



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

South Charlotte Middle School



Designated in 2004; Redesignated 2007

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2007-08 School Statistics

(Source: 2007 NC School Report Card.)

Community: Suburban fringe of a large city
Enrollment: 908
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Traditional

Student Demographics

76% White
11% African American
7% Asian
5% Hispanic

10% Free/Reduced Lunch
2% English Learners

2005 AYP: High Growth, Honor School of Excellence
Met 29 of 29 performance targets

2006 AYP: High Growth, Honor School of Excellence
Met 31 of 31 performance targets

2007 AYP: High Growth, Honor School of Excellence
Met 33 of 33 performance targets

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

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

South Charlotte Middle School is located in Charlotte, North Carolina, on the NC Piedmont, and near the border between North and South Carolina. Student assignment in Charlotte-Mecklenburg changes yearly. In 2001-2002, South Charlotte Middle School's enrollment was over 1600 students with 44 mobile units. As the result of a new middle school opening in the area, the 2002-2003 enrollment dropped to 814 with all classes conducted within the school facility. This year a new elementary feeder school opened and boundaries were changed yet again. Currently, the school serves 960 students with five mobile units. Through all of these enrollment changes total school demographic changes have been less than one percentage point in each area.

Academic Excellence

- The school participates in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Project Acceleration. This program places all students performing at or above grade level on end-of-grade tests in reading and math in "Scholars" or "Accelerated" classes.
- Level II students are placed in accelerated classes with additional remediation provided through tutoring, mentoring, and the 9th period classes.

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Academic Excellence *(continued)*

- AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) classes serve students in the 7th and 8th grades to give additional support to the on-grade level average student who has potential to go to college.
- Students are moved in and out of classes where needed with C-M quarterly assessments.
- The 9th period is a very strong component of South Charlotte. Each 7th and 8th grade student is assigned a class varying from remediation, clubs, academic competitions, and acceleration classes.
- Teachers were very "hands-on" with many varied instructional activities in their classrooms. We saw evidence of rubric scoring, lab experiments, History Alive, Socratic seminars, many projects, and PowerPoint presentations.
- It was apparent that rigorous academic standards are a top priority at South Charlotte. One student said, "In this school, it is okay to be smart. In my other school it wasn't."
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Developmental Responsiveness

- Students at South Charlotte were very friendly and personable. They repeatedly told us "they felt like they belonged."
- The use of varied instructional strategies was in abundance. We saw evidence of addressing the different learning styles, centers in science and social studies, group work, use of cameras for broadcasts and reports, and many other strategies mentioned earlier.
- Their character education program was integrated into the entire curriculum.
- An abundance of activities were available to all students: fine arts wheel in grade 6, Odyssey of the Mind, Battle of the Books, Math Counts, and Science Olympiad to name a few.
- Another strength of South Charlotte was the relationship with the school family as well as the community. The principal sends a newsletter to parents, emails parents, has "Conversations with Christine," and through the use and check of the phone system, homework is constantly updated for parents. Students, through the use of in house broadcasting, provide news and reports on events happening in the school.
- There are many PTA volunteers in the school doing various tasks from changing the marquee to opening and running the school store. The school has established partnerships with various businesses in the community. There are "Monday nights at Restaurants" using different restaurants with the school getting a percent of the money from the meals purchased.

Social Equity

- Every student who scored at a level 2 on the EOG or made a D or E on their report card was provided a mentor/tutor.
- Multiple intelligence needs were being addressed in classrooms.
- The use of the 9th period provided additional opportunities for all students to be successful. Students were carefully "placed" in these classes are moved in and out as needed. The use of the 9th period provided a challenge to all students and accelerated all learning. These classes also

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Social Equity (*continued*)

filled in gaps that might otherwise have existed giving students the opportunity to engage in enrichment activities without penalizing a student by taking away an elective.

- Another strong component of South Charlotte was their looping of the grade level guidance counselors as well as their grade level assistant principals. Students, as well as the staff, really got to know students in their grade level by having them for their three years in the middle school.

Organizational Support

- The School Improvement Plan is truly a living document. Everyone is involved and knows what is included in the plan.
- The school has an exceptionally strong principal. One student said, "She will do whatever she needs to do to get us where we need to be." Another said, "Our principal wants us to be successful." She has established a strong line of communication within the school as well as with parents.
- The school has established many partnerships within the community--Wachovia and Harris Teeter to name two. The school regularly invites guest speakers from the community to participate in the school through the Leadership Class or in the classrooms. The use of professional books, research, and outside reading was also evident.
- The entire school engages in data driven decision-making to include the three counselors. No child falls through the cracks.