

RUTH HALE BARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL



2017-2018 SCHOOL STATISTICS

Designated in 2018

Community Size - Rural

School Enrollment - 495

Grade Levels - 5, 6

School Calendar -

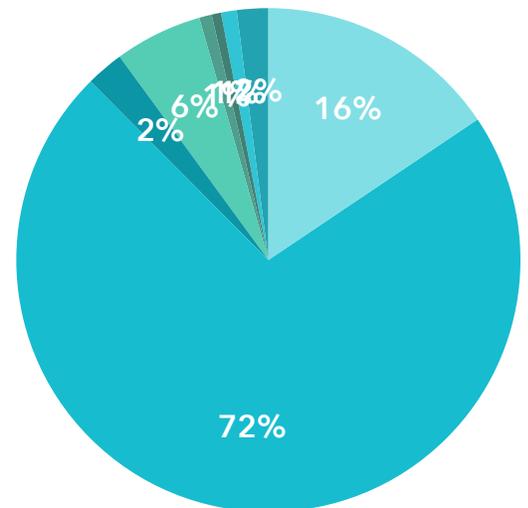
Free and Reduced Lunch 31%

English Learners 10.3%

Students With Disabilities 14.9%

Ruth Hale Barker Middle School
Bentonville School District
500 SE 18th St. Bentonville, AR 72712
Tel (479) 696-3300
Principal - Eric Hipp
<https://www.bentonvillek12.org/RBMS>

2017-2018 School Demographics



School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

All students at Ruth Barker Middle School are expected to meet high academic standards. Students' needs are met through special education inclusion, Response to Intervention, and TREC classes. Students also participate in Genius Hour/Wonder Hour. Best practices employed by teachers include modeling reading and writing and small group lessons. Teachers provide one-on-one conferences with students providing feedback for improving work based upon rubrics, both teacher and student created. Standards and expectations are made clear to students and parents through weekly emails, team letters,



curriculum guides, and exemplar/anchor texts from all classes. Curriculum, instruction, assessment, and appropriate academic interventions are aligned with high standards. All core subjects use a district curriculum map and pacing guide; this allows for collaboration among teachers as to best practices for lessons as well as re-teaching or intervention strategies. Utilizing MAPs assessments, the NZ

Maths numeracy project GLOSS assessment for math strategies, the IKAN (a math knowledge test), DAZE and DIBELS reading assessment, and the Phonics First spelling assessment to identify gaps in students' learning, students receive specialized and specific interventions. Monthly Rtl meetings involve discussions about the whole child with all stakeholders involved. During PLC meetings, teachers use anchor texts and work samples to ensure grade level expectations are the same. Barker curriculum emphasizes deep understanding of important concepts and the development of essential skills through the integration of core subject areas. Science, math, writing, and reading are studied as interrelated units of study where teachers and students make connections across subject areas. Students are involved in setting their own learning goals and demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways. At the end of a lesson/unit of study, students reflect upon their learning. Essential skills are emphasized and teachers look for opportunities to utilize tasks involving higher level thinking. Curriculum expectations are high; therefore, a partnership between the teacher, the students, and the parents is crucial. Teachers at Barker use a variety of challenging and engaging activities that are clearly related to the grade-level standards, concepts, and skills being taught. To increase student collaboration and communication, teachers utilize cooperative learning structures, such as pair/share and gallery walks in which students display their thinking. Socratic circles engage students in deep conversations regarding curriculum issues, and when critiquing and evaluating their own work as well as that of their peers, students become critical thinkers and learners. In some classes, videos created by the students are used to teach others and serve as a resource for parents, also. Multiple learning paths and engaging activities are utilized at RBMS to meet the needs of every learner.

Teachers at Barker use a variety of methods to assess and monitor the progress of student learning. Students are given MAP assessments three times a year in math and literacy which measure grade level ability skills and mastery. The GLOSS and DAZE assessments are administered at the beginning of the year to all students to determine grade-level skills and identify students in need of intervention. Daily formative assessments in multiple forms are used by teachers. All students participate in Genius Hour, a time when students are able to research and create a project about a topic in which they are interested. Genius Hour projects are self-paced and vary in difficulty, thereby meeting the needs of every learner. Students are also assessed in their encore classes by their art and music portfolios they create.

