



# KENTUCKY SCHOOLS TO WATCH SCHOOL PROFILE

## Garrard Middle School



**Designated: 2017**

### Garrard Middle School

- Garrard County Public Schools, Kentucky
- Principal: Andrew Pickerill
- School Address: 304 W. Maple Avenue  
Lancaster, KY 40444
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### School Statistics

**Community:** Small, rural community in central Kentucky

**Enrollment:** 584

**Grade Levels:** 6-8

**School Schedule:** 7 periods

**Student Demographics**

5.0%	Latino/Hispanic
90.5%	White
1.0%	African American
3.5%	Other
65.7%	Free/Reduced Lunch
1.3%	English Learners

YEAR	OVERALL SCORE	CLASSIFI-CATION	CATEGORY
2015-16	58.1	Needs Improvement	Focus School
2014-15	61.7	Needs Improvement	Focus School
2013-14	66.7	Proficient/Progressing	Focus School

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Learning targets were posted in most classrooms and students could communicate what they were learning.
- Student work, rubrics, and word walls were visible in some classrooms, and student work was posted in the hallways.

- Teachers are provided feedback and coaching after administrative walkthroughs and observations.
- The principal meets with PLCs every other week with a focus on formative assessments.
- Teachers meet regularly by content areas to analyze common assessment data and to engage in instructional conversations.
- Exit slips or other formative assessments were used in many classrooms
- During the summer teachers participated in 5 days of Kagan training and during faculty meetings Kagan strategies are highlighted.
- Faculty meetings focus on instructional strategies and effective assessment practices.
- Through the Garrard County Instructional Leadership Team school administration has received training and support for building teacher instructional capacity.
- Academic supports (e.g., ROAR, before and after school tutoring, peer tutoring, daytime ESS, RTI) are provided for students struggling academically.

## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- An advisory time in the middle of the day provides a time for teachers to address social and emotional concerns with students, be a mentor to students, and serve as the first contact for parents/families. The counselor provides direction for this program.
- Building positive relationships with students has become a priority in the school.
- Camp GMS provides incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students with experiences to help them smoothly transition into middle school.
- Monthly Character Count Awards recognize students who ROAR (i.e., Respect, Organization, Attitude, Responsibility).
- Academic achievement is recognized and celebrated in a variety of ways (e.g., Evening of Excellence, Honor Roll, Reward Days).
- Through Operation Preparation, Reality Store, and Career Day students learn about real-world opportunities, careers, and the realities of life.
- Through the student council students have a real voice in what is happening at the school. They planned and managed the school's Veterans Day Program and initiated the idea of clubs. Students from all grade levels are involved.
- Every student is in a club providing time for developing interests and talents. A good variety of clubs is offered and students had a choice in the selection of their club.
- Students have been involved in a variety of community projects (e.g., food drive, animal shelter, clothes drive, Veterans Day Program, Operation Christmas Child, rest home).
- All students are part of an interdisciplinary team providing them with a smaller, more personalized learning community. Team names are the mascots of universities building a greater awareness in students of higher education possibilities.
- Students are introduced to new interests and develop talents through Explore, extra-curricular activities (e.g., sports, KYA, KUNA, Beta Club, Academic Team), and Encore classes (e.g., band, arts and humanities, computer application, health, physical education, choir).
- Operation Preparation and the Reality Store involve community members and provide students with information about different careers and future possibilities.

## **Social Equity**

- Communication with parents and families is handled through a variety of ways (e.g., Remind 101, phone calls, email, postcards, principal messages, Twitter, parent/teacher conference nights). The parents indicated the principal messages were very informative and useful
- The cameras and locks on doors have made the school more safe and secure for all students and staff. The front entrance provides a means for monitoring who is entering the building.
- The behavior expectations are communicated to students during the first three days of schools and after longer breaks. Discipline referrals have been reduced and rules are consistently and fairly enforced.
- Transportation is provided to two elementary schools for students involved in after school activities, making parent pickup more convenient.
- The ROAR program provides students with a supervised time and meal after school. The program features both structured academic and social/recreational times.
- A process has been established for addressing reported bullying incidents with 3 adults reviewing each report for validity.
- Inclusion is the norm; students with special needs are placed into regular classes as there are limited resource rooms. If needed, individual students are pulled out for additional instruction and academic help.
- Culture Day increases student awareness and appreciation of different cultures. Through the content of the arts and humanities and social studies classes students are also exposed to information about different cultures.
- Services (e.g., School Smiles, Transition Camp, drug prevention programs, Lending Library, home visits) provided by the Youth Service Center serve a critical role in reducing barriers to student learning.
- At the beginning of the school year, grade level open houses are held making it possible for information relayed to the parents and families to be specific for the grade level.
- The needs of gifted and talented students are being addressed through weekly services provided by a certified gifted and talented teacher. High-performing math students, both seventh and eighth graders, are able to take Algebra I for high school credit. If a student is ready for geometry while at the middle school, arrangements are made for the student to travel to the high school for the class.

## **Organizational Support**

- The principal and some of the experienced teachers work with new teachers to help them be successful. Monthly meetings provide time for mentoring.
- District personnel visit the school and provide strong support for the school and the middle school concept.
- A reflect, refine mindset permeates the school supporting continuous improvement efforts. An intentional effort has been made to address the growth areas identified in the 2016 Schools to Watch report.

- This year the master schedule was revamped with advisory moved to mid-day and time added to the core classes. This was done with input from the staff.
- The One Drive for instructional plans allows all teachers and administrators to access instructional plans.
- The principal keeps staff informed of upcoming events and potential issues through his weekly Cougar Compass communication.
- Time is built into the schedule for grade level PLC meetings providing time for teachers to have instructional conversations and for identifying academic needs of students.
- A Twitter account has been established for the school and is used to publicize and announce events, accomplishments, and other news from the school.
- The school leadership team meets monthly to discuss and analyze academic and behavioral data and to plan for improvement.
- The principal sets high expectations but keeps the pressure low. He is a true instructional leader.