



## The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform

### Schools-to-Watch<sup>®</sup> Criteria

# Developmental

*Responsiveness*

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**High-performing schools with middle grades are sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence.**

1. The staff creates a personalized environment that supports each student's intellectual, ethical, social, and physical development.
2. The school provides access to comprehensive services to foster healthy physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.
3. Teachers foster curiosity, creativity and the development of social skills in a structured and supportive environment.
4. The curriculum is both socially significant and relevant to the personal and career interests of young adolescents.
5. Teachers use an interdisciplinary approach to reinforce important concepts, skills, and address real-world problems.
6. Students are provided multiple opportunities to explore a rich variety of topics and interests in order to develop their identity, learn about their strengths, discover and demonstrate their own competence, and plan for their future.
7. All students have opportunities for voice—posing questions, reflecting on experiences, and participating in decisions and leadership activities.
8. The school staff members develop alliances with families to enhance and support the well-being of the children.
9. Staff members provide all students with opportunities to develop citizenship skills, to use the community as a classroom, and to engage the community in providing resources and support.
10. The school provides age-appropriate, co-curricular activities to foster social skills and character, and to develop interests beyond the classroom environment.