

# SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL TO WATCH



## CAMPOBELLO GRAMLING SCHOOL

### 2016 - 17 School Statistics

(Source: PowerSchool, Pearson Education Inc.)

Community: Rural  
Enrollment: 250 Middle School, 760 Total  
Grade Levels: K-8  
School Schedule: Traditional

#### Student Demographics

3.7%	Hispanic
92%	White
<1%	Asian
2.9%	African American
0%	American Indian (Native American)

50%	Free/Reduced Lunch
11.5%	English Learners
N/A	Mobility Rate

#### ESEA / Federal Accountability Rating System

Overall Weighted Points Total: 92.5  
Overall Grade Conversion: A



#### Redesignation I in 2016;

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## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

Rigorous Expectations & Extra Assistance - Campobello Gramling School continues to pride itself on academic excellence. With programs in place to help students who need to achieve proficiency and students who are ready to be accelerated to the next level, our middle school has changed itself in the past two years to specifically address the needs of all students. In order to achieve rigorous expectations for all students, we have implemented a change in how we assign classes for students. We have incorporated a new “cohort” program for our advanced students and moved others to new honors classes. We continue to provide ample opportunities for success. We pride ourselves on the opportunities we provide our students to succeed. Below are some of our strategies:

Students who fail an assessment or fail to master a concept are given the opportunity to correct work until they can produce a passing grade if the teacher feels like the student needs another opportunity. In most cases, the grade reflects an average of the original score and the re-test score.

Students who fail to turn in homework assignments are given the opportunity to work with a teacher during lunch to make up that missing work.

Also, we have begun “Workday Wednesdays” in the early bus and car rider rooms where students can get help from several adults on duty. We offer assistance with homework or projects. Teachers arrive early to help students who may need supplies or other resources for class projects.

Each spring, all middle school teachers stay after school for an hour every Tuesday to help students in the Wildcat Club. Wildcat Club students may be chosen to attend, or they may volunteer if they believe they need extra help in any subject. Special education, resource and ESOL teachers also stay after school to provide additional help to any students. To ensure social equity, the school provides bus service home for any child who wishes to stay. As a result, transportation does not prevent anyone from participating.

Curriculum & Critical Thinking- Along with the South Carolina State Standards, our school incorporates the Making Middle Grades Work philosophy of requiring critical thinking and deep understanding. Teachers focus on instruction that requires thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving. For example, teachers design classroom instruction and reflections that promote the higher-level thinking required to read and think at the most complex levels. Also, our English teachers use Socratic Seminar, a classroom practice that allows the students to reach the deeper thinking and understanding of a text. This type of activity is student-focused and allows students time to articulate their thoughts and think critically about a text. Teachers in our math department rely on real-world math problems that allow our students to see how math is applicable in everyday life. These include integer games, virtual shopping trips, CGS Kitchen activities and other problem-solving tasks.

Scheduling for Maximum Student Interaction - At the time of our initial designation, our master schedule had been customized to maximize student/teacher interaction. This year, our master schedule has once again been reviewed and changed to meet the needs of all of our students. We found that many of our advanced learners needed options for classes that we were not currently providing. Many of these changes came about as a result our self-study at the time of our initial designation. With the support of our district, we have implemented the following changes to ensure ALL students have access to the appropriate course offering:

The addition of an 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra I class that begins at 7:30 a.m. to allow for the 90-minute block requirement

The addition of an 8<sup>th</sup> grade Geometry class to be offered in the spring

The addition of a 8<sup>th</sup> grade English I course for high school credit

The addition of a mixed 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra IA class that meets all year

The addition of a mixed 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra I class

The addition of new exploratory classes in drama and Spanish better meet the interests of our students.

Mentor & Interest Program for all students in grades 6-8---Teachers, coaches, administrators, counselors and school staff have all created small interest clubs. Students will be able to join these small clubs and meet once a month with a teacher/advisor. These groups will stay constant all year and teachers and advisors follow up with students to make sure they are successful in academic classes.

