



# SCHOOLS TO WATCH – VIRGINIA

## HARPER PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL – VISITOR'S GUIDE



### Harper Park Middle School



**Designated in 2010**  
**Re-Designated in 2013**  
**Re-Designation II in 2016**

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### 2015-2016 School Statistics

*(Sources: Student enrollment as of March 10., 2016 compiled from the current VDOE school report card)*

Community: Suburban Washington D.C.  
Enrollment: 1057  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: Alternating Block

#### Student Demographics

- 57% White
- 14% Hispanic
- 8% African American
- 15% Asian
- 6% Multi-Racial
- 17% Economically Disadvantaged
- 14% Special Education
- 7% English Language Learners

#### Fully Accredited by VDOE:

Math Pass Rate	92%:
English Pass Rate	87%:
Science Pass Rate	92%:
History Pass Rate	95%:

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- The master schedule was completely revised at Harper Park to create the inclusion of academic and honors student within all classes in the science, social studies and English content areas.
- The revision of the master schedule allowed time for faculty to have planning time with their grade level interdisciplinary team and allow for collaboration time with content PLC's – professional learning communities.
- Content PLC's are afforded valuable time to meet, collaborate and plan.
- Professional development has been provided to faculty in the areas of learning communities and collaboration.
- A select group of students with weak math skills in sixth grade, seventh grade, and eighth grade have been scheduled into daily blocks of Math 6, Math 7, Math 8, and Algebra 1 respectively. With this continued growth, we are seeing more students enroll in higher level math classes (Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2 / Trig) than ever before.
- Staff members have had professional development opportunities to improve teacher efficacy in understanding, implementing, monitoring and sustaining high quality assessments and grading practices.
- Backward design is used in order for staff to determine what they want students to learn and how it will be taught and assessed. Harper Park Middle School continues to be a high performing Middle School making growth in content areas.
- The School Improvement Plan is created and written by the entire faculty at the beginning of each school year. The School Improvement Plan continues to be 'the compass' by which many decisions are made.
- For the 2015 – 2016 school year, staff determined the major focus is going to be on English achievement scores overall and specifically with the ELL and SWD populations.

- Staff Development in 2015-2016 focused on Math instruction and teaching strategies that can be used in all domains. John Strebe led this PD.
- Harper Park developed and implemented a Bring Your Own Technology Initiative.

## Developmental Responsiveness

- Harper Park implemented PBIS– Positive Behavior Interventions and Support in 2010 throughout the school. PBIS remains strong with the intent of this system to encourage appropriate behavior, gain student and staff input while providing consistent supports to sustain appropriate behaviors. Harper Park became a Tier II school in PBIS in 2015 and has tiered interventions for both Behavior and Academics.
- Harper Park is aligned with all schools in the Heritage High School cluster, the first cluster within LCPS to have all schools participate in this program.
- The PBIS team has developed an action plan that is carried out annually and the school matrix focuses on respect, responsibility and readiness with our Harper Park daily motto of, “Be There, Be Ready and Be Kind”.
- Through PBIS, common language is used throughout the building and on school buses such as, “Give me Five” for silence and “Right shoulder to the hall, silence in hall” when making transitions. PBIS asks staff and students for input successfully with 99% student participation in the Student Climate Survey.
- A Focus Group was established to develop and discuss new ideas.
- Student and staff recognitions and rewards are celebrated through the ‘Caught in Kindness Program’.
- Data is used for decision making from discipline data, caught in kindness distribution data and surveys.
- All Harper Park students and staff participate in a monthly Advisory Program. Oftentimes this Advisory time is used to reinforce lessons from PBIS, Equity Team and Character Education.
- Harper Park students participate in Anti – Bullying Initiatives each year through each grade level.
- Anti-bullying initiatives are reinforced by staff, guidance counselors and administration. Sixth grade students participate in a three day series of anti-bullying workshops while seventh and eighth grade students participate in ‘refresher’ workshops. Each workshop is specifically tailored for the grade level and the student’s maturity and development.
- Harper Park Middle School continues to have an active Equity Team. Initiatives provided through the Equity Team include staff diversity training, courageous conversation and collaboration training, building cultural competency training, peer observations, Mentor Program and recently a partnership with PBIS to continue to develop and foster a positive school climate.
- The Equity Team’s focus for the 2012 – 2013 school year is to keep our staff developing in the area of becoming a Culturally Proficient School, the sixth stage in our “cultural evolution / continuum”, now called The Six Stages of Cultural Proficiency
- Grade level guidance counselors lead small group support and counseling sessions. These may include but are not limited to- friendship groups, study skills groups, organization skills building, bereavement groups, children of addiction groups, changing families groups and social skill development group.
- Harper Park Middle School has numerous after school programs and clubs such as homework club, after school team sports, a mentor program, yearbook, ecology club and chess club. Harper Park students have opportunities for fresh air and kinesthetic movement every day during grade level lunch time. Students may go outside if they desire and play casual sports, have time to casually chat amongst friends or just relax.
- As a school community, Harper Park takes an active role in supporting charitable organizations. Some of these charities include Loudoun Breast Health Network, Seeds of Change, Mobile Hope, Boy Scouts, Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation, Ronald McDonald House, Loudoun Animal Shelter, Loudoun Interfaith Relief, Back Pack Buddies two Heritage High School scholarships and two Harper Park Scholarships.