The faculty and master schedule at Barker provide students time to meet rigorous academic standards. Most core class periods have been extended 30 minutes. The PE4 Life program allows a 40 minute time period per day for RTI in literacy and math, which allows for up to 3 days of intervention and still meet the state requirements for PE. During this RTI time, the remediation, Title I, and ESL teachers focus on foundational skills students may lack.

Barker teachers know what each student has learned and still needs to learn. Pre-assessments, classroom formative and summative assessments, and district assessments are used as data points to identify students in need of assistance. A variety of levels of assistance are provided. Teachers work with students before school and during lunch, and point-in-time intervention is provided during the school day for literacy and math. An after-school homework club is offered as well. Students are encouraged to show mastery of skills in a variety of ways. For those students who have mastered the standard, enrichment activities are provided. The adults at Barker Middle school are provided time and frequent opportunities to enhance student achievement by working with colleagues to deepen their knowledge and to improve their standards-based practice. Every core teacher has a built-in PLC representative to serve as the facilitator for our weekly PLC meetings, which consist of focusing on student learning, student work samples, teacher collaboration, and discussion about best practice and students' needs. Teachers are provided time each week to work both with their grade-level team, as well as their subject area colleagues.

Rtl meetings are held once a month to discuss the whole child and his/her progress. The Rtl team consists of counselors, teachers, interventionists, and administrators. District coaches provide trainings and strategies to improve teaching practices.

Developmental Responsiveness

At Ruth Barker Middle School (RBMS), we are sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence and realize the importance in developing the individual strengths of each student who enters through our doors. Every child is viewed as unique and special. Staff members are flexible in their response to meeting each child's needs because they recognize not every child responds the same. Because of this, we are able to commit to offering a wide range of opportunities in order to bring out

the strengths of each child. The RBMS theme for the 2017-2018 school year is "Home," and all staff members strive to make every student feel welcome and comfortable at school. We individually personalize our school environment to support each student's intellectual, ethical, social, and physical development. This is made possible through many academic and extracurricular outlets. Throughout the curriculum, project based learning (PBL), collaborative group work, student choice, and differentiated assessments can be found. Extracurricular examples include of personalized opportunities for development are student initiated clubs, mentoring, advisory, Girls on the Run, elementary and high school partnerships, math enrichment club, Student Council, student ambassadors, student recognition and after school activities for students identified with lack of social opportunities.

We have a comprehensive program to foster healthy physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. To aid our students in their physical development, our counselor works with organizations to provide the resources for snack packs and to provide extra snacks when the school has extended breaks. Food for the snack packs have been secured through partnerships with local businesses and snack packs are assembled by a team of community members who weekly volunteer their time.

The school coordinates with local mental health organizations to provide school based counseling services to students in need of therapy. This allows students access to therapy without missing a large portion of academic instruction. Also, by having therapy within the school it reaches those who may not otherwise be available due to lack of parental resources such as transportation or work constraints. Collaboration also occurs with our Parent-Teacher Organization's (PTO) "Barker Gives Back" program that addresses the individual needs of each child by providing resources such as clothing, school supplies, resources for their home environment and extended holiday food.

Girls on the Run, an afterschool running program for girls, addresses the social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. Teachers work to enhance the curiosity, creativity and the development of social skills for students in a structured and supportive environment. In order to ensure this is happening an advisory time has been established every morning of the school day in which character education lessons are taught. Students discuss such as trustworthiness, organization, responsibility and friendships with their peers and advisor during the advisory period.

Curriculum is both socially significant and relevant to the personal and career interests of young adolescents. Teachers use an interdisciplinary approach to reinforce important concepts, skills, and address real-world problems. All students participate in a weekly Genius Hour during which time they can participate research projects of their own choice. The topics being researched during Genius Hour lead to conversations about career fields and future study. Students are provided multiple opportunities to explore a rich variety of topics and interests in order to develop their identity, learn about their strengths, discover and demonstrate their own competence, and plan for their future.

