



SCHOOLS TO WATCH — INDIANA SCHOOLS TO WATCH MODEL SCHOOL — VISITOR’S GUIDE



Northridge Middle School



2014-2015 School Statistics

Community: Rural
 Enrollment: 1050
 Grade Levels: 6-8
 School Schedule: Traditional

Student Demographics

- 8% Hispanic
- 88% White
- >1% African American
- 2% Multi-racial
- 1% Asian
- 30% Free/Reduced Lunch

2014 National and State Schools to Watch
 2013-2014 IDOE “A Rated” School

Designated in 2014

Northridge Middle School • Middlebury Community School Corporation • Elkhart County
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ISTEP+ Scores	2012	2013	2014
Math	91.3%	92%	93.7%
English/LA	79.8%	80.4%	82.4%
Science	70.7%	76.1%	69.6%
Soc Studies	77.7%	77.7%	78.5%
Attendance	96%	95.9%	96.3%

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence:

- The curriculum at Northridge Middle School is intended to be rigorous, to meet the needs of the whole child, and to be differentiated to meet each student’s individual needs.
- Students are offered demanding elective offerings that include: Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Technology, Health, CPR/ First Aid, PE, Family and Consumer Science, 2 Dimensional Art, 3 Dimensional Art, Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, and Music Exploration.
- NMS classrooms are fully equipped with technology, including Promethean boards, LCD projectors, netbooks, active responders, and desktop computers to meet our 21st century academic needs.
- 25%-33% of all Northridge Middle School 8th graders take Algebra 1. For 7+ years we have had a 100% pass rate on the Indiana End of Course Assessments.
- Students who score Pass+ in both areas of ISTEP+ have the opportunity to take the Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search Tests, which includes EXPLORE, ACT, and SAT.
- The 6+1 writing traits are used by all of the Language Arts teaching staff at Northridge Middle School to speak a consistent language with students and their writing.

- Reading Plus is a data based technology that is used with 25% of our students to continue growth in reading rate and fluency.
- NMS students have the ability to participate in numerous extra-curricular opportunities that are academic based, including: Spell Bowl, Science Olympiad, Math Counts, St. Mary's Calculator Contest, Academic Super Bowl, Rocket Club, Computer Coding Club, Spanish Club, Chinese Club, Art Club and oratorical contests.
- All NMS students participate in weekly keyboarding instruction.
- Students' reading levels are assessed three times a year via the STAR Reading test, and all students are assessed weekly on writing skills using the PEG Writing software
- Our self-created character education program (GO RAIDERS) focuses on a new theme each month and is discussed daily with students. The Project Wisdom literature and connections are included with this as well.
- Civic responsibility is also something we believe strongly in, and our students participate in numerous volunteering activities outside of our traditional school day.
- Our Ability Day provides our students an awareness of different types of disabilities and how they can become better friends/ helpers for those in need.
- We believe strongly in the 21st Century Skills and our need to educate students about the global marketplace. This has been our focus curriculum through Junior Achievement.
- Principals and teachers are evaluated using the McRel teacher assessment model which is heavily based on the ideals of the Professional Learning Community Model as well as 21st Century Skills.
- Staff participates in full staff professional development sessions, department meetings, PLC meetings, and School Improvement Committee meetings during our Late Arrival Wednesday times.
- A New Teacher Club that meets monthly with the administration and mentor teachers to help acclimate new teachers to our school and bring them up to date with past professional development trainings.
- Interdisciplinary teams at Northridge Middle School help us to ensure student success and academic excellence by creating a smaller "school within a school" learning communities.
- Our counselors and administrators meet weekly with each team to provide services and intervention strategies for struggling learners or students in need.
- Teachers have a common planning time daily to meet with instructional teams and data teams.
- Common formative assessments are given quarterly through the PLC process based on content standards and literacy standards across all courses.
- Data from ISTEP+, Acuity, and Common Quarterly assessments drives instruction. Data Team (PLC) data is posted quarterly on teachers' doors (and on the data website), charting student progress, standards assessed, interventions given, and extension activities.
- NMS teachers post daily classroom objectives, standards addressed, 21st Century Skills covered, and any applicable NMS character education traits in their classrooms. All PLC related data, including copies of assessments, are posted on our online wiki page.
- Our case management team made up of counselors, administrators, and our social worker meet weekly to discuss students in the greatest need of additional support.
- Special education teachers co-teach with math, language arts, science, and social studies teachers.
- RTI, Academy, and special education services help students continue to show exceptional academic growth.
- Homework is posted daily for all Northridge Middle School students on one central website as a communication extension with parents.
- Students are recognized for academic successes through the following: quarterly VIP luncheons, Principal Recognition Luncheons, and monthly awards ceremonies, Pep sessions, VIP Tea, Honors Breakfast, 8th Grade awards ceremony, and National Junior Honor Society.
- Every student ends their day at NMS in a course titled RaFT (Raider Focus Time). This course allows every student to meet with one of their core classroom teachers, receive additional academic support before going home for the day as well as participate in school wide silent sustained reading time.

