

Nicolas Junior High School

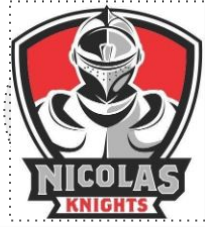
Jose Varela, Principal

School Mission/Vision/Demographics

Nicolas Junior High School is committed to cultivating a community of students who are innovators and mindful citizens, characterized by determination, capability, and focus. The school's mission reflects its dedication to developing students who are prepared to meet the challenges of the future. Its vision emphasizes the importance of personal determination and focus, empowering students to become lifelong learners who actively contribute to their communities.

As of the 2024–25 school year, Nicolas Junior High serves a total of 615 students. The student population is predominantly Hispanic (86.7%), followed by White (5.1%), Asian (3.8%), Multiracial (3.3%), African American (0.5%), Pacific Islander (0.5%), and Native American (0.2%). The school serves a highly diverse and high-needs population, with approximately 89% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, and 21% of students identified as English Learners.





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School Data

SBAC DATA

Nicolas Junior High School, located in Fullerton, serves 615 students in grades 7–8. The student population includes 87.8% who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, 21% English Learners, and 1.3% foster youth. The school has shown positive academic growth, particularly in English Language Arts (ELA), improving by 15.9 points, though still 34.3 points below the standard. Mathematics scores also improved by 9.7 points but remain 80.2 points below standard. A highlight is the English Learner Progress indicator, which earned a Blue rating, with 66.7% of English Learners making progress. Chronic absenteeism stands at 16.6% (Yellow) but has declined by 5.1%. Suspension rates are low at 3.1%, earning a Green rating, with strong equity indicators in school climate. While student growth trends are promising—especially in ELA and among English Learners—areas for continued focus include improving math performance and reducing chronic absenteeism. The data reflect a school making steady progress while addressing key challenges.

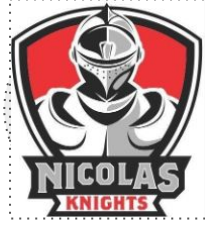
IREADY DATA

During the 2024–25 school year, Nicolas Junior High students demonstrated strong academic growth across all groups. Overall, students improved their Distance from Standard (DFS) in ELA from -68.1 in the fall to -49.2 in the spring—a gain of 18.9 points. The percentage of students performing on grade level increased from 11.6% to 15.6%, with 63.7% meeting their individual growth goals. English Learners made the most significant gains, improving by 26.1 points in DFS and increasing their grade-level performance from 0% to 1.5%. Notably, 70.8% of English Learners met their growth goals. Economically disadvantaged students improved by 19.9 points, with 11.8% reaching grade level and 65.5% meeting growth goals. Students with disabilities also grew by 19.9 points, with 4.8% on grade level and 57.1% meeting goals. Hispanic students showed a 20.2-point gain, with 13.5% on grade level. Overall, the data highlights steady growth and a strong trajectory for continued improvement.

Fiscal Information

Budget Information	
LCFF Supplemental	229,232
LCFF Base	101,687
Title I	196,447

SPSA Goal	Total Expenditures
Goal 1	319,745
Goal 2	55,500
Goal 3	102,750
Goal 4	38,371



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Goal 1: Student Achievement

Nicolas Junior High School fully implements California Common Core State Standards through state-adopted curriculum and collaborative departmental PLCs. Teachers ensure pacing and instruction align with guaranteed standards, with curriculum goals clearly communicated to students and families. Professional development supports Marzano strategies, High Reliability Schools, and AVID methods, with STEM integrated across subjects. Key literacy skills—close reading, nonfiction analysis, writing, and student collaboration—are emphasized schoolwide.

Support for struggling learners includes RTI systems, push-in and co-teach models, small group instruction, and before/after-school interventions. English Learners receive dedicated ELD instruction, and SPED students are supported through inclusive classroom models. Student wellness is prioritized with a full-time mentor, mental health counselor, and social service assistants.

Teachers receive release time for planning, collaboration, peer observation, and best practice sharing with coaching support. School community involvement includes ELAC, SSC, PTSA, and ASB input, with targeted parent engagement through conferences, School Smarts, and technology classes, fostering academic and social success.

Goal 2: Digital and Informational Literacy

Nicolas Junior High School is committed to building student and staff understanding of 21st century learning standards through a focus on critical thinking, personalized learning, and technology integration. Instructional strategies emphasize the 4 C's—critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity—while leveraging tools like 3D printers, CNC machines, and robotics for real-world application. Classrooms and professional learning spaces are intentionally designed to support flexible, collaborative, and innovative environments.

Project-based learning and STEM-infused lessons promote design thinking and problem-solving. Technology, including one-to-one iPads and gamified instruction, supports personalized learning experiences. Teachers receive ongoing professional development, release time to observe best practices, and training from community partners. Teacher leaders share innovative strategies during site PD.

The school also supports families through parent education on 21st century learning, PowerSchool navigation, and technology use at home. Internet access support and tech classes for parents foster strong school-home partnerships, ensuring students thrive in a modern, connected learning environment.



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Goal 3: Safe and Secure Environment

Nicolas Junior High School prioritizes building positive relationships among students, staff, and families to foster a safe, welcoming, and engaging environment. The school promotes strong connections through fun and inclusive activities, including assemblies, concerts, classroom competitions, and celebrations. Classrooms are well-resourced to support engaging instruction, with STEM and the arts integrated across content areas. A positive campus culture is reflected in a clean, organized environment, displays of student work, and a strong college-going identity with murals and community pride.

The school maintains a warm and inviting Parent Center and emphasizes excellence in customer service. Student health and safety are supported through regular emergency drills, a comprehensive Safe School Plan, and accessible emergency supplies. Attendance is promoted through incentives, recognition programs like SSOAR Saturday School, Principal Honor Roll, and community-supported awards. With PBIS strategies and innovation-focused instruction, Nicolas fosters academic success and a supportive atmosphere where students thrive both socially and academically.

Goal 4: Parent and Community Engagement

Nicolas Junior High School is dedicated to fostering strong school-to-home communication through proactive outreach and inclusive practices. Administrators and teachers initiate positive contact with families before the school year begins and continue regular communication via phone calls, emails, newsletters, and in-person meetings. Parents are informed about school programs, policies, and events and are encouraged to advocate for their children. Community resources and PowerSchool workshops further support families in guiding student success at home.

Internally, staff communicate effectively using tools like email, phones, and daily logs, while teachers maintain clear learning expectations for students. Positive communication and digital citizenship are taught and practiced among students. Staff remain accessible to students throughout the day for academic and emotional support.

Externally, the school strengthens connections with the district and broader community through social media, news outlets, and participation in local events. These efforts build strong relationships, increase transparency, and ensure families are informed and supported year-round.

ATSI/TSI/CSI/Title I/Educational Partners

Nicolas Junior High ensures alignment with content standards through schoolwide expectations, PBIS behavior frameworks, and engaging elective and extracurricular programs like AVID, arts, and sports. Instruction incorporates research-based strategies, including 1:1 iPads, structured routines, and the Start On Time program to reduce tardiness. Enhanced supervision, video monitoring, and a refined Safe School Plan contribute to a secure learning environment. Students benefit from weekly tutorials, after-school intramurals, and academic interventions. Parent and community engagement is fostered through PTSA, ELAC, Site Council, conferences, and educational workshops.



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Nicolas at a Glance

