

# OHIO SCHOOLS TO WATCH

## MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

### Van Wert Middle School



#### Designated in 2005

- Van Wert Middle School (VWMS) • Van Wert City Schools
- Van Wert County • Mary Riepenhoff, Principal
  - 10694 State Route 118 South, Van Wert, OH 45891
  - Tel-(419) 238-0727, Fax-(419) 238-7166
  - [www.vanwertcougars.net](http://www.vanwertcougars.net)

### 2005-07 School Statistics

Community: Small Urban  
Enrollment: 487  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: 4 Cores, 2 Electives, 1 Bonus Period

#### Student Demographics

90.3%	White
2.5%	Hispanic
2.1%	African American
4.3%	Multi Racial
34.5%	Economically Disadvantaged
16.6%	Students with Disabilities

2005 AYP: Met

2006 AYP: Not met with Econ Disadvantaged

2007 AYP: Not met with Students with Disabilities

(Visit <http://www.ode.state.oh.us> to view this school's data for previous years)

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- **Failure Is Not An Option:** Motto, belief and culture of school. Students who do not meet passing standard in any course are expected to redo, retest, rethink work. Incompletes are assigned until standard is met.
- **Daily Bonus Time**-extra help period for academic assistance. All teachers available for tutoring, preteaching, reteaching.
- **Rigorous standards-based lessons and assessments.**
- **Engaging curriculum through teaming, projects and presentations.**
- **Eighth Grade Student mentors** to assist our 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at-risk learners organize and study.
- **Core teams manage all core minutes in regular or altered instructional day.**
- **Core teams build student rosters for next year schedule. No batch loading of kids!**
- **Grade level departments meet regularly.**
- **Building level departments meet monthly.**
- **Teams meet daily.**
- **Academic Content Standards in every student's binder.**
- **School wide editing standards for all written work.**
- **Samples of completed and graded student assessments are submitted to administration monthly.**
- **Daily objectives, learning goals and rubrics used throughout the school.**

## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- **Failure Is Not An Option:** motto, belief and culture of school. All students are known as individuals. The faculty and staff understand and coach students about their differences in social, physical, emotional and academic maturity. VWMS has built in many Extra Help opportunities for all of our students.
- **No Bullying** approach is publicly known by all. Repeated reminders to students, staff and parents to inform the administration and guidance counselor of incidences.
- **Academic Coaching**-extra help period during day to assist at-risk learners.
- **Cougar Mentor Team**-8<sup>th</sup> grade mentors who host 6<sup>th</sup> grade orientation and assist 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade at- risk learners.
- **Pack of Cool Aid**-advisory period. All teachers and paraprofessionals advise students. Curriculum developed for each grade level. Topics chosen based on time of year and climate of school.
- **Study Tables**-volunteer and highly recommended after school program to work on assignments.
- **No bells**-all grade levels operate on different schedule.
- **Many elective choices;** band, choir, music, art, computer, life skills, health, physical education and gifted program.
- **Parent access to grades,** listservs of parents established for team news, parent contact for positive and need to change behavior on weekly basis.
- **Cougar Council** are school hosts and assist with some school decisions.
- **We say HELLO.** Our students are welcomed every morning and encouraged to greet staff as they are greeted. Staff is encouraged to be present and welcome their students every day!

## **Social Equity**

- **Failure Is Not An Option:** Motto, belief and culture of school. Faculty and staff believe ALL students can learn and we will try many paths to assist any student.
- **All students** receive rigorous classes.
- **Teachers** hand schedule each student into their classes. This helps with heterogeneous groups.
- **Systematic** approaches to discipline and effort issues.
- **Systematic** approach to intervention. VWMS starts with helping students during the day and moves into after school assistance then to summer intervention. Bonus Time---Academic Coaching---Study Tables---Academic Contract---Summer Bridge.
- **Inclusion** settings predominate special education placement.
- **All teams** have systems for student rewards on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.
- **All 5<sup>th</sup> grade** students transitioned to 6<sup>th</sup> grade through several programs.
- **All 8<sup>th</sup> grade** students transitioned to 9<sup>th</sup> grade though high school program.

## **Organizational Support**

- **Failure Is Not An Option:** Motto, belief and culture of school. Wall is painted with motto, students who earn all passing grades at each grade card will have their name on the wall.
- **Teams** meet daily and maintain agendas/minutes reviewed with administration on monthly basis.
- **Guidance,** administration available for team meetings.
- **Team Leaders** meet bi-weekly to discuss student/school issues and accomplishments.
- **Full staff** meets monthly. Time used to learn about data, technology, team accomplishments, programs, etc.
- **Administration** and Staff share decision-making.
- **Teams,** with the guidance of administration and guidance, establish learning plans for students with unique needs...whatever it takes!
- **Renaissance Program**-school wide reward program based on standards for academics, attendance and attitude.
- **Self-study** groups are formed by staff to study school programs.
- **Community support:** DARE, behavioral health center, Community Action Commission.
- **Host** Ohio State University pre-service teachers each year.