



## Pennsylvania Don Eichhorn Schools: Schools to Watch

### Northley Middle School



#### Designation: 2017

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### School Statistics

<http://paschoolperformance.org>

Community: Suburban  
 Enrollment: 793  
 Grade Levels: 6, 7, 8  
 School Schedule: 7 period day with advisory/support and team planning

#### Student Demographics

American Indian/Alaskan Native	0
Asian	2.1
Black or African American	6.45
Hispanic	2.72
Multi-Racial	2.97
White	85.98

2017 AYP: Reading 91% Math 87%

2016 School Performance Profile: NA  
 2017 School Performance Profile: 61.1

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Northley Middle School continues to review and focus efforts to ensure academic excellence. Professional Learning Communities continue to be an integral part of our academic efforts.
- Our schedule continues to provide grade level partners with common preparation time twice a day. While teachers are required to meet with their grade level partner twice during every six day cycle, they often meet daily. Over the past year (two years for math), the staff has used this time to revise their current district curriculum. The teachers initially revised their scope and sequence with a focus on analyzing the gaps and alignment to the Pa Standards. They then fleshed out each unit of study with activities to ensure differentiation for both advanced and remedial students. The teachers have also utilized this time to review the rigor of the Daily Learning Objective, include additional technology and discuss instructional strategies.
- School-wide department meetings are held monthly but have changed over the past year. These morning meetings have had a greater focus on vertical articulation within each department throughout the curriculum writing process. This time has been utilized to create department specific Tier 3 vocabulary lists,

standardized departmental Cornell Note structure, and backward map the curriculum. Each department has collaborated at different times to adopt a new instructional program over the past two years.

## **Academic Excellence (Cont'd)**

- Social Studies and Science piloted and adopted new materials in 2014-15, Math in 2015-16, and English Language Arts will be piloting and adopting in 2016-17.
- Grade level team meetings have been moved to every Thursday and every other Monday morning. Team meetings have been organized to focus one week on best practices, one week on data analysis and interventions, two days are focused on developing inter disciplinary units, and the remaining days are to discuss student issues and other team business.
- Staff technology trainings continue to be held once a month. These trainings have been coordinated by district Tech Integration teachers on special assignment (TOSA). These professional development sessions have been utilized to introduce the new student information system, targeted training on Google docs, and the functions on the newly installed Brightlink interactive whiteboards. Additionally, staff members have been polled on a monthly basis for tech specific instructional strategies they would like to receive or would like to present to the staff. The selected topics are presented by the teachers and TOSAs.
- Over the past three years, Northley has investigated strategies and interventions to ensure all students receive an appropriate education. Each level developed vocabulary lists specific to their grade (Tier II), while each department created vertically aligned, content specific vocabulary (Tier III) to ensure a common language for staff and students. Students continue to be provided classes that meet their specific needs including: Gifted seminar, Honors and general courses, 1-2 year acceleration in math, ELA and math support classes, co-taught inclusion classes at the general level, tiered intervention, and self-contained classes. Additionally, staff members have taken advantage of their Differentiated Supervision time to investigate and implement differentiated instructional strategies, plan for and engagement of students with behavioral issues, and create new interdisciplinary lessons.

## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- We recognize the variety of needs of our students, and have added to or modified the numerous programs in place to address the diversity of their needs. 5<sup>th</sup> grade students continue to visit Northley at the end of the year. This provides us the opportunity to lay the foundation that they are now Northley Vikings. Our week long, staff-led transition camp continues to provide incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders time to acclimate to the building and familiarize themselves with some of their teachers and guidance staff.
- Our grade level guidance counselors continue to address the individual needs of our student population. Specialized groups are offered based on similar issues facing groups of students and are determined as the need presents. Groups focus on matters such as attendance, organization, social skills, new student, grief/loss, divorce, anger management, and more.
- Northley students continue to follow the “Viking Vision” as a part of the school-wide Positive Behavior System. All students receive ongoing instruction and reminders. Expectation posters have been placed throughout the building. We have revised our 3 “Be’s” to Be Ready, Be Responsible, and Be Respectful to include additional areas of focus. Our faculty PBiS committee works with our student PBiS committee to develop new ways of rewarding and ensuring the 3 “Be’s” are being followed. All students receive a Viking Visa at the beginning of the year. Staff member are encouraged to punch/stamp student cards as they are observed following the Viking Vision. The Visa cards can be redeemed in the student store for prizes. The faculty team now meets bi-monthly and for a full day in the summer, while the student team meets monthly. Northley has also introduced a new mission: Encourage, Empower, Excel. These three words were developed by the staff through a series of faculty and professional development opportunities. This mission statement is the driving force of all staff efforts.
- Northley Middle School is a part of the Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance Services. Students who are not being academically or socially successful can be referred to the Student Assistance Team by any concerned party. The goal of the team is to identify barriers to students’ education. Students and their families may be directed toward services to aide with mental health and/or drug or alcohol issues. Students in the program are provided with a mentor at school.



