



## Santa Maria Middle School Receives Copper Apple Award

This Copper Apple Award is for Santa Maria Middle School for their hard work, effort, collaboration, progress, and achievement this last school year. After the 2023-2024 school year, Santa Maria MS had a low C (60%) letter grade as a school. By implementing clear goals, expectations, best instructional practices, and strong protocols around collaboration, student achievement has increased and moved their letter grade to a strong B (75.37%) for the 2024-2025 school year. There were many observable strengths and areas of progress during this past school year starting with the principal, Ms. Sanchez, who is hard-working, reflective, humble, professional, kind, personable, knowledgeable, open to feedback, and deeply committed to the work of professional learning communities.

Benchmark Data throughout the year showed gains in ELA and Math in multiple grade levels with marked increases in the number of students who fall into the Proficient and Highly Proficient categories when compared to the first two Benchmarks. Their focus on ensuring that all classroom teachers posted daily Learning Targets that were visible, tied to essential standards, in kid-friendly language, and referenced throughout the lesson paid off throughout the year. One seemingly minor, but truly important, tangible, and observable growth/strength was their PLC room.

Ms. Sanchez worked with her team to clear this room out of old furniture, equipment, supplies, etc., and turned it into a true meeting room where colleagues sit around a table, face one another, and engage in meaningful conversations around instruction and student data. Prior, they were in rows with their backs to one another, and collaboration was inhibited.

Santa Maria's other Project Momentum Goal was focused on implementation and use of frequent common formative assessments which they excelled in. Content grade level teams administered CFAs at least once every two weeks and then used that data to inform instruction and determine necessary interventions. Santa Maria staff also put solid plans in place for interventions leading up to the AASA and ensured that students (and parents) were informed, prepared, and eager to do their best when taking their exams. The entire school staff should be proud of their efforts in ensuring that student achievement and growth were always at the center of their discussions and efforts. The jump in scores and their overall letter grade was a reflection of their great work.