The creation of a digital basics class to ensure success with 1:1 Google Chromebooks for all students

The addition of a computer applications course that was moved from the high school to the middle school  
Continuous Professional Development - Administrators continue to provide top-level professional development at our school based on a needs assessment. Teachers meet with curriculum coaches in Monday afternoon training sessions and learn innovative classroom strategies. Administrators meet weekly with middle school staff to discuss students of concern and allow for vertical and horizontal planning. To ensure the highest level of expertise in reading instruction, our special education teachers, along with our 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies teacher, are trained in Reading Recovery. Most classroom teachers are endorsed to teach Gifted/Talented, or they are currently seeking endorsement. Much of our professional development is teacher-generated and teacher-facilitated. Teachers who have attended professional development share what they have learned with the faculty.

Interdisciplinary Curriculum - As a school committed to STEAM, we have increased our incorporation of art in the classroom. For example, just last year, each student created an art project in science to include illustrations of all parts of an animal cell. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, ELA students complete an art-inspired research project that culminates in an 8<sup>th</sup> grade art show attended by students, parents, district staff, and members of the community. This project is part of a grant awarded to our school by the Spartanburg County Council. In special education, music is incorporated in learning. In sixth grade, students participate in an Egyptian museum where they design and create pieces that would belong in an Ancient Egypt museum exhibit.

### **Developmental Responsiveness**

CGS understands the adolescent child and strives to create programs and classes with the particular needs of an adolescent in mind. With our unique opportunity to foster a child's development from K4 through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, we are able to allow our adolescent learners to flow naturally into the middle school setting with the comfort of "never leaving home." Campobello Gramling School is located in a small rural community, and the families of our students are an integral part of the community. Over the 10 years that our students are in attendance at CGS, we

pride ourselves on building strong relationships while working equally hard to make sure any new students are welcomed with open arms and made to feel like part of our family. To ease transitions, we have added 5<sup>th</sup> grade parent meetings and orientations so that the family feels a part of the transition from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, even though the physical transition is only down the hall. CGS provides many different services to our students to foster growth and development of the whole child. The following programs address the needs of our students in a variety of ways:

Backpacks of Hope provide healthy snacks for students that may not have enough food over the weekend.

The ESOL teacher makes Rosetta Stone available to all of our ESOL families.

The school library is open for families to attend one day each week during the summer.

Our school nurse is available to parents and students to assist families in seeking medical services and completing Medicaid applications.

Meet the Teacher Night, Open House, Parent Information Sessions & Conferences are all avenues for parent communication and involvement at our school.

All middle school parent conferences are student-led.

During normal classroom periods, teachers continue to differentiate lessons for small groups of students based on data-driven needs. As teachers move away from whole-group instruction, they have begun to organize classrooms into learning stations and use technology collaboration stations to encourage group work and real-world problem solving in teams. Self-contained special education students have rigorous academic expectations as well. Our special education teacher is a district leader in writing grants to ensure that her students are constantly engaged in learning that stimulates their minds and encourages real-world simulation activities.

We believe community service and philanthropy play a huge role in the development of the adolescent child.

We provide ample opportunities for our students to give back to others. Five years ago Campobello Gramling began creating and collecting Christmas cards to be distributed to veteran nursing facilities and hospitals. This is done with the support of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Through these efforts, CGS alone has delivered over 23,500 cards to America's heroes. Under the CGS Jr. Beta Club's leadership, our card drive went district wide last year collecting a total of 18,000 cards. In the past three years, the CGS Jr. Beta Club spearheaded a school-wide drink can tab drive where can tabs were donated to our local Ronald McDonald House. Over 593,000 tabs, equaling over 590 pounds, have been donated to help in their fundraising efforts. Providing new leadership opportunities for our middle school students remains a top priority for us. We are constantly seeking ways for our students to be leaders in our school community and the community as a whole.

Each day, core teachers facilitate RtI Focus Groups, a specific time for students to receive extra help or

enrichment at his or her own learning level. Each semester, the superintendent, assistant superintendent and all cabinet staff spend a day at our school reviewing our data plan and intervention success. Teachers prepare oral interview questions (asked in advance) so administration can ensure that all teachers are using interventions that are in alignment with the school and district goals. In these interviews, teachers are able to share the many successes they have had in the classroom that previous semester.