## Social Equity

- Our philosophy is based on equity and inclusion for all students and staff.
- In the Summer of 2015, the Focus Group rewrote the Harper Park Mission Statement.
- All students take part in Quarterly Awards Ceremonies.
- Students are provided opportunities for enrichment and remediation during the school day (resource block, reading and math remediation, double blocks of math for selected students) and through a variety of after- school clubs (BUG Club – Bring up Grades, Homework Club).
- Harper Park provides opportunities specifically for students with disabilities. Social Skills groups and ‘Lunch Bunch’ are offered throughout the school year for students with Autism.
- All sixth graders take part in a “College in Six” experience (in house field trip) where college representatives visit Harper Park, meet sixth grade students, and students learn about the possibility of attending college.
- Seventh and eighth graders have an opportunity to meet former Harper Park students who are currently in college in an informal, College Meet and Greet / Showcase through resource classes.
- Harper Park is proud to offer in partnership with Smarts Mill Middle School and J. Lupton Simpson Middle School an information evening for our parents on planning for the financial commitment of college.

- Harper Park offers Parents as Educational Partners Night for parents whose first language is not English. This is an evening where families are invited to meet the administration, learn more about Harper Park and services that they may want to access.
- Harper Park offers PEP (Parents as Educational Partners) bi-monthly.
- Students are recognized in numerous ways for their talents – academic, athletics, character, development and growth and skills.

## **Organizational Support**

- Communication is important at Harper Park Middle School. Teachers are given feedback by Administrators in the form of ‘walk through tools’ which are being revised this year to align with the new VDOE evaluation standards for licensed staff.
- Students and families can access information from various sources – web site, newsletter, agendas, Connect Ed messages and the use of Phoenix where both parents and students will be able to access on line grade books.
- Communication is provided through a variety of sources including Twitter, the school website, Facebook, weekly news flashes and cluster consistency from the elementary level to the high school level.
- The PTA and parent volunteers are a major contributing factor to Harper Park’s in improving communication between the school and home.
- Another important facet of communication is the time allocated to grade level inter-disciplinary teams and content PLC’s.
- The Administrative team meets weekly to plan, discuss topics and refocus.
- SALTs (Subject Area Lead Teachers) meet monthly with the Principal to plan, discuss goals and gauge where each department is headed. All departments utilize data to make decisions and define areas of success or areas of need.
- Inter-disciplinary teams have planning time specifically when their students have resource time (similar to Study Hall) for the very purpose of allowing teachers to work with students.
- As an Administrative Team, we continuously attempt to hire staff that represents the demographics of our student body.
- In addition, we try to view our students as individuals, with developmental needs within the context of their families and within the Harper Park community.
- We include parents in decision making and school improvement. Surveys are used frequently.
- We truly believe in an open door policy.