



NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOLS TO WATCH MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

Pine Forest Middle School



Designated in 2007

- Pine Forest Middle School • Cumberland County Schools
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2007-08 School Statistics

(Source: 2007 NC School Report Card.)

Community: Suburban fringe of a small city
Enrollment: 800
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Traditional

Student Demographics

47% White
46% African American
7% Hispanic

40% Free/Reduced Lunch
3% English Learners

2005 AYP: School of Excellence
Met 20 of 21 performance targets

2006 AYP: School of Progress
Met 25 of 25 performance targets

2007 AYP: School of Progress
Met 19 of 23 performance targets

(Visit <http://www.ncschoolreportcards.org> to view this school's data for prior years.)

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Pine Forest Middle School is a School of Choice in Fayetteville. Pine Forest serves an additional 120+ 'opt out' students from neighboring schools. They have met the challenge of serving each of these unique populations effectively. The students and staff are happy to be at Pine Forest. There is valuable input and buy in from stakeholders when making decisions for the school. Parents are pleased with progress. Because of positive changes, Pine Forest Middle School has experienced tremendous growth in student achievement, staff morale, and parent satisfaction

Academic Excellence

- "Building Academic Vocabulary" effort is having a profound impact on practices throughout the building
- Focus on "Characteristics of a Great Classroom" have raised the bar across the school
- "Word Walls" are everywhere—even in elective classrooms and in foreign languages
- Very strong use of feedback and higher-level questioning/thinking consistently observed

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Academic Excellence *(Continued)*

- Teachers have support they need from administration, case manager, literacy coach, counselors, and others to free-up teachers so they can TEACH. It is clearly a team-effort
- There is a VERY powerful literacy coaching program in place

Developmental Responsiveness

- Many opportunities exist for all students to participate in sports, clubs, and activities
- Parent communication is a priority-e-mails, newsletters, phone calls, etc.
- Coaches stay in touch with teachers. Athletes tell us that falling grades are not allowed
- Music is used effectively throughout the building both instructionally and for background/classroom management
- A broad use of instructional strategies were evident- including lecture, lab, co-teaching, cooperative grouping, paired reading

Social Equity

- Through focus on vocabulary, all students master over 1500 new vocabulary words during middle school
- 120 opt-out students from other schools are assimilated into the school culture effectively
- Special education classes are rigorous yet warm, and every child is expected to succeed
- All students are engaged. We were told more than once, "We never know what to expect when we come to class. Anything can happen. We do lots of different things."
- Students are confident and freely express themselves. They behave in a remarkably civil manner, and mutual respect between adults and students is the norm

Organizational Support

- Strong use of county's "Creating Great Classroom" focus
- Monthly staff development meetings share best practices and professional development efforts are articulated and aligned with the school's goals
- The School Improvement Plan is transparent and clear-everyone know what the staff's goals are and how they will work to achieve them
- Teachers regularly visit, observe, and plan. They know what their peers are doing, and look for opportunities to integrate curriculum
- Strong benchmarking and the use of data to drive instruction permeate the school. Staff members contribute to the district's test banks on a regular basis