



## Mattoon Middle School

*Insert photo  
of school here.*

### Mattoon Middle School Mattoon CUSD #2

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## 2014-2015 School Statistics

Community: Mattoon CUSD #2 is a K-12 rural district in Central Illinois whose population nears 20,000.

Enrollment: 730  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: 8:30am-3:30pm

### Student Demographics

- 4.2% Hispanic
- 88.8% White
- 3.5% African American
- 0.1% American Indian
- 0.1% Asian
- 0% Pacific Islander
- 3.3% Multi-racial
- 61% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 0.1% English Learners
- 14.2% Students with Disabilities

2014-2015 Attendance: 94%

### 2014 ISAT & 2015 PARCC Data:

- 73% N/AE
- 77% N/AE-ELA
- 70% N/AE
- 65% N/AE-ELSA

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices for Mattoon Middle School

### Academic Excellence

- MMS staff universally implements a consistent approach to identifying learner outcomes as a part of instruction. MMS staff now uses: *I Can, So That, I Know I Have It When...* statements as a universal approach to identifying learner objectives.
- Essential Skills work has become an important part of our collaborative efforts at MMS. The process develops over the course of five levels. Level 1 encourages overall reflection on the content-specific standards and then identification of the ten most important skills students would need to successfully transition forward. Level 2 calls for the vertical and horizontal articulation of the skills and the elimination of any overlap. Level 3 charges teachers to uniformly weave the essential skills into their lesson plans and to develop a communication plan for the skills. Level 4 requires teachers to incorporate other content area skills into

their content preparation. Level 5 is the creation of common assessments that incorporate essential skills from the various content areas.

- Over the past three years, we have made great strides in the area of interdisciplinary instruction. For instance, the Renaissance Unit in Grade 6 has grown from one team to both teams and now encompasses all sixth grade students. The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade continues to develop their Holocaust Unit, which they would modestly still describe as more cross-curricular than interdisciplinary. What's more, however, is the teaming dialogue that now exists on common vocabulary. As IDU's continue to develop, cross-curricular and interdisciplinary instruction continues to evolve, which is resulting in themed team planning for long-term coordination. This type of planning and development coincides well with the strategic plan of implementing essential skills at every grade and subject. Through our strategic plan, faculty meetings this year are focusing on three of the six ELA pedagogical shifts stemming from Common Core and the remaining three next year (e.g., building knowledge in the disciplines, text-based answers, and academic vocabulary.)
- Over the past two years, MMS has been transitioning from two separate 44-minute reading and language arts classes to one 91-minute, blocked English language arts class. This larger block of time allows our ELA teachers to more thoroughly integrate literacy skills, and it provides our students with the time they need to approach the subject at a deeper level. Because of lunch periods, we still have one split class, which isn't necessarily ideal; however, staff pays careful attention to student needs when placing students in either the blocked or the split classes and can move a student from one to the other as needed. To our surprise, the split class has actually been a better fit for some of our students.
- MMS offers a "working lunch" program called Lunch and Learn, which is facilitated by a certified staff member. On a daily basis, students may opt to spend their lunch period completing assignments, making up tests or quizzes, or studying in general.
- MMS now conducts a weekly eligibility check for ALL Mattoon Middle School students. Students with failing grades in any class are not qualified to attend extra-curricular events such as ball games and dances. As the year progresses and the popularity of these events increases, the number of students failing has been decreasing. We now see students reminding and encouraging each other to do well in school, so everyone will be eligible to participate in these events. We continue to explore the notion that instead of measuring achievement by week we want to look at their overall progress over their course of the entire year.

## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- Mattoon Middle School maintains an Advisory program. Advisory is a time of the day that builds on relationships, goal setting, bullying prevention, the virtues project, and meeting the social-emotional learning standards. The Advisory program is continually evolving to ensure that the essential components are being maintained while balancing the requirements of RtI. The Advisory committee that once existed as a voluntary committee for staff now exists as a standing committee. In short, the building has placed greater emphasis on Advisory and its components as students have identified through surveys that Advisory is something they truly enjoy about their time at MMS.
- MMS strives to ensure every student has at least one trusted adult. Students complete a survey indicating which adults at MMS they trust and would confide in. Students' names are then provided to the adult to begin building further relationships, and students who

provide no names are quickly attended to with the hopes that they will soon be able to identify with a trusted adult.

- MMS partners with a variety of community-based organizations to meet kids' needs. The First Christian Church partnered with Mattoon Schools to provide school supplies and waivers for 10 PE uniforms to be distributed as need arose. The Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital Dental Bus comes to MMS to provide dental services to students in need of no-cost dental services. I Sing the Body Electric brings their displays to our students to show healthy choices. Heart Smart for Teens is a program through SBLHC that delivers information to females about healthy choices. TRIO is a program through Lake Land College that is intended for first generation college-eligible students and low-income families. The Kiwanis Club conducts its meetings at MSM and we host the annual Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast.
- The 7<sup>th</sup> grade math classes utilize *Foundations for Middle School Students* from Dave Ramsey to initiate financial literacy early before poor decisions are made in adult life.
- MMS continues to build on its Essentials offerings, basing the courses on our students' interests. MMS offers Spanish, Music Appreciation, Theater, Drama, FACS, Careers, Guitar, International Drumming, Industrial Tech, Band, Chorus, Art, Agriculture, and Foods.
- Students serve on Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals committees at Mattoon Middle School. These students work alongside board members, community/business leaders, parents, staff, and administrators to ensure our school continues to grow and thrive both now and in the future.
- Students participate in student-led conferences to present their work portfolio to parents and discuss strengths, goals, and progress.
- Students take an active role serving over 500 people during the annual Community Chili Supper at MMS each November.

