

NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS TO WATCH

MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

Roosevelt Middle School



Designated in 2009

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<http://schools.woboe.org/Schools/RMS/Pages/default.aspx>

2009 School Statistics

West Orange is largely a suburban community and is home to 43, 500 residents occupying slightly over 12 square miles. West Orange is a town that embraces its diversity. Its location allows for convenient transportation to New York City. West Orange has extensive recreation programs that work in conjunction with its school system. There are eleven schools that house 6300 students.

Besides an award winning comprehensive fine arts program, physical education and technology courses are integrated into the student's day. Four world languages: Spanish, Italian, French and Chinese are offered in 8th grade.

Enrollment: 469

Grade Levels: 7-8

School Schedule: The school is composed of an eight period day. Each day the students attend their five academic classes for 46 minutes. Students have physical education alternately meeting with band/chorus/orchestra/art classes. They also have one period of a related arts class that meets every day for either 35 days (7th grade) or 45 days (8th grade).

Student Demographics

- 20% Hispanic
- 26% White
- 48% African American
- 0% American Indian
- 0% Filipino
- 6% Asian
- 0% Pacific Islander
- 52% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 3.2% English Learners

(source: 2008 STW application)

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

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School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Roosevelt Middle School has used the Schools to Watch process to increase rigor, refocus its energy, sustain a student-centered approach, and continue conversations about data, instruction and students.

Academic Excellence

- All 8th grade students receive instruction in either pre-algebra or algebra.
- Building wide monthly themes drive interdisciplinary connections and instruction.
- Students are encouraged to address and resolve issues, questions and problems.
- Higher level thinking skills, questioning strategies are emphasized in all classes.
- A strong advisory program supports the curriculum in addressing reading, character education and reinforcement of skills in the areas of mathematics and language arts literacy.
- The school participates in the New Jersey STAMP pilot in world languages.

Developmental Responsiveness

- Students express a connection to the school and with the teachers.
- All students must participate in at least one of the wide offering of extra curricular activities.
- The school supports grade level teams that meet daily to share insights and concerns about students as well as to articulate curriculum and encourage interdisciplinary activities.
- There is a very low student to counselor ratio that allows for open communication to occur, as well as to facilitate conversations between students and students, or students and teachers.
- The counselors and school resource officer work in conjunction with the advisory classes to address the issues below:
 - bullying
 - harassment
 - character development
 - alcohol and substance abuse

Social Equity

- The increasing diversity of the school has led to students, staff and parents recognizing similarities and differences that can be valued among everybody. The school is seen as a family by students and staff alike.
- Due to a demonstrated number of specific subgroups being suspended, a partnership was set up with a community organization to provide mentors and role models for identified students. This has the strong approval and support of the West Orange Board of Education.
- The school supports regular and consistent parent and student communication about learning and behavior expectations.

Organizational Support

- The school maintains academic rigor and a student-centered approach to learning.
- Teachers are in support of the changes that are occurring and feel they can be sustained even through administrative changes that may occur. Shared leadership is obvious in the building.
- The school's leadership is shared with clear goals and lines of responsibility and accountability.
- The school supports the use of data during team meetings and as part of professional development.
- The school has district support for continuing improvement.
- The school has support from the district administration for all activities at the school level as well as district-wide.