## Social Equity

- All students are an essential piece of the NMS community and are included whenever possible. Special education students are scheduled into co-taught classes for all subject areas. Aside from a very small population of students with very specific needs, every student is placed in regular education classrooms for science and social studies. Co-taught classes are instructed by both a core general education teacher and a special education teacher. Though certain special education students with the greatest academic needs are placed in smaller classes with a special education teacher, those students are typically placed with their peers in Art Cycle (related arts) courses.
- In addition to an extra-curricular sports program for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, there a variety of clubs and activities are open to all NMS students. Students can compete in Reading Olympics, Debate, and the Science Olympiad. Additionally, students can participate in Art club, Steel Pan, skate club, and intermural club to name a few. Any student may also volunteer as a part of the Northley Navigators, Student Council, or PBiS Committee to help make NMS a better place. All students are eligible to apply for the National Junior Honor Society. Applicants are selected based on 5 criteria: Leadership, Service, Academics, Citizenship, and Character. The most popular activity comes under the music department. The music department offers students the chance to join chorus, band, and jazz band. 60% of our student body participates in either or both band and chorus. The annual Drama Club production and band and choral concerts bring great pride to Northley Middle School.
- Northley Middle School participates in the Olweus Bully Prevention Program. Students are introduced to the program in elementary school, and continue the program at Northley, by participating in monthly classroom meetings focused on varying issues such as empathy and cyber bullying. Northley continues to become more diverse and reflective of our community. Northley has added both a Multiple Disabilities and Emotional Support program to complement their Community Based Instruction and Autistic Support programs. We also have Partnership Programs at each grade where general education students partner with one students from one of the support programs. These efforts have made our entire school community more accepting of those with differences.
- Communication to all stakeholders continues to be a focus of Northley. The PTL continues to coordinate a variety of activities throughout the year for each grade level. Parents are able to attend and participate in a number of activities throughout the year including: Back to School Night, Student Led Conferences, choral and band concerts, musical, career day, Science Expo, and Orientation Night. The Principal has begun to provide weekly updates to families with information on the next week's activities. Teachers each maintain a webpage and have been utilizing the new student information system eSchool to communicate regularly with parents about upcoming assignments, activities, and student progress. Team meeting time is also available throughout the year for parents to meet with their child's teachers as needed.

## Organizational Structures

- Northley is a data driven school. Our Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) team consists of administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers from all grades and content areas. The CIP team meets monthly, as well as in the summer. The CIP team members relay information to and from their teams to help guide both the school and team focus. All teachers are provided with PSSA data for their students in the fall. Three times a year, students take the Classroom Diagnostic Test and staff members are provided time to review and analyze the data and plan strategies to address areas of student need. The staff utilizes this data along with classroom data to place students within the appropriate class, even if that requires a mid-year move. An increasing number of teachers use this and other data (Kahn Academy, iXL, etc) to develop focused lessons and create small instructional groups within their classroom.
- As part of the reflection of testing data, the state standards, and the curriculum revision process, we are in the process of combining our English and Reading courses into an English Language Arts (ELA) "block." ELA teachers are currently writing the new ELA curriculum by marrying the English and Reading courses. They will also be piloting new materials this year prior to implementing the change in the 2017-18 school year.



## **Organizational Structures (cont'd)**

- Student goal setting happens at different times of the year. School wide, students set personal goals at the beginning of each marking period. This is done under the guidance of their teachers. These goals are reviewed with parents by the students during the November Student Led Conferences. The students also review their scores and goals before each CDT and PSSA exam. Students record all standardized scores and goals in a custom page of their assignment book.
- Our Profession Development time has been focused around district goals and school needs. Our staff has received extensive training on the Google suite and the new student information system. Additionally, we have received training on writing and including Text Dependent Analysis (TDA) questions into all curricular areas. The staff has also focused heavily on curriculum writing to ensure all content areas are aligned with the Pa Standards.
- The district continues to work closely with a number of neighboring universities to place student teachers. Additionally, we have reached out to the closest university in hopes of establishing a partnership to provide afterschool tutoring for our students.