## Social Equity

- MMS continues to work towards a more-standards based form of assessing student learning, which by its nature, encourages differentiating instruction and assessment. Our exploration is causing teachers to welcome a variety of forms of expression to demonstrate learning in our classrooms.
- MMS now offers each fall a Parent Forum Night which offers resources and education on topics such as parenting tips for teens, bullying prevention, homework help, standards-based grading, the teen brain, helping teens cope with stress, improving literacy in the home, and digital citizenship.
- MMS participates in online book studies (*Mindset, Move Your Bus*, etc.) as a way to inspect, reflect, and change its culture.
- Counselors and special education teachers loop with kids during their three years at MMS in order to create a consistent advocate for their personal issues, needs, and successes.
- All students with special needs are afforded the opportunity to attend all Essential and core classes to the fullest extent possible.
- The area-wide Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program is now a permanent fixture in Mattoon Schools. We have added sign language as a new language in our building

- MMS is the leading force behind our community-wide literacy efforts. The MMS Reading Committee distributes 1000 books throughout our community each year and students present to many civic groups
- Mattoon Middle School continues to be an active member in the Back Pack Program in conjunction with the Mattoon Ministerial Alliance. MMS is providing food-filled packs for 85 students.
- In an effort to encourage all students and their families to participate in student-led conferences, MMS offers free transportation to and from the conferences. We want families to become an active part of the MMS learning community and to hear, first hand, their child's progress.
- Multiple forms of communication are used with families, including traditional means as well as email, Skyward messaging, Remind, Facebook, and podcasts.
- We have regularly scheduled assemblies to recognize student successes at MMS. We recognize achievements in sports and academic honors, and we also recognize students who demonstrate excellence in the performing arts, good citizenship, service, attendance, and school spirit.
- The PAWS reward system has been around for over twelve years and continues to be an essential piece for celebrating student successes. The annual kick off universally teaches and models expectations using one of three rotating themes: Basic Training, CSI, and TIKI Time. In addition, teams formally revisit the expectations after returning from winter break, spring break, and whenever needed. All students are provided consistent and fair expectations and are rewarded equally as such. Monthly, our kids are able to attend the PAWS Store and spend their PAWS on a spectrum of prizes. The store is run exclusively by parents and supplemented by our Wildcat Parent Pack.

## **Organizational Support**

- MMS is an active member of its state middle school association; Association of Illinois Middle-grades Schools (AIMS). MMS participates in AIMS round table discussions throughout the state on a variety of topics and also annually attends AISM Summer Splash to listen to the country and state's experts share middle school best practices. MMS is also committed to national conferences for obtaining the foremost in middle level education as was we send staff members to the National Schools to Watch Conference triennially in Washington DC as well as the Association of Middle Level Educators national conferences in Louisville, KY (2011), Portland, OR (2012); Minneapolis, MN (2013); and Nashville, TN (2104). MMS will be presenting in Austin in 2016!
- Effective teaming is at our core. Leadership is shared, and the teams ensure that each thread of operation is relevant and tied to children first. Administration works very closely with team leaders not only in the distribution of information, but also where systems evaluation and implementation are concerned. Teams assign its members roles with which to most effectively serve students and the team.
- Communication is key and members of the learning community are offered a variety of communicative options to obtain information. We offer Principal Podcasts weekly, Skyward Alert messaging, emails, the Mattoon Community Unit School District #2 Facebook and web pages, Remind 101, radio, and much more!

- To help transition 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their families from elementary to middle school, MMS offers 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation in the spring and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Discovery Day a few days ahead of the first day of school. In addition, MMS offers 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientations as well, assisting in each student's transition from one grade to the next. As 8<sup>th</sup> Graders look to transition to Mattoon High School, we work in conjunction with MHS to assist in their registration for classes and host assemblies by MHS JROTC and FFA to expose kids to various opportunities. MMS 8<sup>th</sup> Graders also attend the Freshmen Orientation in January. We have been cognizant of the need to preserve our students' place as middle grades learners while helping them look ahead to the next stage of their learning.
- Mattoon Middle School has become, over the past couple of years, a focal point of Eastern Illinois University. As the university continues to develop its middle level program, it's recognizing the vast resources we are able to provide for its students, and conversely we are able to utilize the staff, resources that a large university can provide, and undergrads to better implement our programs. MMS students, families, and staff participate in SEE Day (Social and Emotional Excellence) at EIU. Mattoon Middle School also serves as the venue for EIU's SPE4800 practicum course (Diagnosis and Assessment of Learners with Exceptional Learning Needs.) In short, many partnerships between MMS and EIU are in existence and the two parties are now, more than ever, fostering those partnerships for mutual gain.