

# VIRGINIA SCHOOLS TO WATCH



## Farmwell Station Middle School



## 2007-08 School Statistics

(Source: 2007 AYP Report)

Community: Suburban, one of the fastest growing school systems in the nation

Enrollment: 1,066

Grade Levels: 6 - 8

School Schedule: 90 Minute Block

### Student Demographics

08.2% African American

00.5% American Indian

16.2% Asian or Pacific Isle

11.6% Hispanic

62.5% White

01.1% Non Specified

10.4% Free/Reduced Lunch

07.0% English Learners

2005 AYP: Met AYP

2006 AYP: Met AYP

2007 AYP: Met AYP

### Designated in 2007

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## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Rigorous, cohesive and individually tailored academic standards are applied to every student.
- Block scheduling affords teachers the flexibility to use instructional time to alternate between whole-class instruction of new material and one-on-one support and feedback.
- Middle school teaming concept that provides team-planning time for teachers to meet regularly in order to provide an aligned, cohesive curriculum.
- Unique academic programs designed for the middle school learner that utilize guided practice, collaborative learning opportunities, hands-on projects and technology.
- Content knowledge is not isolated; students are shown how to make cross-curricular and real-world connections.
- "One Book, One Community" program provides each student with a copy of a book that the entire staff and student body reads and discusses.
- Each student has a resource period every other day to work with teachers to practice and master difficult concepts.
- Remediation sessions are available for all core subject areas.
- "Taking Care of Business" teacher-led homework club provides all students a positive after-school environment where they can complete assignments, access technology for projects, or study for upcoming tests.
- Technology is an integral part of the curriculum across all content areas.

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## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- Teachers and support staff provide each student a feeling of self-worth, belief in the potential for greatness and the support to go the distance.
- Middle school orientation activities including an ice cream social and new student breakfast provide a positive transition to middle school.
- Teaming concept creates a warm, inviting atmosphere for students and allows students to gain sense of belonging.
- Each teacher collaborates with his or her team to ensure that all students are well known by at least three adults in the building. The grade-level administrator and counselor stay with students throughout sixth, seventh and eighth grades.
- “GO” program provides a teacher mentor to any student who needs special attention in academics, social skills and organization.
- Students are recognized for their contributions and celebrated for outstanding academic work with programs such as Student of the Month, Bring Up Grades (BUG) Club, Deans Dozen, library displays and hallway displays of student work.
- Students are given opportunities to take part in leadership and service positions by facilitating clubs with teacher support such as: Literary Magazine, Leo Club, SAC, yearbook, chess and spring musical.
- Counseling initiatives that involve small group assistance and opportunities for students to support their peers
- Students are active in the community by working with charities throughout the year and each eighth grade student completes a community service project.
- Counselors visit classrooms to teach lessons on bullying awareness, drug prevention and social skills.

## **Social Equity**

- Annual “Multicultural Night” where students, families and members of the school community are invited to enjoy fine foods and fine arts put together by our own community’s diverse cultures.
- An entire week of instruction is dedicated to celebrating diversity in education. Teachers continue working within their curriculum and objectives but incorporate multi-cultural lesson plans and diverse authors.
- Classes are inclusive and team-taught to ensure each student receives the educational and social values, experience, and opportunities of the full classroom environment.
- Interpreters are provided to families who are English language learners for all school events and communications.
- Counselors coordinate and lead programs for various at risk groups, such as: children of divorced parents, children who have lost a parent, and lunch bunch for students having difficulties fitting into social dynamics of the school.
- Staff members serve as mentors for practice teachers including high school students who might be interested in a career in teaching.

## **Organizational Support**

- The principal’s open door policy encourages faculty, staff and students to come with questions, concerns, or comments.
- Staff enrichment activities that build camaraderie and support networks among staff members including a “Pay it Forward” program that gives staff members an opportunity to recognize their colleagues.
- Technology resource teachers are available to provide staff development for integrating technology across the curriculum.
- Staff members participate in a staff development book study activity each year and meet to discuss the content and strategies presented.
- Teachers are encouraged to observe each other in the classroom to gain valuable experience from one another.
- Staff begin each school year by developing a School Improvement Plan by examining the data from the previous year, including test scores, attendance rates, discipline referrals; and student, teacher, and parent surveys.
- Prevailing belief that teachers are learners and teachers are encouraged to attend local, regional and national conferences.