



Nicolas Jr High School
Principal J. Varela

School Mission/Vision/Demographics

Nicolas Junior High School is dedicated to building a dynamic community where students grow as innovative thinkers and responsible, mindful citizens. Through a strong focus on determination, capability, and purpose, the school prepares students to confidently meet the challenges of an ever-changing future. Nicolas fosters a culture of perseverance and focus, empowering all students to become lifelong learners who make meaningful contributions to their communities. This commitment is strengthened through a collaborative partnership among students, staff, and families, ensuring every learner is supported, challenged, and inspired to reach their full potential.

As of the 2025–26 school year, Nicolas Junior High School serves approximately 615 students in grades 7–8, with a predominantly Hispanic population (87.2%) and smaller representations of White (3.5%), Asian (2.2%), Multiracial (2.2%), African American (2.0%), Pacific Islander (0.9%), and Native American (0.7%) students. The school supports a diverse and high-needs community, with about 89% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch and 24.7% identified as English Learners. This demographic profile underscores the school's strong commitment to equity, culturally responsive practices, and targeted support systems to meet the needs of all learners.





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School Data

Nicolas Junior High School in Fullerton serves approximately 539 students in grades 7–8, with 86% socioeconomically disadvantaged, 24.7% English Learners, and a small foster youth population. The school is demonstrating steady academic growth, particularly in ELA, though performance remains 35.1 points below standard. In Mathematics, students are 84.1 points below standard, highlighting a continued need for targeted support. The English Learner Progress indicator shows 46.7% of students making progress, reflecting a 20-point decline and an area for focused improvement. Chronic absenteeism has improved to 13.4%, and suspension rates remain low, indicating a positive school climate. Overall, Nicolas continues to build momentum while prioritizing gains in math, attendance, and outcomes for all student groups. The school remains committed to data-driven instruction, targeted interventions, and ongoing progress monitoring to meet student needs. Through strong collaboration among staff, students, and families, Nicolas is focused on accelerating achievement and fostering success for every learner.

Nicolas Junior High School's i-Ready data shows strong overall growth in ELA and moderate growth in Math, reflecting positive momentum across the school. In ELA, all students improved significantly, with DFS increasing from -73.1 in Fall to -52.2 in Spring (+20.9), while the percentage of students on grade level rose from 9% to 17% (+8%). Notable gains were seen across student groups, including English Learners (+25.8 DFS), LTEL students (+23.4), and 8th grade students (+26.9 DFS, +10% proficiency), demonstrating the impact of targeted supports. In Math, progress was more modest but still evident, with all students improving from -59.9 to -49.5 DFS (+10.4) and proficiency increasing from 3% to 8% (+5%), with stronger gains in 8th grade (+14.3 DFS, +7% proficiency). Despite these improvements, performance in Math remains significantly below standard, and English Learners showed limited growth in proficiency, indicating a continued need for focused intervention. Overall, the data highlights meaningful growth, especially in ELA, while reinforcing the importance of accelerating Math achievement and continuing targeted supports for key student groups.

Fiscal Information

Budget Information	
LCFF Supplemental	227,730
LCFF Base	100,418
Title I	207,889

LCAP Goal	Total Expenditures
Goal 1	321,928
Goal 2	71,803
Goal 3	102,250
Goal 4	40,056



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Goal 1: Student Achievement

Nicolas Junior High School delivers a comprehensive and aligned instructional program grounded in the California Common Core State Standards, supported by state-adopted curriculum and strong Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Teachers collaborate regularly to ensure pacing, rigor, and instruction are aligned to guaranteed and viable standards, with clear learning goals communicated to both students and families. Instruction is strengthened through ongoing professional development in Marzano strategies, High Reliability Schools, and AVID methodologies, while STEM integration and a schoolwide emphasis on close reading, nonfiction analysis, writing, and student collaboration elevate learning across all content areas. To support all learners, Nicolas implements a robust system of interventions, including RTI structures, push-in and co-teaching models, small group instruction, and extended learning opportunities before and after school. English Learners receive targeted ELD instruction, and students with disabilities benefit from inclusive practices within the general education setting. Student wellness remains a priority, supported by a full-time mentor, mental health counselor, and social services team. Teachers are provided dedicated time for collaboration, planning, peer observations, and sharing best practices, with ongoing coaching to refine instruction. Strong partnerships with families and the community are fostered through ELAC, SSC, PTSA, and ASB, along with targeted parent engagement opportunities such as conferences, School Smarts, and technology workshops, ensuring a supportive environment that promotes both academic achievement and social-emotional growth for all students.

