



SCHOOLS TO WATCH

MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

Smart's Mill Middle School

Loudoun County, Virginia



2009 STW Designation

Smart's Mill Middle School (SMMS) • Loudoun County Public Schools • Loudoun County, VA • Eric Stewart, Principal • 850 North King Street, VA 20176 • Tel 571-252-2030, Fax 571-252-2043
<http://cmsweb1.loudoun.k12.va.us/smarts/site/default.asp>

2008-2009 School Statistics

(Sources: 2009 Star Base Student Ethnicity Summary and VDOE School Report)

Community: Suburb of Loudoun County, VA
 Enrollment: 920
 Grade Levels: 6-8
 School Schedule: "4-Block" Alternating Schedule

Student Demographics:

- 70.7% White
- 12.6% Hispanic/Latino
- 5.7% Asian
- 9.8% African American
- 1.2% Non Specified
- 11% Special Education
- 13% Economically Disadvantaged
- 5% English Learners (ESL)

2004	New School
2005	Fully Accredited
2006	Fully Accredited
2007	Fully Accredited
2008	Fully Accredited

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School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence:

- A 45 minute "resource period" for a majority of the student body to help enrich and remediate
- All 6th graders receive 30 minutes of foreign language instruction in Spanish
- Each classroom is equipped with a Promethean Board
- We host evening quarterly Cornerstone Awards for student recognition in each grade
- Staff are recognized quarterly with the Golden Horse shoe award for displaying one of the four core commitments to kids and the school
- Yearly Language Arts themes (6th - Family, Friends, and Rituals; 7th – Conflict, and 8th – Social Justice) aim to tie in all aspects of the curriculum for the staff and students
- Literature Circles help emphasize our literacy program
- The 7th Grade Social Studies Department added a read aloud of *Leap into Darkness*, to read during class. The author, Leo Bretholz, then visited our school
- Staff participated in year long and long term staff development (Ric Wormeli consulted with our school and teams in 2007) on topics of "differentiation and Assessment"
- Our Master Schedule includes common planning time that includes math on teams

Developmental Responsiveness:

- School PD and philosophy align with the National Middle School Association (NMSA)
- Our staff uses NMSA's *This We Believe* as a discussion piece for conversation about kids
- Teaming is the vehicle in which integration of curriculum, advisory, and consistent practices occur
- Our advisory program (FOCUS) always changes based on student and staff survey feedback
- Each student in the school is known by name as we have a yearly contest to "Name the Students" and in 2008, out of 920 kids, we correctly named all 920 kids
- A staff committee focuses on *Health and Wellness*, both physically and socially for the kids and activities (pancake breakfast, intramurals, Character Counts, multiple clubs) are planned from it
- One guidance counselor per grade plus an active Parent Liaison help meet the emotional needs of students
- At-risk students are regularly reviewed by teacher-teams and clubs to help them succeed
- Exploratory classes in art, music, drama, technology, and foreign language enrich the curriculum
- Smart's Mill is a safe, clean, supportive, and friendly campus

Social Equity:

- Special education students are mainstreamed into classes with co-teachers and we serve students with disabilities ranging from mild to profound including autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, as well as self contained and inclusion programs
- International Nights serve to highlight all cultures
- The school has developed an environment with guidance structure for anti-bullying education and assemblies for students and staff
- We set a goal for every student to be in at least one honors class with support when needed
- ESL students received IPods to take home so they could listen to books that we read in English to improve their vocabulary
- Our library has made efforts to match the collection with our student body so that all students will have appropriate role models and reading materials
- The character counts program recognizes kids each quarter (nominated by their teachers)
- Maverick Adventure Team (MAT) and Girls are Beautiful (GAB) help identified students set goals and earn field trips not part of the class curriculum by maintaining a C or better in all classes

Organizational Support:

- The administration fosters high levels of teacher involvement in the shared leadership professional learning community
- Our administrative team follows the McRel 21 Responsibilities and has bi-weekly meeting with the AP's and once-per-week meetings with the deans
- Departments and Academic Teams continually work with the School Improvement Plan to monitor and evaluate the success of our goals and our programs
- Professional development is a vital piece of our school
- Each grade level includes two interdisciplinary teams which are led by core team leaders
- Each student is on a team of core teachers who meet with them and all 6th and 7th grade students have common planning
- Transition to the school from 5th grade and to the high school from MS are smooth and student centered
- Visibility and accountability remain a focus as is communication
- Teacher turnover is minimal
- Effective routines and systems allow teachers to focus on student data and learning