



The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform

Schools-to-Watch[®] Criteria

Social Equity

High-performing schools with middle grades are socially equitable, democratic, and fair. They provide every student with high-quality teachers, resources, learning opportunities, and supports. They keep positive options open for all students.

- 1. To the fullest extent possible, all students, including English learners, students with disabilities, gifted and honors students, participate in heterogeneous classes with high academic and behavioral expectations.**
 - Faculty and administrators are committed to helping each student produce proficient work.
 - Evidence of this commitment includes tutoring, mentoring, enrichment assignments, differentiated instruction, special adaptations, supplemental classes and other supports.
 - Accelerated, short-term interventions for students with similar needs are fluid and do not become low-level or permanent tracks.
- 2. Students are provided the opportunity to use many and varied approaches to achieve and demonstrate competence and mastery of standards.**
 - Teachers know each student's learning style.
 - Teachers differentiate instruction in order to give each student equal opportunity to comprehend the standards-based curriculum.
- 3. Teachers continually adapt curriculum, instruction, assessment, and scheduling to meet their students' diverse and changing needs.**
 - The faculty is always seeking ways to improve programs, curriculum, and assessment to better meet student needs.
- 4. All students have equal access to valued knowledge in all school classes and activities.**
 - All students use technology to do research and analyze data, read more than textbooks, and understand how to solve complex problems.
 - To the fullest extent possible, students with disabilities are in regular classrooms that are co-taught by special education professionals.
 - All students have access to participate in interest-based classes, activities, or opportunities.
- 5. Students have ongoing opportunities to learn about and appreciate their own and others' cultures.**
 - The school values knowledge from the diverse cultures represented in the school, community, and our nation.
 - Materials in the media center represent all of the cultures of the students.
 - Families often come and share their traditions and beliefs.
 - Teachers use multi-cultural materials and methods.
 - Multiple viewpoints are encouraged.

- 6. The school community knows every student well.**
 - Each student is appreciated and respected.
 - Staff members do not use negative labels or discuss students in negative ways.
 - Every student has an adult advocate and supporter in the school.

- 7. The faculty welcomes and encourages the active participation of all its families and makes sure that all its families are an integral part of the school, such as:**
 - Transportation, meals, childcare, and translation support are provided so all families of diverse cultures and languages can attend school events.

- 8. The school's reward system is designed to value diversity, civility, service, and democratic citizenship.**
 - The faculty recognizes the contributions of all its students.
 - Awards are not limited to sports and academic honors.
 - Students' success and good deeds are always noticed.

- 9. Staff members understand and support the family backgrounds and values of its students.**
 - The school recruits a culturally and linguistically diverse staff.
 - The staff members are a good match to the school's community.

- 10. The school rules are clear, fair, and consistently applied.**
 - Students and parents are informed of school rules and know exactly what will and does happen if students break the rules.
 - The school's suspension rate is low and in proportion to the student population.
 - Staff members routinely analyze and act upon referral and suspension data and make sure that no one group of students is unfairly singled out by classroom teachers and school staff.
 - The school's disciplinary referrals and suspension rate are low as a result of proactive interventions that keep students engaged, resilient, healthy, safe, and respectful of one another.