- PASS (Program for After School Support) is offered twice a week to any student who wishes to receive additional academic support from our certified teaching staff.
- Our Adults Reaching Middlebury Students (ARMS) program also helps our students find mentors to help motivate and navigate through the challenges of middle school.
- Our annual community survey also provides feedback on our programming that helps us maintain our academic excellence.

Developmental Responsiveness:

- Data is collected annually from our Olweus Anti Bullying Survey, the Indiana University Drug/ Tobacco/ and Alcohol survey, and our annual community survey to make sure we are meeting the needs of our students.
- Our daily announcements include Project Wisdom curriculum and NMS Character education connections to motivate and reinforce positive attitudes.
- Individual and small group counseling opportunities are available to all students.
- LEAD Day (through our counseling office) offers 7th and 8th grade students a chance to lead at a deeper level in: character education, leadership skills building, and collaborative team building exercises.
- The Northridge Middle School counseling department also provides classroom instruction in: career planning, digital reputation, college preparation, scholarship education, and anti-bullying.
- Three counselors and a school resource officer provide assistance to struggling students and families in times of need.
- Students with identified disabilities are serviced through our special education department. Our school implements a full inclusion model with additional supports available through a functional skills classroom and a mixed ability classroom.
- Our RTI program is designed with a pyramid of interventions to best meet the needs of our students and is communicated across the school to staff via a custom PowerSchool intervention page.
- More intensive Tier 3 services are offered via our Academy Alternative School.
- An Academic Support course helps students learn how to organize their school resources, learn better study skills, and provide assistance with daily homework.
- Recommendations for student placement happen via our case management weekly meetings (counselors, administrators, and our school social worker), as well as our guidance team meetings.
- RaFT (Raider Focus Time) allows all students to end their day with a core teacher for the purpose of getting organized and receiving last minute assistance on any academic work before going home.
- Our Olweus Anti-Bullying monthly class meetings assure that we continue to address this critical need of our middle school.
- PASS (Program for After School Support) is offered twice a week so that students may receive additional assistance after school with two of our certified teachers.
- Teachers are organized into interdisciplinary teams at Northridge Middle School.
- Professional Learning Communities are a critical component of our teaming structure and our school. This helps us offer a small setting to support the needs of our students by creating a personalized learning environment.
- Our purposeful and collaborative schedule allows interdisciplinary teams to meet daily with peers. Teachers meet twice a week with their PLC data teams, twice a week as instructional teams alone, and once a week with their grade level counselor and administrator. The purposes of these are to discuss both students' academic needs as well as social/ emotional needs.
- Staff members communicate with each other on student needs via two online resources. The first is our school created wiki page. This is our data warehouse for all student data. The second is our custom PowerSchool page which allows us to document interventions given to each student from year to year.

- Our teachers post homework assignments daily on a website that all of our students and families can access from home (www.whatsduetoday.org).
- Students at Northridge Middle School participate in a variety of extracurricular activities including: Cross country, volleyball, football, soccer, swimming, basketball, wrestling, track, golf, tennis, rocket club, jazz band, pep band, National Junior Honor Society, Show choir, Chinese Club, Spanish Club, Video Game Club, Computer Coding Club, Yearbook, Student Council, Academic Super Bowl, Geography Bee, Leisure League, Spell Bowl, Math Counts, and Science Olympiad.
- 65% of all students participate in a performing art (Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, or Drama Production Club).
- Students at Northridge Middle School also see the value in serving our community through an abundance of service projects and opportunities.
- Our entire school also participates in an annual Ability Day. This is our opportunity to raise awareness for certain types of disabilities and help educate our students on how to best help and befriend students who may have different needs than their own.
- Student successes are acknowledged through: an honors breakfast, National Junior Honor Society, pep sessions, VIP awards luncheons, Principal luncheons, quarterly academic awards ceremonies, and our 8th grade awards ceremony.
- ARMS (Adults Reaching Middlebury Students) is a shared program between the schools and Middlebury Community volunteers to mentor our students.
- Guest speakers and various convocations educate our students and teach them to make positive social and academic choices.
- A fifth grade orientation each year to help new students better adjust to middle school, as well as traditional parent/teacher conferences and a Back to School Night.
- NMS also assesses our communication annually with a community survey.
- Northridge Middle School also has a tremendous working with our local Boys and Girls Club, who are housed on campus

