

# VIRGINIA SCHOOLS TO WATCH

## MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

### Short Pump Middle School



#### Designated in 2008

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### 2005-07 School Statistics

*Source: Henrico County Public Schools Research and Planning and State AYP Reports.*

Community: Suburban  
Enrollment: 945  
Grade Levels: 6 - 8  
School Schedule: Alternating Block

#### Student Demographics (2006-2007)

7 % African American  
11 % Asian  
3 % Hispanic  
78 % White  
2 % Other  
7 % Free/Reduced Lunch  
5 % English Learners

2005: Met all AYP criteria  
2006: Met all AYP criteria  
2007: Met all AYP criteria

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Common grade-level planning each day to facilitate collaboration
- CORE block every other day provides time for reinforcement in the four core areas as well as remediation, tutoring, and scheduling school-wide assemblies
- Extensive use of technology in instruction: one-to-one laptops, white boards, on-line simulations, iMovies, PowerPoints, on-line student and staff testing and surveys
- Connections across curriculum: English/social studies debates, technology/math CO2 car races, songs in music class to learn states and capitals, etc.
- Wide range of assessments including skits, role-playing, poems, posters, cartoon creations, games, portfolios, iMovies, and PowerPoint's
- Major focus on student centered instruction, multiple learning strategies, and use of differentiation with an emphasis on technology

*(Continued)*

### **Developmental Responsiveness**

- Sixth grade transition program created to assist in-coming students acclimate to their new school
- Students arriving during the school year are assigned a peer mentor to assist in adjustment
- Students trained and assigned as peer mediators, mentors, and tutors
- SSR (Silent Sustained Reading) for 30 minutes every other day to increase reading interest and skills
- OWL (Organization Workshop in the Library) program meets weekly after school to support and enhance students' organizational skills
- Numerous field trips to enhance learning experiences including Washington D.C., Baltimore Aquarium, Richmond Zoo, and civics classes to the county court and jail

### **Social Equity**

- Range of class options: advanced, accelerated, gifted, regular, self-contained, and collaborative, with 10 high school credit classes offered
- Clearly written and enforced expectations and rules; few students are suspended with in-school suspension and Time Out options, as well as administrative and teacher detention
- Critical communication: school website with daily announcements; HCPS Link which gives on-line access to grades and homework; teacher websites; frequent PTA on-line news briefs; quarterly PTA/school newsletters; and scheduled day and evening parent-teacher conferences
- Recognition assemblies: academics, physical fitness, art, music, and citizenship
- Wide participation in intramural and interscholastic sports and clubs that are strongly supported by families and staff
- Involved media center that sponsors multi-ethnic authors and activities such as Black History Month, the World of Holidays in December, Cinco de Mayo, and our Tranquility Reading Club patterned after Japanese traditions
- An active Prejudice Awareness Group

### **Organizational Support**

- School philosophy: We are a Professional Learning Community.
- Shared leadership among the administrative team, Principal's Advisory Council, departments, grade-level councils, and numerous committees
- Input through student comment box (Puma Ponder Box), principal's coffees, and student and staff surveys
- Improvement in test scores and school discipline guided by a Continuous School Improvement Plan which included alternative testing for special education students
- Each staff member responsible for life-long learning through an individual or collegial Professional Growth Plan each school year.
- School-related leave provided for all faculty to attend conferences, and up to \$1000 stipend provided for conferences, coursework, and training
- Henrico Education Foundation provides funding for innovative teaching practices and to needy students
- Active PTA with 100% staff and more than 80% parent membership, and includes over 300 parent and family volunteers
- Effective recruiting, training, and mentoring of new teachers and student teachers