

# SCHOOLS TO WATCH

## MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE



### Little Village Academy



#### Designated in 2009

Little Village Academy

- Chicago Public School District 299 • Cook County
- Elsa Carmona, Principal
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- School website: [www.lva.cps.k12.il.us](http://www.lva.cps.k12.il.us)

### 2009 School Statistics

(Source: Enter name of data source for stats listed below.)

Community: Little Village Community southwest side of Chicago

Enrollment: 804 students

Grade Levels: Headstart-8<sup>th</sup> grade

School Schedule: 9:00am-2:45pm; 90-minute rotating block schedule & 40-minute exploratory schedule

#### Student Demographics

- 99.9% Hispanic
- 0% White
- 1% African American
- 0% Asian
- 0% Pacific Islander
- 100% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 43% English Learners

2006: 58.7% Reading 66.9% Math

2007: 59.5% Reading 64.6% Math

2008: 63.8% Reading 74.1% Math

2008 AYP: Met and exceeded standards in Reading & Math

(Visit [state department of education Web site](http://state department of education Web site) to view this school's data for prior years.)

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Middle school within an K-8 elementary school
- Consistently maintained gains in the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)
- Middle school orientation night to form partnerships with parents and students before the school year begins
- Teachers implement a rigorous and challenging curriculum throughout the school year
- Teachers begin the curriculum discussion and planning every school year by analyzing the previous ISAT data and Illinois Standards
- Teachers meet weekly by grade level and monthly as a middle school
- Implementation of independent, collaborative, project and inquiry-based activities and projects that foster choice and critical thinking.
- AVID certified school
- Vertical classroom visits
- Ninety minute rotating block schedule for the core subjects: language Arts, math, science and social science
- Teacher created syllabi and classroom websites to inform students of expectations
- Connected Math curriculum for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Algebra I offered to half of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Co-teaching with reading interventionists, special education teacher and bilingual literacy teacher for our special needs and English language learners

### *Name of School*

#### **Developmental Responsiveness**

- All teachers are endorsed in their content area
- Teams have weekly common planning time and a bi-weekly meeting with the entire middle school team to plan and develop an aligned curriculum
- Middle school students have a separate uniform to distinguish them from the rest of the school
- Daily five-week exploratory schedule: Music, Computers, Library and Physical Education
- Weekly advisory time incorporated into block schedule
- Annual Career Day and College Awareness Day
- Yearly college or university visits for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Attend city high school fair and host a school high school fair
- Little Village alumni are invited to speak to our middle school students about challenges and successes of high school
- Students are given a voice in their academics and activities planned for the year.
- Community Schools Initiative (CSI) provides an onsite staff member who works with teachers to provide services and programs before and after school.
- After school programs: soccer, basketball, wrestling, ultimate Frisbee, scrapbooking, science club, photography, band guitar, violin, and student council.
- Community schools initiative provides free eye exams and glasses
- Partnership with the Museum of Science & Industry provides after school curriculum training and family days for our middle school students
- Becoming a Man (BAM) program for 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade male students
- Spirit Week at the beginning of the school year to increase student motivation
- High parent participation during open house, reading night, orientation and report card pick-up.

#### **Social Equity**

- New ideas are implemented yearly to make the school experience for every student safe, enjoyable, and highly academic.
- Students have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Teachers stay after school and come before school to tutor and assist students
- Teachers are aware of their students ability level and have a plan for getting students to reach higher achievement
- Students are grouped heterogeneously with others to allow each student to utilize their strengths and succeed
- Teachers differentiate and make sure to reach all learning styles in every lesson
- Cooperative grouping and inquiry based instruction is prevalent in each classroom
- Community building is a major emphasis of advisory
- Classrooms are equipped with technology (document cameras and LCD projectors)
- Math classes use graphic calculators, formulas on excel, math software and interactive whiteboards to develop their algebraic skills and reasoning
- Partnership with Alivio Medical Center
- Multicultural environment (Olympics, Mexican Independence, Egypt projects)
- Student reward system with positive and negative consequences
- Students and parents are fully informed of school rules and expectations through orientation, open house, parent letters and student handbooks.
- Incredibly low suspension rate of 1.8%
- Highest attendance rate in the area since 2001

#### **Organizational Support**

- Coherent and challenging curriculum that includes a strong literacy component with the integration of technology
- Students are expected to succeed in high school and pursue post secondary education.
- Leadership team, grade level teams and content area teams work and meet together on a consistent basis
- Analysis of school data provides training focused to our schools needs during professional development days
- Teachers are regularly enrolled in and attend professional development outside of the school

- Math and science teachers attend Level 1 training for their curriculum twice per quarter in addition to summer training; veteran teachers attend level 2 and 3 training.
- Teachers attend the National Middle School Conference annually
- University math and science coaches are provided thru Cluster 4 Middle Grades Project to support teachers with implementation, observations, evaluations and demonstrations
- 47% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders enter their freshman year of high school having taken Algebra I in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- 60% of our 8<sup>th</sup> graders pass the Algebra I state test
- Detention process created by teachers which has allowed students to take responsibility of bad study habits
- Teachers actively take part to increase academic rigor and expectations of students

### **Focus for the Future—Continuing Improvement**

- Advisory
- Individual schedules for each student
- Interdisciplinary units