

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS SCHOOLS TO WATCH

MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

North Salem Middle School



2005-07 School Statistics

(Source: NYS Accountability and Overview Report)

Community: Rural
Enrollment: Grades 6-8: 318; Grades 6-12: 741
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: 6-8 Middle School within 6-12 organization; Team blocks within 9 period day

Student Demographics

51% Male
49% Female
3% Hispanic/Latino
94% White
0% American Indian/Alaskan Native
1% African American
0% Filipino
2% Asian/Pacific Islander
12% Students with Disabilities
3% Free/Red. Lunch/Econ. Disadvantaged
1% English Learners

2005 AYP: ELA 191/AMO 106; Math 194/AMO 83
2006 AYP: ELA 185/AMO 116; Math 188/AMO 80
2007 AYP: ELA 185/AMO 116; Math 187/AMO 80

Designated in 2007;

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School Web site: Northsalemschools.org

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- *Middle School University* prepares all students for academic excellence annually by addressing organization skills, use of technology, learning styles and goal setting
- Personal academic assistance provided after school and through Small Group Assistance (SGA); content area teachers available throughout the day to assist students
- All students accelerated in Spanish or French; 40% - 60% 8th graders accelerated in Algebra and Earth Science
- Full-time teacher of the gifted provides extensions and challenges to all students through push-in model
- Authentic learning experiences provided through interdisciplinary and technology-enriched instruction and assessment
- Grade level teams initiate professional development, support communication, examine student work, share strategies and provide systems to make expectation of excellence a reality

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Developmental Responsiveness

- Individualized goal setting for all students to serve as a guide toward yearly progress
- AIS scheduled in school day to allow students to fully participate in all courses and after school offerings; support provided to students by teacher recommendation in addition to standardized test scores
- Hands-on learning experiences including overnight field trips for each grade: 6th grade camping including scientific and team building activities, 7th grade Boston trip for authentic study of Colonial history, 8th grade visit to Washington, D.C. to experience government firsthand
- Training in different teaching modalities and understanding of learning styles; student and parent identification of student learning styles with application to individualized learning
- Learning experiences which make connections between disciplines, include an element of choice in projects and assessments, and are socially relevant
- Peer Mediation to promote self-regulation and positive problem solving
- Project S.T.A.N.D. (Stop, Think, Accept 'n' Do the Right Thing) fosters a climate of acceptance and the understanding of differences. Character Education and anti-bullying activities occur through the year in small group advisory format
- 17 clubs, 19 teams and extensive co-curricular program (assemblies, social events, service projects) dedicated exclusively to Middle School students

Social Equity

- All students annually participate in Art, Music, Home and Careers, Technology Education and Integrated Computers
- All classes (except for accelerated courses in grade 8) are heterogeneously grouped
- Inclusion classrooms utilize a co-teaching model at all grade levels
- Extensive professional development supports teachers in reaching the diverse learning needs of students through such topics as brain research, technology integration, literacy in all disciplines, learning styles, and teacher designed study groups
- Special preparation courses are offered after school to **all** students prior to NYS assessments
- Full-time teacher of gifted provides extension activities to all students
- Performance assessments include: creation of models, composition of original music, technology-integrated presentations, creation of video, etc. in addition to traditional tests and essays to support student demonstration of mastery

Organizational Support

- Articulated District Vision and Middle School Mission Statements are the foundation of the academic, social and emotional programs of the school
- Grade level teams include special area and special education teachers that meet weekly, host quarterly parent meetings, and jointly plan curriculum that addresses student needs
- A teacher serves as the Middle School Coordinator to ensure articulation across grade levels and with administration
- The unique 6-12 building structure with teacher membership in academic departments, and administrative leadership for grades 6 – 12 ensures continuity, articulation and consistency in school philosophy and procedures
- Teaming is supported in the schedule which is developed to support Middle School needs as a priority
- Professional development is ongoing, purposeful, directly connected to practice and is facilitated through interdisciplinary teams, common planning time, combined Middle/High School department and faculty meetings, multi-grade teams that assess and analyze student performance, a teacher appraisal instrument which includes collaboration as an expectation for teachers
- New teachers are supported through a formal, 2-year Mentor Program