We have an active Student Council, Principal's Advisory Committee, Book Fair Planning Committee, Student Ambassadors and leadership opportunities in our student-led clubs. Student Council members and student ambassadors are student leaders within the student body providing support to their peers. Clubs allow students to foster individual interests and to share with other like-minded students. RBMS actively seeks leadership opportunities for our students; recognizing that students and parents have more buy-in when students lead the way.

We work with the Illinois Watershed Project, Watch Dog Dads, local counseling agencies, Crystal Bridges Museum, the Amazeum and Ellis Island Simulations. The school provides an age appropriate, co-curricular activities to foster social skills and character, and to develop interests beyond the classroom environment.

Additionally, we have many adult mentors from a variety of backgrounds who come during lunch time to build relationships with students one-on-one and sometimes in small groups. Student led clubs, student council, band, orchestra, choir, talent show, Girls on the Run, Advisory, Bruin Ballers (basketball club), Fine Arts night and Hour of Computer Coding provide students with the opportunity to foster social skills and character development.

Social Equity

We provide all students, regardless of income, disabilities, exceptionalities, or language variances, with equal opportunities to participate in a learning environment where our expectations for behavior and academics cause them to perform to the best of their abilities. We are constantly looking for ways to make inclusion the best option for each and every student so that they are given what they need as individuals to be successful in a classroom of their peers.

We have smaller groups taught by certified teachers. All students are welcome in instrumental or vocal music classes, art classes, technology classes, and our ESL teachers are very involved with the regular education classroom teachers to reinforce instruction. Students with exceptionalities, learning differences, and limited language are placed in mainstream classes. These students are held to the same high standards of academics and behavior as are all students.

Through Project Based Learning, Genius Hour, Makerspace and cross-curricular collaborations, we work to provide our students with various ways to achieve and show their mastery of content standards. By giving students access daily to technology, we are able to foster their questioning, creativity and heterogeneous learning styles that we see leading to excitement and ownership in their learning. Math teachers are CGI trained which lends itself to varied learning styles. Band students are allowed limitless retakes and can use Google Classroom for video playing assignments, and multiple assessment forms are utilized to improve feedback and mastery.

As facilitators of our students' learning we are constantly adapting to the ever-changing needs of our students in order to effectively meet their specific needs.

All students have access to our curriculum, resources, and activities. This includes providing transportation to school events, funds for field trips, and supplies when needed. Student-created rubrics are also used to help with student engagement and choice.

All of our students require and deserve equal access to valuable knowledge across all curriculum and activities. This includes their need for ownership in these opportunities by providing choices in their learning. Our students have electives in sixth grade of various fine-art classes including orchestra, band, performance choir or general music. This helps to ensure that access to all opportunities is uniform for all learners. We have been fortunate to have essentially a 1:1 ratio with computers and this lends itself to an even more technology-fluent classroom environment. The ESL department holds an exit celebration with families to celebrate their success and hard work. We also hold award ceremonies with an open invitation for anyone to come and celebrate what their students are accomplishing. Our teachers communicate with parents weekly, and our social media accounts are kept up-to-date as a point of communication with students and guardians as well.

Consistency of a reward system designed to value diversity, civility, service and democratic citizenship is incredibly important for a cohesive and safe school environment. Barker's values are communicated through our newsletters, websites, citizenship lessons and classroom discussions. We highly value academics and reward those successes by honor roll designations and subject-specific awards.

Just as much emphasis is placed on our students as citizens. We give Barker's Best awards which take note of those students showing leadership, being positive examples, having enthusiastic attitudes, giving outstanding effort, showing integrity, and a willingness to serve others. We have an award named after a former student from Barker who passed away, the Floyd Smith Award, which goes to a student who shows perseverance, leadership and a strong work ethic. There are several other awards like the Barker Bruin Award, the Citizenship Award, and the Kathy Dougan Award that recognize students for overall achievement. These awards give ALL students a chance to be recognized for those attributes that make them a better human being and will affect them in every part of their lives, not only at school.

