



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

East Wilkes Middle School



Designated in 2009

East Wilkes Middle School • Wilkes County Schools •
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2009-10 School Statistics

(Source: 2009 NC School Report Card.)

Community: Rural
Enrollment: 414
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Traditional

Student Demographics

93% White
4% African American
3% Hispanic

50% Free/Reduced Lunch
1% English Learners

2007 AYP: High Growth, School of Distinction
Met 13 of 13 performance targets

2008 AYP: High Growth, School of Progress
Met 17 of 17 performance targets

2009 AYP: High Growth, School of Distinction
Met 16 of 17 performance targets

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

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

East Wilkes Middle School is located in northwest North Carolina in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and is an important part of the rural community of Ronda. Even with a high percentage of disadvantaged students, the school thrives and continually strives to reach higher growth. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming, and the community supports the school in a variety of ways.

Academic Excellence

- Real life applications are commonly found in all subject areas.
- A wide variety of strategies, activities, and assessments are used---oral presentation, hands on experiments, group discussions, think/pair/share, conferencing, peer tutoring, peer editing, proportional art, games, note taking, lecture, silent reading, essential questions, projects, oral/written tests, labs, integrated technology, smart board application, stations, etc.
- Students are given the opportunity to improve their grades each week through an after school help program provided by the teachers.

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Academic Excellence *(continued)*

- Teachers meet in teams to discuss student needs on their teams, and they meet to discuss the students with the students' teachers for the next school year; this also includes communication with the high school teachers. Eighth grade teachers meet with students who have violated school policy and work with each student to achieve success in behavior and academics. Every grading period, teachers revise plans to meet the needs of their students; they discuss areas of weakness, success, and what may cause the lack of student achievement.
- Teachers have professional development throughout the year and are required to develop an integrated unit around their subject areas. The staff also participates in a school novel initiative and attends workshops in areas, such as Thinking Maps, Learning Focus, and core subject topics.

Developmental Responsiveness

- The school environment is welcoming, clean, and meets the needs of students, staff, and community.
- The school has access to the following services: a full-time counselor, part-time nurse and social worker, school psychologist (as needed), and peer mediators.
- Teachers use a variety of strategies with students---question/answer, cooperative learning, labs, group discussion, role play, drama presentations, silent/oral reading, thinking maps, manipulatives, notes, video clips, computer activities - word processing, spread sheet, and database activities, hands on activities, etc.
- Real world applications are presented to students, as they would appear in the students' lives.
- Clubs are unique, fit the interests of the students, and provide choices for students.
- Students have opportunity to discuss concerns with each other, teachers, and the administration.
- Families are very welcome at East Wilkes. Open houses and orientations are held each year. Three parent nights are held throughout the year.
- The school offers athletics and clubs (both during and after school. Students complete surveys to determine their clubs. Some clubs are geared toward student interests and others are geared toward student need, such as Smart Girls, Girl Power, and Wise Guys.

Social Equity

- All teachers have high expectations for all students - the librarian has students read barcodes by numerical place value.
- Students have a wide variety of choice to show achievement and develop mastery or objectives.
- The school has adapted to its population. The school has gone to the community - not the community to the school. The school opens its doors for the community's use; for example, the County Rec League uses the facility to promote sports for sixth graders. Students participate in a huge number of service projects for their community.
- Students voice their opinions through the student council. Students present ideas to teachers and administration. Students have opportunity to be involved with the Principal's Advisory Council.
- The school uses a variety of rewards systems such as honor rolls, Principal's List, Scorpion Pride, perfect attendance, and celebrations at the end of school.

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Organizational Support

- The school shares a vision. They see each person as an essential piece of the tapestry that is East Wilkes Middle.
- The faculty, staff, and students see the principal as the person who holds the school together, but they also see the administrative staff as a well-balanced team.
- Each team is required to develop an integrated unit around a topic in their subject areas.
- The school has a variety of partners in the community who support the work at East Wilkes.
- The school has a benchmark meeting to discuss how to use data to modify and drive instruction after every grading period.
- Wilkes Community College, Appalachian State University, and UNCC work closely with the school.