Social Equity:

- Parents and community are members informed throughout the school year through our school websites, School Messenger automated calls, PowerSchool parent access, Facebook page, Twitter feed, and our homework site www.whatsduetoday.org .
- A NMS wiki page created for the purpose of being our data warehouse for all student / PLC data.
- A custom PowerSchool page that tracks all interventions and communications between teachers and students in need of additional services/ interventions.
- NMS students are very active in our community through school designed service projects. These include the Riley Dance Marathon, Feed the Children, Middlebury Food Pantry, Water for Sudan, Middlebury Parks Department, and Pennies for Peace.
- Speakers from our global community share their knowledge about other cultures with students. This has included live chats with holocaust survivors as well as people who are living in other parts of the world.
- Our participation in the Junior Achievement program “Global Markets” has also increased our communication with local businesses.
- NMS hosts an annual 5th grade orientation to communicate with incoming families our practices and beliefs.
- NMS sends out a community survey to our entire community to assess our communication successes as well as see what community members may suggest to help us to continue to improve.
- Our community also assists us via our Adults Reaching Middlebury Students (ARMS) mentoring program.
- Interdisciplinary teams at Northridge Middle School help us to ensure student success and social equity by creating a school within a school smaller learning communities.

- Our counselors and administrators meet weekly with each team to provide services and intervention strategies for struggling learners or students in need.
- Teachers have a common planning time daily to meet with instructional teams and data teams.
- Our case management team made up of counselors, administrators, and our social worker meet weekly to discuss students in the most need of additional support.
- Our counseling department also leads classroom counseling lessons on a variety of topics including career planning, high school and college preparedness, and digital citizenship.
- NMS also employs the services of a school resource officer to ensure everyone is safe and supported.
- Professional Learning Communities are the core of our school and prevent students from missing out on learning required academic information.
- Full inclusion allows students with all disabilities to participate in all school activities at NMS.
- Additional support services for students include: Functional Skills classroom, Mixed Ability classroom, English Language Learners Lab, Academy Alternative School, RTI Centers, Academic Support classes, and Counseling programming.
- Northridge Middle School hosts an annual Ability Day which helps our general education students learn more about students with disabilities and how to become better friends for them and understand their needs.
- Students participate in monthly Olweus Anti Bullying discussion groups.
- To help ensure our Olweus groups are meeting our needs, our students participate in an annual Olweus Survey/Assessment.
- PASS (Program for After School Support) insures students have adequate academic support outside of the traditional school day by offering after school tutoring with NMS teachers twice a week.
- Students at Northridge Middle School are rewarded for a multitude of reasons. This includes: attendance, academic achievements, musical accomplishments, citizenship, athletic achievements and participation in extracurricular activities. These students are acknowledged through monthly pep sessions for all student activity groups, Principal's Lunch for students with no discipline referrals, no absences, and no tardies each month, VIP luncheons and end of the year awards banquet for our good citizens, an academic honors breakfast for students and families, and an 8th grade awards celebration.
- Every teacher has Raider Bucks to distribute to students for acknowledging good citizenship/ growth. These can be used monthly to purchase items from the school as rewards.
- Our students also have a tremendous amount of ways to connect to our school on an extracurricular level. NMS offers 37 after school clubs, sports, academic, and social groups all with staff direction and support.

Organizational Support:

- NMS works consistently with groups outside of our school to help us create a well-rounded experience for our students. We work with the business community through our chamber of commerce as well as Junior Achievement courses.
- The National Junior Honor Society, Student Council members, and all 8th grade students are involved in many service learning projects throughout our community.
- NMS formally collaborates with neighboring schools on a multitude of issues including a multi county writing consortium and a countywide attendance program.
- Our community participates in formal surveys and input meetings to help us find ways to continue to improve our practices and communications.
- Adults Reaching Middlebury Students (ARMS) is a mentor program in which adults in our community partner with and mentor students in need in our school.

