

The Successful Middle School: This We Believe

Essential Attributes

AMLE affirms that an education for young adolescents must be:

Responsive

Using the distinctive nature and identities of young adolescents as the foundation upon which all decisions about school are made.

Challenging

Cultivating high expectations and advancing learning for every member of the school community.

Empowering

Facilitating environments in which students take responsibility for their own learning and contribute positively to the world around them.

Equitable

Providing socially just learning opportunities and environments for every student.

Engaging

Fostering a learning atmosphere that is relevant, participatory, and motivating for all learners.

Characteristics

Successful middle schools exhibit the following 18 characteristics:



Culture and Community

- Educators respect and value young adolescents.
- The school environment is welcoming, inclusive, and affirming for all.
- Every student's academic and personal development is guided by an adult advocate.
- School safety is addressed proactively, justly, and thoughtfully.
- Comprehensive counseling and support services meet the needs of young adolescents.
- The school engages families as valued partners.
- The school collaborates with community and business partners.



Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Educators are specifically prepared to teach young adolescents and possess a depth of understanding in the content areas they teach.
- Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and diverse.
- Health, wellness, and social-emotional competence are supported in curricula, school-wide programs, and related policies.
- Instruction fosters learning that is active, purposeful, and democratic.
- Varied and ongoing assessments advance learning as well as measure it.



Leadership and Organization

- A shared vision developed by all stakeholders guides every decision.
- Policies and practices are student-centered, unbiased, and fairly implemented.
- Leaders are committed to and knowledgeable about young adolescents, equitable practices, and educational research.
- Leaders demonstrate courage and collaboration.
- Professional learning for all staff is relevant, long term, and job embedded.
- Organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships.



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