

South Carolina

Schools to Watch™

Principal's Checklist

Your school may be a high performing, high impact school, but is it ready to be designated as a model for others? Making an application is not an easy process, so before you begin, here are a dozen items to consider. If you have some *Not Yets*, you may want to rethink or postpone making an application at this time.

The STW Deliberative Dozen

	Yes	Not Yet
1 Our school meets the minimum academic achievement eligibility requirements. PASS: NO MINIMUM PASS SCORE is required; however, schools must have shown progress for 3 years. Our school has met AYP or is making progress toward meeting AYP with all subgroups.		
2 Our school is not in Program Improvement, is not being state monitored, and does not have any unanswered or ongoing civil rights violations.		
3 Our school's programs are replicable by schools with challenging and diverse populations.		
4 Our school has an operational, school wide progressive discipline plan. All students receive consistently fair and equitable treatment. The suspension data reflects that no subgroup is being unreasonably suspended.		
5 Our school actively supports the mental, physical, emotional, and social health, welfare and safety of our students with counseling, health services, adult advocacy, developmentally responsive activities, and positive incentives. Cognitive and non-cognitive programs are designed and implemented to encourage, motivate, resolve conflict, and build character, resiliency, attendance, and achievement for all students.		
6 The district (superintendent and school board) provides strong support for its middle schools to meet the needs of young adolescents with financial resources, highly qualified teachers, administrators, and counselors, curriculum and instructional materials, and professional development for its teachers. <i>Explicitly, the middle school is not an island operating successfully with limited district support.</i>		
7 The school has an operational and formalized structure of distributed leadership that embraces a clear and current vision and mission for the school. Groups meet independently and regularly with a clearly articulated system of norms, collaborative purpose, communication, and ability to make meaningful decisions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District wide teacher-leadership in curriculum-instruction-assessment-data and budget groups • School wide leadership team with representation from key individuals • Department curriculum-instruction-assessment-data groups • Grade-level department groupings • Grade-level interdisciplinary teams of teachers with common set of students and mutual accountability for student behavioral and academic success • Student study team for at risk students 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-Site Council with student voice • English Language Advisory Council • Parent or Parent/Teacher association • Student council <p><i>Explicitly, the school leadership is not just the administration or a small group of teachers, nor is it all of the teachers buying in to <u>top-down decisions</u>. It is an organized system of learners and leaders.</i></p>		
<p>8 The school is an integral part of the community. It seeks support from the community (universities, colleges, businesses, non-profits) and provides support to the community in terms of student volunteer services, facilities, and joint projects.</p>		
<p>9 The master schedule of the school is a reflection of students’ needs and school mission. It is flexible and innovative in providing time and opportunity for coherent, rigorous, standards-based instruction for all students within the school day. It provides students with curricular opportunities in core subjects, targeted intervention opportunities, electives, and physical education. It provides common planning time for teacher teams in the school to work collaboratively on the behalf of their students. It creates smaller, closer learning communities for students.</p> <p><i>Explicitly the master schedule gives priority to students’ needs over adult needs.</i></p>		
<p>10 Students are heterogeneously placed on teams and in classrooms to the fullest possible extent. Instruction is differentiated for interventions and enrichment opportunities. Resource specialists collaborate or co-teach. Additional intervention or content specific classes are provided for students with specialized needs that cannot be met in the regular classroom (i.e. math intervention, beginning and early English language development, remedial reading). Enrichment and leadership opportunities are accessible by all and not determined on the basis of IQ and test scores. Advanced content classes (algebra, geometry) may have prerequisite standards and support classes for student success. All classes have high expectations and high levels of student engagement.</p> <p><i>Explicitly, there is no tracking of students <u>throughout the day in classes with lower expectations and rigor or with less qualified teachers</u>.</i></p>		
<p>11. Curriculum, instruction, school wide strategies, pacing, assignments, homework, assessment, grading and reporting, enrichment projects and activities (i.e. History Day, Science Fair, field trips) in each subject area are consistent and coherent across the school.</p> <p><i>Explicitly, each and every student has equal access, opportunity, and challenge in any classroom to which they are assigned.</i></p>		
<p>12. By the time application is submitted, the entire administration and faculty will have participated in an extensive and ongoing discussion of the <i>Schools To Watch</i>TM- School Self-Study and Rating Rubric and the development of the application. If selected, we will be prepared to honorably fulfill the obligation of sharing with others statewide and nationally what it takes to be a high performing, high impact middle school that is on its own continuous journey of improvement.</p>		

Whether you plan to apply or not, please:

Download the *STW School Self-Study and Rating Rubric* and get started on the road to continuous improvement (www.scmsa.org) and visit a South Carolina STW model middle school.

Questions?

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