservation and what a wetlands is. Sixth grade students also have the opportunity to cultivate more than their minds. The students have a garden that they tend to and consume some of the produce that they collect. Campus wide, students are encouraged to recycle in the classroom, and a group of student collect the recycling each week.

Finally, our students are encouraged to develop an appreciation for the arts. Our Role Playing Group Club, Drama Club, Readers Theater, and the collaboration with the high school art show give our students an opportunity to display a talent that extends beyond the classroom. Our goal is to send students out into the world with not only academic skills, but to expose the students to a wide variety of activities that will make them well rounded people.

### **Community**

Beyond the campus activities and groups, students are also given community service opportunities. Through a partnership with the Salvation Army, our Youth Service Club sponsors a clothing and food drive to help those in need. Our staff and students have been able to donate up to five barrels of non-perishable food items and two overflowing barrels of clothing items. This event is sponsored right before our students leave for Winter Break and is a particularly busy time for the Salvation Army. In addition, our staff and students participate in the Angel Tree gift program through the Salvation Army. This year, our school was able to fulfill 150 gift requests from young children in our community that are in need. Youth Service Club also teams up with our local Humane

Society. In this cooperation, students on our campus have assisted in building beds for the animals, making cat and dog toys, donating money, food, and cleaning supplies. Additionally, students recently donated the funds to purchase a “drag bag” for an abused animal that lost his rear legs and are in the process of raising funds for a wheelchair. The collaboration with the Humane Society has resulted in students independently signed up to volunteer at the shelter.

### **Parents/Staff**

Our hard working PTO board and parent members meets on campus on a monthly basis to continue to support students and staff in reaching our goal of creating a well rounded student. They are involved in fundraising in a variety of ways, such as financing an ongoing T-shirt sale, sponsoring two annual Book Fairs, selling Popcorn, Candied Apples, Chocolate bars, creating end of the year field trips and assisting our community during Open House. Their tireless fundraising has continued to better our campus through tree planting, mural painting and Boxtop clipping plus raising our student’s morale through academic awards, spirit competitions and AR incentives.

Frank Wright Middle School faculty and staff take great pride in communicating consistently with families through Remind, School Messenger, and use of the student planner. Our parents are very much involved in their children’s education. The use of our daily planner allows for conversations to occur naturally and as a result, parents are in constant and routine contact with the school. Furthermore, our parents are accustomed to visiting our school due to our open door policy.

Parent input is valued and collected through surveys and our various parent programs such as PTO, School Site Council and the Migrant Parent Advisory Council.

Frank Wright students, staff and parents model positive attitudes and good citizenship. All members of our staff, which includes classroom aides, noon duty supervisors, cafeteria workers, school custodians, teachers, principal and office staff know the importance of positive reinforcement to ensure student success.

### **Results of the Practice**

The results of our culture of high standards and expectations coupled with a supportive staff and community have contributed to our school attaining many high achievements. In addition, the school activities we provide enhance our students’ academic achievement and social development. Our practice of creating and maintaining a positive school culture has resulted in the ability to encourage a positive student outlook about their education. Additionally, our practice has strengthened students’ sense of

belonging to a strong community base. We are a campus with opportunities for students to express their creativity through the arts, sports, community service and academics. Please refer to chart below that showcases the diversity of programs available to our students.

**Services:** 2 Counselors, Student Support Representative, Resource Officer, SST process, Team meetings, Nurse, tutoring across the board, Migrant Speech & Debate

**ELLs:** Rosetta Stone, Newcomer classes (levels)

**High Expectations:** AR goals, fluidity of the ELA Intervention program that advances students through the intervention levels to prepare them for a course of study at the high school, after hours commitment of our band students and staff, involvement in the MESA program and competitions.

**Clubs:** RPG Club, Campus Life, Chess Club, Drama Club, Youth Service Club, Diversity Club, Recycling Club

**Vertical Articulation:** Math planning with high school, Art Planning with high school, Music Planning with HS.

**Saturday Academies:** Math, Reader's Theater

**Sports:** Grade checks, tournaments

**ASB:** AR dances, Fabulous Fridays, Spirit Counts, Spirit Assemblies,

**Awards Assemblies:** Honor Roll/Honor Society, Character Counts, Student of the Year, Rising Stars, Department Awards, AR King and Queen, Scholar Athletes

**College Day:** College Dress up days

**Attendance:** Attendance Clerk, SARB, High Rates of attendance

**Elective Courses:** Band, Music Appreciation, Art, Literacy with Technology, Study skills, Journalism - school newsletter, Yearbook, MESA, College & Career Readiness, Academic Support Classes

**Band:** Color Guard, Drill team, Drumline, 3 levels (Beg., Intermed., Adv.), field trips, All Valley Honor Band, Band Competitions

**Academics:** Double block ELA- 7th & 8th, Master schedule planning, Intervention & Advanced classes, Double block Math and English-6th grade only, Analyzing student needs and placement-counseling

**Collaboration:** Teams, common preps, committees

**Student Accountability-** Portal, grade checks, planners, progress reports

**School Activities:** Spelling Bee, Duck Project, 6th grade garden, High school-Art Show, Advanced Math-Algebra I classes, Hoops for Heart, after testing group activities.

### **Parent Involvement/Support**

School Messenger, Remind, Parent Portal, PTO, Band Parent Group, SSC, Back to School Night, Parent/Teacher % attendance, SST, Boxtops for Education.

**PTO-** Gym Murals, T-shirt sale, Book Fairs, Fundraising, Field Trips and Back to School Night support

**Community:** Halloween Carnival, 4-H Club, Local parades, local competitions, Angel Tree, Adopt a Soldier, Food Drive, Clothing Drive, Adopt an Animal, Humane Society, Memorial Tree Planting

**Policies and procedures:** Fair and consistent expectations of behavior, attendance, dress and deportment of all students. Because of this, students enjoy a safe and clean campus.