In a continuing effort to educate the whole child, we have expanded our extra-curricular program in the last three years. All students are encouraged to participate in athletics or arts activities to foster a culture in which they can develop interests outside of academia. In addition to the middle school sports offered at our school, we encourage all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to participate in an activity at one of the two high schools in our district. Students currently participate in cross country, track, basketball, baseball, golf, softball, tennis, volleyball, weightlifting, soccer, band, winter guard, competitive cheer, and tennis. Bus transportation is provided by the district to both high schools each afternoon for those students participating at the high school level. This bus ensures social equity because transportation does not prevent anyone from participating at the high school level.

CGS fosters each student's personal development, health, wellness and safety. Our developmental guidance and counseling program supports the personal, social, educational, and career development of all students. In an effort to get students to begin thinking about their futures as soon as possible, we have chosen a program called Project AIM (Adult Identity Mentoring) to implement in our 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Project AIM challenges students to think about their future in a positive way. Students will participate in structured lessons aimed at identifying personal strengths and resources necessary for success while considering ways to safeguard their futures.

### **Social Equity**

Campobello Gramling School continues to provide fair access to education and resources for all of its students without regard to socioeconomic status, race, or ethnicity. We have participation by all student groups in many aspects of our academic, community, and programs. We are always looking for ways to ensure social equity at CGS.

In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, our academically and artistically gifted students participate in our Excel GT program and Studio Art. All of these classes and programs include students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and home language.

CGS uses a standard behavior plan for all of its middle school students so that they will know what behavior is acceptable and not.

Staff members routinely analyze and act upon referral and suspension data to make sure that no one group of students is unfairly singled out by classroom staff. (Self-study rubric strength)

Counseling, advisory sessions and frequent parent-teacher communication reduce the amount of

out-of-school and in-school suspensions, allowing for greater amounts of time in the classroom for all children.

A dedicated, full-time administrator for middle school handles discipline issues before they escalate, virtually eliminating missed class time because of out-of-school or in-school suspension. Teachers understand that proactive interventions are necessary to reduce referrals and suspensions. Opportunities allow students to grow an appreciation of other cultures in reader's theatre productions, Fine Arts Day, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade multi-cultural art show, speeches and participation in a variety of writing, poetry and art contests.

There is a 100% attendance rate for all 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents each spring at Individualized Graduation Plan conferences.

Beginning in 2016, all 8<sup>th</sup> graders receive an opportunity at no cost to take the PSAT each fall. Teachers continually survey students' learning styles in order to address the needs of all students. They use cooperative learning groups, learning centers, stations, and small focus groups that are tailored to the different strengths and weaknesses of each student. Our school still uses programs such as Study Island and Fountas and Pinnell to pre-assess students to help teachers ensure that each student is receiving focused help in particular areas of weakness. Science and social studies teachers have added USA Test Prep as a tool for creating benchmarks. We have added Kahn Academy to our repertoire of on-line tools for pre-assessing and individualized instruction in math. All students have access to this free, online program.

Sixth Grade Gifted/Talented (Excel) classes are spent developing social/emotional relationships within the classroom and to guarantee classroom equality with team and community building. Sixth grade teachers also use orbital time to ensure that students from all backgrounds have to have equal access to school materials and resources.

Our bilingual or ESOL students receive copies of letters home in their native language. Our ESOL teacher is fluent in three languages and acts as a translator to our large Russian and Ukrainian population. She acts as a liaison between teachers and parents to create an open line of communication. Gifted/Talented teachers maintain open dialogue with all resource, special education, and ESOL teachers to ensure equality and opportunity. To ensure social equity in our special education population, all special education students are an integral part of our school community. The self-contained students participate with the student council by providing morning announcements. They also assist the PTO with holiday activities and participate fully in school clubs. Our unique K4-8<sup>th</sup> grade structure is key to knowing our students. Because so many of our students attend school here from pre-school through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, we are intimately familiar with the students' home life and background. We appreciate

the different sets of values that each culture holds and we honor those traditions in our home-school relations. Our school's reward systems are designed to honor academic excellence as well as service, artistic talent, and character. Student of the Month awards are given for perseverance, compassion, trustworthiness, and responsibility.