Organizational Support

Ruth Barker Middle School (RBMS) is an educational community, arranged to support and sustain a trajectory towards excellence. Our district vision statement sums it up in one phrase: "Where Excellence Lives". As we strive towards excellence, our school has a shared vision for learning environment as well as academics. Feeling safe is the major driving force for students and faculty to be able to perform at high levels. We want students to feel safe to explore new concepts, make mistakes and learn from those mistakes. Our vision also includes our commitment to be enthusiastic, self-disciplined, respectful, considerate and encouraging to all people. As a staff we have

landed on four core beliefs which are evidenced throughout everything we do as school community:

- Provide a rigorous academic curriculum
- Be intently focused on the needs of the whole child
- Be actively engaged in learning with our community
- Committed to increasing capacity and legacy building within the teaching profession.

Barker's principal has the responsibility and authority to hold the school-improvement enterprise together, including day-to-day know-how, coordination, strategic planning, and communication. This is our principal's third year as building principal at RBMS. Over the course of the last three years, we have went through the process of establishing core beliefs for our school. This process was inclusive of all stakeholders in the school community. Based upon survey results and multiple academic data points, decisions are made to best serve kids. Communication methods are continuously evaluated to best reach all constituents.

Currently, we have a principal's advisory committee comprised of student leaders, a parent advisory committee, and a school leadership team of teachers. Surveys among these groups along with opportunities for teachers to analyze structural components of our school to provide feedback for growth is used on a frequent basis. School improvement is based off of data and vetted at multiple levels to ensure all student needs are being met. We are a community of practice in which learning, experimentation, and time and opportunity for reflection are the norm.

Students are grouped according to teams so they have smaller learning communities as part of the larger school. Team teachers are scheduled time within the regular school day to meet with one another to address needs of individual and groups of students on their team. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are subject based and are established in which teachers can meet during

school hours at least once week to collaborate and reflect on what is working and to share best practices. At various times during the school year, all teachers will be asked to reflect in surveys how they feel about the success of certain programs being utilized.

Using survey data, programs are then modified and refined. Numerous in-service trainings areas are available to meet the needs of teachers to be sure they are appropriately trained for new situations. We are piloting different student schedule models to find out what works best for improved student learning.

Both RBMS and the Bentonville School District devote resources to content-rich professional development, which is connected to reaching and sustaining the school vision and increasing student achievement. Our school and district will either provide high quality professional development. The district maintains a summer institute with all the training needed from technology, to curriculum, to the emotional and social needs of students.

A middle school institute is held at RBMS at the beginning of the year to provide new professional development opportunities for the upcoming year for educators at all of the district middle schools. Supporting our vision of academic curriculum, math and literacy coaches and curriculum specialists are available throughout the school year and during these training sessions to work with teachers on understanding and implementing their curriculum with rigor. The school and district support our arts programs through funding of training outside our district.

Our local museum (Crystal Bridges) provides high quality training in the visual arts and our band program is part of a Midwest clinic. Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) training is provided to all Pre-AP teachers to insure they meet needs of advanced students. Specialized training on literacy and mathematics intervention programs is also provided to certified staff member. Supporting our vision of the “whole child,” the school counselor provides training on emotional and social needs which in turn will impact academics. Our school is not an island unto itself; it is a part of a larger educational system, i.e. districts, networks and community partnerships. Our school communicates and shares teachers with other middles schools within our district.

The high school orchestra teacher works with beginning orchestra students to ensure a rich music experience throughout a student’s school career and support the vertical alignment Bentonville has for all our music programs. The junior high and high school bands and choirs come perform for our students in order to let our students recognize future opportunities they will have in their education.

