

EAST RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

East Ridge Middle School is a learning community that strives to transform students into responsible citizens through intellectual, character, and social development.

To reach this vision the specific focuses of East Ridge Middle School in the 2006-07 school year will be three-fold:

1. To equip the faculty to reach the MSNS Overarching Purpose.
2. To arrange the ERMS delivery model to position students to reach the MSNS Overarching Purpose.
3. To work with East Ridge High School in developing a 6-12 academy approach whenever possible. It is recognized that since the two schools share one campus we are missing a great potential if we ignore opportunities to work as one.

The distinctive that should be noted by any outsider seeking to understand the needs of East Ridge Middle School is its diversity. Our school has an African-American population of 27%. ERMS is an ESOL center for Hamilton County. That is, approximately five percent of our students come from homes where the family's language is something other than English. As the migrant and immigrant population of Hamilton County increases ERMS is being called upon to educate many of these children. An indicator of this growing population is that our feeder ESOL schools have an ESOL population that is 37.16 percent of each of their grade levels. The ESOL population of ERMS is presently averaging 7.66 of each of its grade levels. This larger population will be arriving at ERMS beginning next year.

64% of East Ridge Middle School's students are on our free and reduced lunch rolls. A complicating factor related to this is that fewer and fewer students each year are able to pay student fees, resulting in a smaller amount of money coming into the school for its operations. Accompanying this poverty rate is a growing problem of transient and single parent families. 13% of our present population began this school year in a different middle school. No specific data is available to note the number of single parent homes but we see it as a clear and growing challenge. Please note, in relation to the poverty rate, ERMS is not a Title I school.

On the bright side, the data provided by New York University, taking into account its free and reduced lunch percentage, notes that ERMS is doing a good job with its constituency. A broader look at the data, combined with an insider's knowledge of the school, indicates that its successes have much to do with hard work on the part of its faculty. With this work ethic in place we believe that we can be better equipped to reach all subgroups.

Generally, we want to develop a school-wide understanding of some of the primary instructional methods seeing success in urban schools today. We want to equip ourselves to "take it up a notch" in instructional methodology. We have a broad range of student abilities represented in our school. We feel that we really need to develop ways to meet the needs of each extreme and everyone in between without sending our teachers into early retirement.

In addition to equipping the faculty to better deal with the population changes that have occurred in our community, we would like to develop a delivery model that will allow us to best serve the students. At this time we are trying to utilize our time to best meet the academic needs of the students. We would also like to also work on personalization. We are envisioning a schedule that allows for extended periods as well as opportunities for students to develop relationships with one another and faculty members.

Finally, we are developing a strong relationship with the high school. For various reasons, this has not existed in the past. We are investigating, along with East Ridge High School, ways that we can share resources and make East Ridge Middle and High School students successful. We feel that this opportunity makes the East Ridge Learning Community plan potentially distinct from most Hamilton County middle school plans.