- NMS also collaborates with our other district schools (intermediate and high school) via structured articulation meetings.
- Clearly there is support for collaboration by our district leadership.
- NMS has a very active PTO group.
- Interdisciplinary Teaming creates a smaller community of learners and a school within a school atmosphere.
- Teaming aides us in creating interdisciplinary connections that help to give purpose and meaning to the standards taught in the classroom.
- Our teachers meet three times a week in teams during the school day to address student programs, intervene with students on an individual level, and to plan instruction. One of these meetings includes the grade level counselor and a building principal.
- Our schedule allows teachers to have common planning time with team and collaborative partners (PLC Data Teams) daily.
- Professional Learning Communities meet twice a week during the school day and one time a month before school. Administration meets with each PLC data team twice quarterly.
- The schedule at NMS allows for 55 minutes of uninterrupted instruction in each core class every day, all year.
- Every student at NMS ends their day with one of their core class teachers in a class referred to as RaFT (Raider Focus Time). This period includes our daily video announcements, 20 minutes of school wide silent sustained reading, and finally a chance for students to receive additional support/ instruction from their core teachers before going home for the day.
- Extensive school improvement committees exist at NMS including: Student/Staff Recognition, Technology, Safety, Olweus Anti Bullying, Facility Improvement, Fundraising, and Character Education.
- High expectations are set for all NMS students and staff members.
- Response To Instruction (RTI) centers are offered for Language Arts and Math. Programs utilized in the RTI centers include: Reading Plus, Lind-Bair Reading, Accelerated Math, Math Facts in a Flash, APEX, and IXL.
- Our most supportive tier of RTI services is included in our Northridge Academy Alternative School.
- Students may also receive support services through a course titled Academic Support. This course helps students learn how to organize their school resources, learn better study skills, and provide assistance with daily homework.
- Our programming for students with special needs includes a collaboratively taught inclusion model, a mixed ability classroom, a functional skills program, and additional structured supports daily.
- PASS (Program for After School Support) is offered twice weekly. Students are able to stay after school and receive assistance on school work with two certified teachers.
- NMS has created a custom Pyramid of Intervention page in our PowerSchool student management system. This page allows us to communicate from teacher to teacher, year to year all interventions given to particular students as well as success rates and parent communications. This page is also viewable by our high school teachers when students become freshmen to help ease the transition to high school.
- Parents of NMS students have continual access to their student's grades via PowerSchool parent.
- NMS created and maintains a website, www.whatsduetoday.org to post every class's homework assignments daily to breakdown any potential miscommunications with students and their families.
- We communicate with parents additionally through our school website, school Facebook page, school Twitter account, automated phone call system, and newsletters.
- Students at NMS also receive instruction and support in the Olweus Anti Bullying Program through school wide activities and class meetings.
- Northridge Middle School offers 37 extra-curricular clubs and teams for students to participate in and build a sense of belonging and increased self-esteem.
- Our counseling department provides individual and small group counseling in addition to whole class/ grade lessons.
- Before students become 6th graders, NMS annually hosts a 5th Grade Orientation Day that includes information given by our administration and counselors as well as tours by some of our student ambassadors.

- NMS hires high quality teachers using a structured model with all impacted staff involved in the process.
- Extensive professional development for staff is given during Late Arrival Wednesdays.
- Ongoing review of student data, teacher input, and administrative guidance drives the professional development offerings available during this professional development time.
- Through professional literature and workshops, teachers work to develop best practice approaches and collaborate regularly to continuously assess and improve our school.
- Our staff participates in state and national associations that help keep us current with educational issues and best practices (IMLEA, AMLE, NSTA, NMTA, NAASP, and IASP).
- New teachers to NMS meet monthly with the administration and mentor teachers in New Teacher Club after school hours to help them get up to speed with past school wide professional development initiatives. This also allows them to learn more about the everyday details of our school and create a sense of community with our school.
- Our teacher evaluation system (McRel) is heavily based on the practices of the Professional Learning Community model and 21st Century Skills.
- Other noteworthy supports for students at Northridge Middle School include: a full time school resource officer and a case management team that meets weekly as a group to help serve students in need. This group is comprised of our administrators, counselors, and school social worker.