

SCHOOLS TO WATCH VISITOR'S GUIDE

Saline Middle School



Designated in 2006

Middle School: Saline Middle School
District: Saline Area Schools
County: Washtenaw
State: Michigan
Principal: David Raft
School Address: 7190 Maple Road, Saline, MI 48176
Phone: (734) 429-8070
E-mail: raftd@saline.k12.mi.us
School website:
<http://webportal.salineschools.com/schools/ms/Pages/default.aspx>

2005-07 School Statistics

Community: 9,000 / Suburban
Enrollment: 913
Grade Levels: 7-8
School Schedule: Flexible Block

Student Demographics

1.9% Hispanic
92.3% Caucasian
2.0% African American
3.6% Asian
0.2% Pacific Islander

% Free/Reduced Lunch
% English Language Learners

2005 AYP: MET

2006 AYP: MET

2007 AYP: MET

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- Evidence of writing in all curricular areas
- A variety of engaging strategies used to help students gain proficiency in writing
- Evidence of higher order thinking skills in classrooms and student work
- Students are given opportunities to improve and revise their work
- Administrators have a vision of excellence for the school
- Much evidence of distributed leadership among the teams
- Online reporting system allows both parents and students access to up-to-date information regarding each student's progress
- Teachers collaborate across teams to maximize teaching effectiveness
- Embedded exploratory opportunity give all students the chance to stretch themselves
- Extreme Middle School gives all students an opportunity to engage in meaningful research in areas of their interest

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Developmental Responsiveness

- Students are respectful of one another and teachers
- Students identify Saline Middle School as a good school and cited teachers as the reason for their “rating” of the school.
- Parents are involved in the school in numerous ways (i.e., Team Parent Council, School Improvement Committee, lunch room, classroom support, and field trips.
- School has formed relationships with businesses and community organizations that have helped fund, direct and extend opportunities for students
- There are lots of opportunities for students other than interscholastic athletics, including cheerleading without cuts, Science Olympiad, Math Counts, Writing contests, Art shows, Fiddle Club, Jazz Band and others. Students can suggest new clubs or activities and efforts are made to implement them.
- Teacher’s actions and conversations reflect their motto: “We simply care about every kid.”
- Instructional strategies reflect what is recommended by middle school research.
- Flexible block schedule allows instruction to determine time, rather than time determining instruction.

Social Equity

- All classes are available to all students.
- Different levels of math do not determine student grouping throughout the day and these levels are fluid.
- Students work across the curricula to differentiate instruction.
- Parents note that their children with special needs have been wonderfully supported with one parent sharing, “my daughter is doing things I never thought possible!”
- Special education students are included and treated with respect.
- Students have the opportunity to serve other students and high school students also come to the middle school to support and work with middle school students.
- Students have choice and voice in the school from suggesting new clubs and activities, to choosing how to demonstrate mastery of a concept.
- The P.R.I.D.E. (Peer Relationships In a Diverse Environment) program is a great opportunity for students to work with those students with disabilities.
- Multiple programs for helping struggling students (On-Track, In-Gear, Summertime Challenge, Jump-Start).

Organizational Support

- The staff has common planning time that is used to engage in dialogue about teaching and learning and meeting student needs.
- Professional development opportunities are provided based on teacher input and student data.
- Very strong school improvement focus with every teacher given the opportunity to participate on any committee or task force.
- Teachers share in delivering professional development and in interviewing and decision-making for hiring new teachers.
- Community involvement was solicited and used in the planning for the renovation of the former high school to make it appropriate for young adolescents and its attachment to a senior center.
- Teachers are encouraged to create new approaches, share them with others and do action research.
- Feedback is solicited regularly from the teachers and other staff regarding issues facing the middle school and the manner in which it is functioning.
- The principal engages in a 360 evaluation process getting feedback annually from the staff and parents.