



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

Shepard Middle School



Designated in 2007, Re-Designated in 2010

James E. Shepard Middle School • Durham Public Schools
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2009-10 School Statistics

(Source: 2009 NC School Report Card.)

Community: Urban
Enrollment: 447
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Traditional, Magnet

Student Demographics

88% African American
7% White
5% Hispanic

65% Free/Reduced Lunch
1% English Learners

2007 AYP: No Recognition
Met 11 of 13 performance targets
2008 AYP: Priority School
Met 12 of 13 performance targets
2009 AYP: No Recognition
Met 17 of 17 performance targets

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

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Shepard Magnet Middle School is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school located in an urban setting in Durham, North Carolina. Students apply from across the district to attend Shepard, and are chosen by lottery. It is a small school with a big mission—they are committed to helping all of their students, many of whom come from poverty, to become "thinkers and learner." They think and talk about their studies, their world, and their futures. They are also thinking beyond middle and high school to college and careers. Students at Shepard will tell you that they are smart, and they are.

Academic Excellence

- In addition to the Standard Course of Study, the school is accountable for the rigorous requirements of the International Baccalaureate program
- There is a wonderful law class held in a courtroom built on campus. Students learn the basics of law and, working in partnership with local attorneys and students from the NC Central School of Law, get to try mock cases
- There is a strong use of rubrics and students understand what they are expected to produce
- There are high expectations for every student

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Academic Excellence *(Continued)*

- Weekend and after school tutoring help students who need extra support

Developmental Responsiveness

- The Panther Reward Card is a way to recognize students in the school's key areas of "Respect, Responsibility, and Restraint." Students who have been recognized in all three areas participate in special reward activities
- There is a strong and effective counseling department and an intern from UNC to support their efforts
- Guiding questions are placed on the board in all classes and are springboards to a lesson's "big ideas"
- Lessons connect to student interest and the "real world"-Worldwide AIDS Day, global warming issues, etc.

Social Equity

- The school and its IB philosophy help students see beyond themselves to their place in the world
- A powerful partnership with universities has created the school's Photography Gallery. Topics like, "Regarding Race" blend photography with writing to address important issues, and students from Duke and other local colleges can take "Literacy Through Photography" as an elective class and volunteer two days each week at the school
- Student voice is strong, and students feel safe in expressing themselves
- A wide variety of work products are evident-reports, labs, artwork, photography, poetry, and other products are seen in classes
- Expectations for student achievement is very high

Organizational Support

- A strong and growing PTSA supports the school's efforts
- A "Brag Wall" shares positive teacher actions, and the "Pioneer Award" is given monthly to teachers for going "outside the box" in bringing a new kind of lesson or experience to students
- There is clearly a strong vision held by the administration that is also shared by the staff and supported by parents, the community, and central office
- The entire school possesses the collective will to do what is needed for students to succeed