As technology continues to be a focus in the classroom, we integrate technology as much as possible. All 3<sup>rd</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> grade students at CGS have access to a district-provided Google Chromebook. As part of our district's new technology initiative that is designed to ensure technological equity, students utilize technological devices every day. Teachers use programs such as Google Docs and Google Classroom as a way of reflecting and enhancing their learning. Students who do not have access to internet at home can download files to their Google drive and use their computers at home. Then, the next morning, they can sync their files with the school's internet. This has resulted in a great deal more socioeconomic equity between students who have access to a computer at home and those who do not. Students have access to tools such as the Read/Write app that allows our students with reading deficiencies to understand difficult text. Students now have access to many translation tools on their laptops to further eliminate inequality caused by a language barrier.

Another improvement we have made since our initial designation is the implementation of our anti-bullying program. Olweus is a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention that includes school, classroom, individual and community components. Students meet weekly in Olweus groups where we discuss bullying, fitting in, cultural and ethical differences, and a variety of strategies students can use to find, prevent, and counteract bullying in our school.

### **Organizational Structure & Support**

Our administration recognizes the need for our school to be a leader in the community. This fall, the Google Learning executive team, along with other district visitors and SDE leaders, visited our school for feedback on our new technology initiative. Students and teachers were called upon to talk with team members about their experiences. Recently, as part of our technology initiative, members of the academic community in Spartanburg reached out to us as part of the Technology symposium (STEP UP) on the USC Upstate campus. The symposium offered an opportunity to share and learn about uses of technology in teaching and learning in the liberal arts and the professions. Our students demonstrated their skills with technology and explained to college professors some expectations for their college experience. Symposium participants were very impressed with the students' experiences in District 1 and many remarked that, "Your students' presentation was the highlight of the conference." Our school is committed to the beliefs in the South Carolina Profile of a High School graduate. Our priorities are in line with providing our students an education that includes world-class knowledge, world-class skills and life and career characteristics.

Campobello Gramling School provides a *quality, student-centered education*. We believe that all students can learn and that students and teachers should engage in relevant learning experiences daily. A commitment to learning is evident at every level in the district. Campobello Gramling School welcomes student teachers and practicum students from area colleges and universities. We have a strong desire to provide strong leadership to teachers who may return to CGS. We value being able to pass on knowledge from lessons learned, and we believe we offer some of the best opportunities for future teachers to see quality instruction.

Our self rating indicates that we believe there is always room for improvement. We know that we have never truly arrived at perfection in education because the needs of our students are constantly changing as are the demands of the educational culture. After our last self study, we improved and expanded our middle school club program, implemented an anti-bullying program and expanded student access to technology. We customized our traditional middle school schedule to meet the needs of more students and worked within our district to provide two secondary certified teachers to complement our middle school faculty.

We are still committed to analyzing data and instruction to maximize our students' success. CGS teachers know a rich academic history of each student before they ever step foot into their classroom. On our Self-Study and

### **Campobello Gramling Shared Vision**

All students will learn.

Students and teachers are engaged in relevant learning experiences daily.

Students feel safe.

A sense of urgency and high expectations exist for all stakeholders.

Rating Rubric, it is no surprise that several of our high scores were in data collection, analysis and decision-making. The vertical articulation is strengthened greatly by having K4 – 8<sup>th</sup> grades housed under one roof. Teachers are able to share learning styles and student needs at the end of each year and then again at the beginning of each year. Our team scored itself highly on holding ourselves accountable for student success. Again, this is one of our strongest areas as a middle school because we are constantly using data to identify areas for improvement or change.

This year's theme at our school is "From the Mountains to the Sea, CGS is the Place to Be." We collectively chose that theme because we truly believe that our school is one of the finest in the state of South Carolina. While we are always seeking ways to improve, we know that we are a leader when it comes to academic excellence, adolescent development, social equity and organizational leadership. CGS knows that education is a shared responsibility between school, home and the community and that effective leadership will impact teaching and learning. We believe that student work should be displayed and celebrated, and that failure is not an option. We employ a variety of instructional strategies that will maximize student achievement. We understand that

collaboration and incorporation of technology will prepare our students to be 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. We have fully embraced the Profile of a High School Graduate concept, and we are in the process of continued improvement. We teach students to think and problem solve.

Like most places in the small towns in South Carolina, we are always ready for visitors and look forward to sharing our good news with friends. We had a story to share when we received our initial designation as a South Carolina School to Watch, and that story continues today. Our doors remain open to schools who would like to see our commitment to and our love for students. Let us show you why we are proud of what we do and why we believe we are *still* a South Carolina school to watch.