



NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOLS TO WATCH

MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

Piedmont Open IB Middle School



Designated in 2011

Piedmont Open IB Middle School • Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools • Mecklenburg County • North Carolina • Dee Gardner, Principal • 1241 East 10th Street, Charlotte, NC 28204 • Phone (980) 343-5435 • E-mail d.gardner@cms.k12.nc.us
• Website
<http://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/piedmontMS/Pages/Default.aspx>

2010-11 School Statistics

(Source: 2010 NC School Report Card.)

Community: Urban
Enrollment: 960
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Magnet, Traditional

Student Demographics

70% African American
16% White
7% Asian
5% Hispanic

44% Free/Reduced Lunch
1% English Learners

2008 AYP: Expected Growth, School of Progress
Met 27 of 29 performance targets
2009 AYP: Expected Growth, School of Distinction
Met 25 of 25 performance targets
2010 AYP: High Growth, Honor School of Excellence
Met 25 of 25 performance targets
(Visit <http://www.ncreportcards.org> to view this school's data for prior years.)

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Piedmont Open IB Middle School is located in the southern Piedmont of North Carolina and is on the edge of the downtown area of Charlotte. The school is an International Baccalaureate magnet school and represents a cross section of Mecklenburg County. This school is always ahead of the curve in terms of innovation and strategies. While the school is strong in academic rigor, social equity and developmental responsiveness, the story behind this school is that "the school truly walks the walk and talks the talk." Community involvement is critical to the everyday operation of the school. Data drives decision in classrooms (each teacher has a data notebook along with the data team) and teachers and students have built a creative and encouraging community where everyone can find his/her niche. The administration of Piedmont Middle has created an environment where teachers enjoy coming to work and students enjoy learning. Teachers and students work hard in this school but they also work smart. There is valuable input and buy-in from stakeholders when making decisions for the school. Parents are very pleased with programs and the care/concern shown by teachers and staff. Parents are on various committees and the PTA leads the parent organization and involvement.

Academic Excellence

- High expectations are communicated by everyone on the staff
- Data driven instruction is the norm in classrooms

(Continued)

- Learning styles are known and utilized on a regular basis. Students knew their own and actually used them and assignment choices were obvious in multiple classrooms
- A wide variety of instructional strategies were observed: Cooperative Learning, project-based learning, hands-on learning, and more
- Integration of curriculum was evident in many classrooms: Interdisciplinary units and integrated units were both used.

Developmental Responsiveness

- Teachers are passionate about students' well-being
- Counselors are on teacher teams
- Teachers were set up in teams and met as teams, with at least one day a week set aside for student concerns and progress
- Students are involved in many clubs and organizations
- Student voice is evident... they even created a club that was approved by the school
- There are multiple opportunities for cultural awareness
- Career awareness is embedded into the curriculum
- It was evident that students have input, choices, and opportunities in their everyday experiences

Social Equity

- Inclusion special education program meets students' needs
- Teachers meet when needed, during planning periods and after school, to help students
- Fund Raisers / Scholarships are available for field trips
- Family and Community Involvement is very strong (downtown partners and parents are involved on a regular basis)
- Students are involved in community service as part of being at this school
- The IB program enriches the overall curriculum

Organizational Support

- Several types of leadership teams (data, PLT, PTA) are operational
- The school administration truly holds the mission together
- The principal allows and encourages teachers to be risk-takers and leaders
- Community support and communication is very strong
- Professional Learning Communities for teachers are effectively utilized
- This is an extremely professional setting with happy teachers and students!
- UNC-Charlotte holds on site class
- While they serve a high achieving population, the strategies, structures, and programs can be utilized in many other schools.