

NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS TO WATCH

MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

Maurice River Township Elementary School



Designated in 2008

- Maurice River Township Elementary School • Maurice River Township School District • Cumberland County
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2008 School Statistics

Maurice River Township has a residential population of 3,567 (as of 2000) and is geographically a large township consisting of 93 square miles. Our community is rural which provides an excellent environmental education. The school capitalizes on its location and incorporates it into the classroom whenever possible. (Source: MRTS pamphlet)

Enrollment: 392

Grade Levels: Preschool - 8

School Schedule: Class periods are 52 minutes with a course schedule that includes: social studies, reading, writing, mathematics and science. All students receive instruction in the following special subjects every three days: Spanish, art, music, physical education 1 and 2 and computers.

Student Demographics

- 2.2% Hispanic
- 95.5% White
- 2.2% African American
- 0% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 0% American Indian

- 32% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 0% English Learners

(Source: 2007 STW application)

(Visit the New Jersey Department of Education <http://www.state.nj.us/education/> to view this school's data for prior years.)

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- The school has a language arts literacy program that emphasizes reading and writing across the curriculum (e.g. Junior Great Books, Cornell Note Taking) and the use of rubrics that are well understood by students.
- The school uses technology to enhance student learning (e.g., blogs in writing, Smart Board in mathematics).
- The administration supports the work of the literacy coach. The coach works with all teachers to improve language arts literacy instruction, coordinates professional development, and links to the high school for articulation with AVID.
- The school administers benchmark assessments every eight weeks.

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Developmental Responsiveness

- The school is structured with looping in grades 5-6 and 7-8, allowing for stable, close relationships with students.
- The school convenes grade level teams that discuss student achievement, data, and behavior and coordinate lessons and projects.
- The school supports student participation in programs that create 'ownership' of the school such as Big Brothers/Sisters (e.g., reading to younger students, assisting younger students on the buses and with lunch).
- The school has committed to a behavior intervention specialist and guidance counselor who conduct special programs (e.g. Girl Power) and are available through a confidential referral system that is accessible to all students outside every classroom. They use proactive behavior strategies and character education.
- The school created the Red Carpet Gala which celebrates high academic achievement and serves to engage the community in the work of the students and the school.

Social Equity

- The school's extended learning program provides extra instructional support in mathematics, reading, and writing.
- The school supports small, heterogeneously-grouped classes.
- The school includes special education teachers on grade level teams.
- The school provides childcare for parent-teacher conferences to increase parent involvement.

Organizational Support

- The school supports shared leadership with many personnel wearing several "hats."
- The school has a commitment to on-going, job embedded professional development through the work of the literacy coach.
- The school has strong connections with parents. Volunteers keep the school library running and parents are encouraged to assist teachers in assigned classrooms. The school-community liaison works with parents and community members to support the school.

Focus for the Future—Continuing Improvement

- This school is in the process of revising its curriculum to align with the most recent version of the state standards. At the same time, assessments will be updated and included as part of a comprehensive assessment plan that includes portfolios, samples of high-quality student work, and performance assessments in all content areas.