

# ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS SCHOOLS TO WATCH

## MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

### A. A. Kingston Middle School



**Be SAFE**  
**Be RESPONSIBLE**  
**RESPECT others, yourself, and your school**  
**Be INDUSTRIOUS and ENTHUSIASTIC**

**Designated in 2009;**  
**Re-Designated in 2012, 2015**

[A. A. Kingston Middle School](#) • Potsdam Central District •  
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### School Statistics

(Source: NYS School Report Card, BEDS)

Community: Rural. SUNY Potsdam and Clarkson University

Enrollment: 430

Grade Levels: 5-8

School Schedule: Interdepartmental Team Pure-Block  
Schedule

#### Student Demographics

54.7%	Male
45.3%	Female
0.8%	Hispanic/Latino
93.7%	White
0.0%	American Indian/Alaskan Native
1.8%	African American
3.2%	Asian/Pacific Islander
13.2%	Students with Disabilities
32.9%	Free/Red. Lunch/Econ. Disadvantaged
0.0%	English Learners

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Interdisciplinary approach with grade-level teaming as a focus
- Grade-level teams function as a family and community to nurture students through the transitional middle school years
- AAK expects students to have high standards and to achieve academically in multiple curricular areas
- Teachers use multiple teaching and assessment strategies to target the various student-learning modalities and needs
- Our student expectations are clearly stated and communicated to students and parents
- Student writing is evaluated using the same criteria that is used on the New York State ELA exams
- The faculty uses essential questions to stimulate thinking at the start of lessons and units and as an evaluative tool
- Curriculum is modified to meet the needs of students based on in-depth analysis of state test results, teacher evaluation, and student feedback
- Project-based learning can be seen across each grade level, which draw on student interest to build understanding of important concepts and development of skills and each grade level employs multiple assessment strategies
- Our schedule offers multiple enrichment and accelerated classes. Opportunities exist to provide additional time to master skills and content and to extend knowledge
- AAK's schedule has allowed us to bring experiences to the classroom and entire student body, like guest artists, authors, and performers, character education programs, and career education presenters without the loss of classroom-academic time. The Core-Academic time is organized by student needs and teachers participate daily in team meetings
- AIS works in conjunction with all academic courses and AAK has a number of programs in place to provide students the support they need to meet rigorous academic standards (STRIDE♦S, Opportunity Room, Mentor Program, Choices: After-School Homework Support, AIS Services, and guided study halls)
- Potsdam Teacher Learning Center is a key factor in providing the adults with frequent opportunities to enhance student achievement by working with colleagues to deepen their knowledge and to improve their standards-based practice

### Essential Elements Schools to Watch

#### A. A. Kingston Middle School

## **Academic Excellence *(continued)***

- A District-wide Teacher Mentor Program helps new faculty members discover ways to improve student achievement
- Grade-level team meetings and Team Leadership Council meetings provide time and opportunity to improve instruction and student achievement

## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- AAK has an inviting, personalized school environment which fosters optimal learning and development
- Grade-level teams (including special education staff) have common planning time
- A Child Study Team which looks at the individual needs of students and develops specific, target actions plans
- After-school mentoring program allows academically and/or emotionally struggling students to be teamed with appropriate role models for academic and social activities
- Full-time nurse, guidance counselor, and school psychologists offer the home/school program, discussion groups, and a mentoring program, which provide academic, social, and home-school activities. Health and Wellness Committee in place, which works in conjunction with the County Health Initiative
- Education programs developed by faculty to address immediate social/emotional needs
- Teachers regularly modify curriculum and teaching approaches to adjust to various learning styles and intelligences
- Differentiated instruction through multiple interdisciplinary projects and events
- Character and Career Education programs are used in a variety of classroom settings
- A diverse student community regularly allows our students the opportunity to compare learning styles, points of view and different educational strengths from around the world
- The PE department has focused lessons and activities on developing healthy life-long learning skills
- Varied enrichment and extracurricular opportunities from curricular and interest areas
- Student voices are heard through the Student Council and Building Planning Team
- Family communication is a yearly goal for event planning, policy making, and academic counseling
- Students participate in many activities which provide them with a sense of the global community

## **Social Equity**

- We strive towards 100% of our students mainstreamed into the general education curriculum
- The Opportunity Room (OR) assists general education students with meeting the high academic expectations of AAK
- Differentiated instruction and multiple assessment activities can be found in classrooms throughout the building
- The Potsdam Teacher Learning Center serves as proof that AAK values continual improvement
- Projects and assignments at AAK are always supported with class time in the library and computer labs
- Teachers work to individualize each students experience
- Students participate in many cultural and curricular activities at each grade level
- A transition program is in place to assist entering and exiting students
- Financial support for students is given through established funds for scholarships to curricular and leisure activities
- Many awards are given that recognize citizenship and responsibility to the community

## **Organizational Support**

- Many established committees concerning the educational structure and processes that foster high performance
- Our vision is clear and outlined in our mission statement
- Clear school-wide and individual faculty goals are set and discussed at the opening of each school year
- Cooperative planning is consistently implemented through all grade levels at AAK and evidenced in team planning
- The school staff at A.A.K. holds itself accountable for students' success
- A highly flexible schedule that allows every student the opportunity to achieve at the highest possible level. Our daily schedule is reviewed and evaluated each year and revised to provide the best opportunities possible for every student. Many of our programs including flex periods, resource room, After School Choices, and the opportunity room (OR), provide opportunities and encouragement for high achievement and utmost success
- Faculty and administration of AAK work with colleges and universities to recruit, prepare, and mentor novice and experienced teachers. Also, a number of our teachers serve as adjunct faculty and supervisors at the local colleges