

CASE STUDY BRIEF

Since 2013, the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) has annually designated 21st Century Learning Exemplars based upon exceptional implementation of the [Framework for 21st Century Learning](#).

Each year, P21 has highlighted a cohort of early learning centers, K–12 schools, school districts, and beyond school programs in the U.S. as 21st Century Learning Exemplars. Now that P21 is a network of Battelle for Kids, we are leading together in celebrating the current year of 21st Century Learning Exemplars.

As part of celebrating these awardees, Battelle for Kids and its P21 network provide ways for their stories and impactful practices to be shared with others. This case study brief and those for the other awardees provide powerful insights to guide other school districts, schools, and programs so that every child can experience the best of 21st century learning experiences.



Vista Heights Middle School Moreno Valley, CA

With a concerted effort to develop the whole-child, Vista Heights Middle School offers a warm and supportive learning environment for all students to flourish as they acquire the skills and dispositions needed to successfully navigate a lifetime of learning.

Grades Served: 6–8

Enrollment: 1,325 Students

Founded in 1988

[Website](#)

- Gold Ribbon School – California Department of Education
- AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction
- National Forum Schools to Watch

Vista Heights Middle School

Moreno Valley, CA

Partnership with the University of California-Riverside

With an eye on college and career readiness, Vista Heights Middle School looks to area postsecondary institutions as partners in topical programmatic offerings as well as exposure to collegiate life and potential future life pathways.

Of note is the partnership with nearby University of California-Riverside. For the annual History Day research visits, students conduct college-level research on campus and interview history professors. Vista Heights' social studies department works closely with librarians and media specialists at both UC-Riverside and Riverside Community College to make this annual day possible.

AVID, for which Vista Heights is a Schoolwide Site of Distinction, also partners with UC-Riverside to provide monthly informational sessions to the middle school students on college admissions, financial aid, and resident life.

Vista Heights' Visual and Performing Arts program has a robust partnership with UC-Riverside's Gluck Fellows Program of the Arts, and students lead seminars and "master class" workshops based on their graduate-level research and work in the visual and performing arts.

Students have the opportunity to engage with and learn from graduate students. For example, in 2018–19, they learned Binanog, a Philippine indigenous folk dance, and how to craft a successful short television screenplay.

Vista Heights' advanced show choir—which performs frequently on its campus as well as in competitions—has an artist in residence provided through Gluck.

Something for Everyone

An unwavering belief that high-quality educational opportunities should exist for all students is evidenced by Vista Heights Middle School's extensive program opportunities.

Beginning with the classroom, students are placed in smaller, fluid learning environment groups, with interdisciplinary projects and lessons.

To best facilitate interdisciplinary learning and meet holistic needs of students in a timely manner, instructional staff are provided regular preparation and collaborative blocks daily.



Opportunities are abundant for students to discover and cultivate their passion and talents at the school. This includes utilizing the publishing tool Yearbook Avenue to design actual yearbook pages, set building and sound design in the annual theatre production, and building robots using Lego Mindstorm kits or VEX IQ robotics. For students struggling academically, the school offers Smarter Wednesdays, an after-school intervention program that provides differentiated instruction in language arts and math.

The school's selection as a California Distinguished School and California Gold Ribbon School, Vista Heights' programs and standards-based activities, and their commitment to providing individualized learning opportunities, are all evidence of their ongoing commitment to improve. These highlights are evidence of inspiring others to provide each student with a unique pathway to success in the classroom and beyond.

Global Languages

A journey almost five years in the making, Vista Heights Middle School has prioritized challenging, high-quality international education by pursuing the International Baccalaureate (IB) authorization. Designed for school-wide adoption, the IB is inquiry-based and promotes international mindedness, which includes a multilingual required component.

Students have the possibility to earn high-school credit for A-G classes. By enrolling in one of three languages—Spanish, French, and Mandarin—they meet their IB Language Acquisition requirement and potentially receive level one and/or level two E-course credit at their California high school.

Nine dedicated teachers meet daily and ensure all students receive language instruction, including special education students in the most restrictive environment.

The school utilizes Dr. Kate Kinsella's Academic Vocabulary Toolkit to improve students' familiarity and utilization of high-use academic language. AVID tutors in Mandarin and Spanish provide additional support.

Vista Heights ensures that all students, wherever they are at in their language journey, receive adequate support and structure to become lifelong language learners and practitioners.



2019 21ST CENTURY LEARNING EXEMPLARS

Each of the following earned this year's award for its outstanding practices in equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge for success in college, career, and life:

Early Learning

The Goddard School Located in Broadview Heights
(Broadview, OH)

The Goddard School Located in Simpsonville
(Simpsonville, SC)

K-12 Schools

Canyon Crest Elementary School (Fontana, CA)

Elon Elementary School (Elon, NC)

EVSC New Tech Institute (Evansville, IN)

Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art + Design
(San Antonio, TX)

Kairos Public School Vacaville Academy (Vacaville, CA)

Kensington Elementary School (Waxhaw, NC)

Moreno Valley High School (Moreno Valley, CA)

Saint Ambrose School (Brunswick, OH)

Santiago Charter Middle School (Orange, CA)

Valley View High School (Moreno Valley, CA)

Vineyard STEM Magnet (Ontario, CA)

Vista Heights Middle School (Moreno Valley, CA)

Wolf Springs Elementary School (Overland Park, KS)

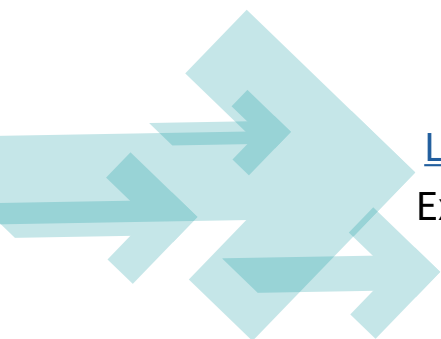
Districts

Lennox School District (Lennox, CA)

Vicksburg Warren School District (Vicksburg, MS)

Beyond School Programs

Camp Champions (Marble Falls, TX)



[Learn more](#) about the 21st Century Learning Exemplars at: bfk.me/p21_ExemplarProgram