

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS SCHOOLS TO WATCH

MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

PIONEER MIDDLE SCHOOL



Designated in 2008
Redesigned in 2011 and 2014

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2013-14 School Statistics

Community: Size/characteristics

Enrollment: 765

Grade Levels: 5 - 8

School Schedule: 7:30 am to 2:20 pm

Student Demographics

52% Male

48% Female

1% Hispanic/Latino

97% White

1% American Indian/Alaskan Native

1% African American

0% Filipino

0% Asian/Pacific Islander

18% Students with Disabilities

47.7% Free/Red. Lunch/Econ. Disadvantaged

.001% English Learners

2010 AYP: Good Standing

ELA AMO Target:151/AMO Actual: 174

Math AMO Target:131/AMO Actual: 187

2011 AYP: Good Standing

ELA AMO Target:118/AMO Actual: 139

Math AMO Target:133/AMO Actual: 159

2012 AYP: Good Standing

ELA AMO Target:146/AMO Actual: 149

Math AMO Target:160/AMO Actual: 167

Source- NYSTART, School Report Card and BEDS forms

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- Learning goals and Common Core standards are posted in all classrooms and discussed regularly.
- Teachers across all subject areas use rubrics to help students understand expectations.
- Teachers model expected learning goals and provide student exemplars to guide students to the successful completion of tasks.
- Students are assessed in a variety of ways, including presentations, group projects, problem-based learning, and document-based questions.
- Lucy Calkins' Reading and Writing Workshop has been implemented in ELA classes.
- Thoughtful Education teaching strategies have been infused in daily lessons across subject areas.
- Teaching strategies, assessments, and programs are consistently reviewed and improved during Building Learning Club professional development time.
- Quarterly Aimsweb benchmark testing is used to assess student growth in ELA and math.
- RTI, progress monitoring, language/reading intervention, math AIS, and summer school assist at-risk students.
- Pioneer uses a team approach to curriculum development, including a collaborative effort to revise curriculum maps in Rubicon Atlas.
- BOCES specialists and Pioneer teachers provide professional development sessions to keep staff current with the most recent educational research and best practices.
- Ample technology, including ten wireless computer labs, three iPad carts, CPS clickers, Flip cameras, wireless chalkboards, SmartBoards, and digital media projectors, assists with teaching and learning.
- The school's RealNet room allows for classes to take virtual field trips and connect with students in other schools.
- All students may stay after for free homework help from staff members until 5:00 PM Monday-Friday.
- A modified block schedule allows for flexibly scheduling classes, as well as allowing for ELA and math AIS time.
- Pioneer's Teacher Center provides workshops aligned to the District Strategic Plan, Building Action Plans, and the Faculty Needs Assessment.

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Developmental Responsiveness

- Pioneer Middle School embraces school-wide expectations to “Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be Ready”, which is part of a district-wide PBIS initiative.
- The school is divided into small instructional teams at all grade levels, which helps meet the academic and developmental needs of students.
- Safe School Ambassadors club allows students the opportunity to work with staff to apply peer interventions to help reduce negative student behaviors.
- Parents attend school on the first day with their children for parent-student orientation day.
- Our after school program allows for a wide variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities including clubs, recreational and interscholastic sports, classes, groups and homework help.
- All middle school staff and students receive pride t-shirts that are worn on spirit days.
- Numerous mental health counselors, home-school liaisons, a school resource officer, and psychologists are on staff to help address student issues.
- Therapy dogs provide companionship and comfort for students.
- At risk students are assigned an adult to check and connect with daily. Targeted Lab is available for students that need extra assistance completing homework.
- Family and Consumer Science classes instruct students on healthy life choices and responsible social choices.
- The entire staff is trained in Capturing Kids Hearts.
- Parents are a vital part of our middle school program through the use of Parent Connect, PST group, Parent Teacher Conference Days, and our Parent Volunteer program.
- Career and College Days help to prepare students for future choices.
- Middle school students volunteer their time, resources and energy through Leo Club (which works with the area Lion’s club), March of Dimes Walk America, Pines Nursing Home, NJHS work at Special Olympics, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Giving Tree (students provide holiday presents to families in need) and community food pantries
- Students are given leadership opportunities formally through Student Council, National Junior Honor Society, sewing club, Interscholastic and recreational sports, Science Olympiad, Yearbook, Foreign Language Club, Running Club, Middle School Newspaper and Lacrosse Club.

Social Equity

- Our PBIS team works collaboratively to determine plans which enable a child to overcome academic, social, and emotional barriers that are impeding success.
- Pioneer values a differentiated instructional program where the needs and abilities of all students are addressed and recognized.
- Students have opportunities to create their own media and participate on safe social networks through the use of Windows Movie Maker, Voicethread, and Edmoto.
- Cultural emphasis is incorporated through social studies, ELA, music, and foreign language instruction.
- Staff members send positive post cards regularly to students to recognize positive behaviors
- Approximately 150 students stay after school to participate in academic or recreational after school programs daily. These students are all transported home by bus.
- Parent communication is a vital part of our middle school program. This is done through: Parent Connect, PST group (Parents, Students, Teachers: United for Success), quarterly newsletter, informational hotline, school newspaper, team web pages, high school planning meetings, Parent-Teacher conferences, Pioneer Middle Schools’ Parent Volunteer program and the PBIS Team.
- The master schedule can be altered to meet the changing needs of staff and students. Teachers have daily common planning time by team and department. Flexible blocks of time allow for more flexible teaching practices.
- Pioneer Middle School houses a vision department, speech, occupational and physical therapists, sensory-response room and an adaptive physical education program.
- The Caught Being Good card enables students to receive prizes for displaying positive behavior.

Organizational Support

- The staff is knowledgeable of the Essential Elements and their importance in the operation of our school.
- At Pioneer Middle School, it is a shared belief that all students can learn. Faculty contributes to this goal by working together on teams with a blended inclusion model at each grade level.
- A model of shared, collaborative leadership and ownership is utilized. Building administrators work with all stakeholders to propel the school forward on its stated mission while preserving its institutional memory and purpose.
- Research-based staff development is embedded in the Pioneer district as part of the commitment to building a professional learning community.
- The school’s mission statement is visible in all classrooms, in the hall of the pool foyer and throughout common areas, and serves as a visual focus for members of our school community.
- Middle school teacher representatives on the district Curriculum Council help to plan staff development days based on student data and instructional needs. Teacher-led faculty meetings focus on improving instruction and learning.