Goal 2: Digital and Informational Literacy

Nicolas Junior High School is committed to advancing 21st century learning by emphasizing critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication through purposeful technology integration and real-world application. Students engage in project-based and STEM-focused learning using tools such as 3D printers, CNC machines, robotics, and one-to-one iPads, creating personalized and engaging learning experiences. Classrooms are designed to foster flexible, innovative environments, while teachers receive ongoing professional development, collaboration time, and opportunities to share best practices. The school also strengthens school-home partnerships by offering parent workshops on technology use, PowerSchool, and digital learning, along with support for internet access, ensuring all students and families are equipped to thrive in a modern, connected world. These efforts empower students to become independent learners and problem-solvers prepared for future academic and career success. Through a shared commitment to innovation and continuous improvement, Nicolas is building a culture that embraces change and prepares all learners for the demands of the 21st century.



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Goal 3: Safe and Secure Environment

Nicolas Junior High School has made strong progress in fostering a safe, supportive, and student-centered environment, while continuing to focus on areas for growth, particularly chronic absenteeism, which has improved but remains at 13.4%. The school recognizes the connection between attendance, student engagement, and overall well-being, and has responded with a comprehensive system of supports centered on social-emotional learning, including weekly Second Step lessons, PBIS practices, CARE Awards, and regular attendance recognition. Collaborative teams such as SEL, MTSS, and PBIS actively analyze data and implement targeted interventions, while expanded counseling services, student support groups, and partnerships like OC GRIP provide additional layers of support. A strong emphasis on safety and behavior is maintained through SST meetings, roundtables, and a dedicated Safety Team, with quarterly student surveys ensuring student voice remains central. Collectively, these efforts reflect Nicolas's commitment to creating a connected, supportive environment where all students can thrive.

Goal 4: Parent and Community Engagement

Parent and family engagement at Nicolas Junior High School continues to grow, supported by a strong foundation of outreach through ELAC, SSC, PTSA, Cafecito with the Principal, and family workshops that create welcoming opportunities for involvement. However, local indicator data identifying Parent and Family Engagement and School Climate as "Standard Not Met" highlights the need to strengthen consistency and impact. Student outcomes further reinforce this need, as the school remains in the Orange performance level in ELA and Math, English Learner progress is at 46.7%, chronic absenteeism stands at 13.4%, and suspension rates have increased, pointing to the importance of deeper home-school collaboration. With a student population that is 85.3% socioeconomically disadvantaged and 24.7% English Learners, Nicolas is focused on expanding culturally responsive and bilingual communication to better connect with families. Moving forward, the school is committed to strengthening two-way communication, increasing participation, and creating meaningful partnerships to ensure all families feel valued and empowered to support their child's success.

Title I/Community School

Nicolas Junior High School, as a Title I school, is deeply committed to ensuring all students, especially those from historically underserved backgrounds, have access to the resources, support, and high-quality instruction needed to succeed. Through targeted interventions, data-driven instruction, and expanded learning opportunities, the school works to close achievement gaps while supporting the academic, social, and emotional development of every student. Central to this work is the Nicolas Community Center, which serves as a hub for family engagement and support services. The school has hosted a variety of impactful events and programs, including a community Health Fair, the Nicolas Food Pantry to support families in need, Parenting Classes that empower caregivers with tools for student success, Zumba classes that promote wellness, and computer classes that build digital literacy for families. These efforts, combined with ongoing outreach and collaboration, reflect Nicolas's commitment to strengthening partnerships with families and creating a supportive, connected school community where all students can thrive.



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Nicolas at a Glance



CLUB RUSH