Our sixth graders visit the junior highs in the spring to prepare for their next school year and know expectations. The visual arts program has representation on the teacher advisory committee at our local museum. Numerous other high school partnerships exist with high school students leading RBMS students through robotics and civil rights studies, participating in lunch groups, serving as mentors, and just being present at our school to greet our students in the morning or play games with our students at the annual RBMS Tailgate Party before we all head over to support our high school football team on game night.

Supporting our core belief to be actively engaged in learning within our community, we have many business partnerships which includes mentors coming to meet with our students during lunch and recess, volunteers helping with our annual school wide events, and guest speakers demonstrating the use of outdoor sporting equipment and bicycles with our physical education

classes. Our library has special parent day(s)/night(s) opening up to support literacy and providing muffins with mom and donuts with dad events. Our district math and literacy coaches and curriculum specialists help facilitate communication in programs across all middle schools and the understanding of state and district student learning expectations and curriculum maps. Open house, parent teacher conferences and PTO further our line of communications with parents and their resources to our community.

Our school staff holds itself accountable for the students' success. Supporting our core belief of rigorous academic curriculum, we practice and teach our students about growth mindset. Teachers have students keep track of their own data through charts and rubrics for self-reflection and teachers use this data to help students find appropriate targets. Many interim formative assessments are used in which students make projections and predictions before tests and then use goal setting forms with teacher guidance. Teachers then use the collected data to determine if extra lessons should be conducted over certain material. Our special education department has quarterly monitoring and adjustments are made as needed. Each student in our building is partnered with an advisory teacher and through regular advisory time, has the opportunity for one on one conferencing about grades.

One of our most effective tools is our RTI, response to intervention meetings. Teachers meet monthly to create fluid groups of students in need of intervention. Teachers review multiple data points on each student and determine if the student is on tier I, which is the goal for all students; tier II, in need of intervention from the regular teacher or a team teacher during a scheduled intervention period each week; or tier III, which moves the student into a three-day-a-week program with a math or literacy specialist or interventionist. The ultimate goal is moving all students back to tier I, or regular classroom instruction and support. Our PLCs help keep teachers on the same page about what is working best in reaching students within their own subject area.

Teachers collaborate to help students with goal setting after formative testing. Many teachers participate in committees to update curriculum and all teachers seek our professional development to enhance learning. The school and district staffs work with colleges and universities to recruit, prepare, and mentor novice and experienced teachers. Our district fully supports many of the local higher education institutions by providing observation and student internships within the district. When a new teacher begins in our district they will participate in a new teacher orientation and gain support in their buildings through PLC's.

We have partnered with the College of Education at the University of Arkansas for the 2017-18 school year to provide multiple internship opportunities. These interns begin their internship during teacher in-service prior to the start of the school year to get the entire picture of what education is really all about.

A partnership with the University of Arkansas Office Of Educational Innovation and the Walton Family Foundation allows travel for our teachers to make observations of schools which have seen large growth in student achievement. Bentonville High School and Bentonville West High School

students who are interested in the education profession are invited in from career classes to job shadow.

We include families and community members in the process of setting goals and supporting the school's trajectory toward high performance. The needs of the whole child is a core belief we have at RBMS. Part of these needs are filled through extracurricular activities. Families support those activities by helping our school during our annual events such as the book fair, dodgeball dance party fundraiser, tailgate party and end of the year celebrations. Parents take leadership roles in helping design activities of high interest for their children. Many parents as community members take

part as guest speakers in class and during career day presentations. To support academics, parents have anytime access to our online gradebook and can contact a teacher at any time to schedule a conference. Our district and school provide confidential parent surveys allowing them to assess how we are doing at communication between the school and the community. As a result, we have altered our PTO meetings to occur at different times each month to accommodate the needs of multiple parents wishing to participate.

Our WatchDog Dads program trains and communicates with fathers to come be a part of the school day to help patrol hallways, support students in academics and participate in recess and lunchtime activities. Parents are also involved and represented in committees such as the parent involvement plan, school improvement plan, and the ways to spend growth money related to testing outcomes. Parents are a crucial part to the whole child and have welcome input at RBMS.