

**NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS TO WATCH®: GROWING, LEARNING, AND  
SUCCEEDING!  
Principal’s Checklist**

Your school may be a high-performing, high-impact school but is it ready to be designated as a middle-grades model for others? Making an application is not an easy process so before you begin, here are twelve things to consider. If you have some *Not Yets*, you may want to postpone submitting an application at this time or make sure that you explain in your application narrative how you are addressing those areas.

	<b>The NJSTW Deliberative Dozen</b>	<i>We’re There</i>	<i>Not Yet</i>
1	The school actively supports the education of the whole child. Programs and services address the child’s physical, mental, social, and emotional needs in developmentally responsive ways. All middle level students have access to counseling and health services, adult advocacy, and positive incentives. Cognitive and non-cognitive programs encourage and motivate students, build character and resiliency, help students resolve conflicts, and promote and support high achievement for all students.		
2	The school implements district-approved curricula aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. Professional learning experiences focus on improving student achievement. The school uses fiscal resources to support highly qualified and effective teachers, administrators, and educational service personnel to meet the needs of all middle level students. The school and district work collaboratively and synergistically.		
3	The master schedule of the school is a reflection of student needs and the school’s mission. It is flexible and innovative in providing time and opportunity for rigorous standards-based instruction for all middle level students within the school day. It provides students with curricular opportunities in core subjects, targeted intervention opportunities, and electives. It provides common planning time for teacher teams to work collaboratively on behalf of their students and creates smaller, closer learning communities for middle level students.		

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4	Middle grades students are heterogeneously placed on teams and in classrooms to the fullest extent possible. Instruction is differentiated for interventions and enrichment. Resource specialists collaborate or co-teach. Additional classes are provided for middle level students with specialized needs that cannot be met in the regular classroom. Enrichment and leadership opportunities are accessible to all middle grades students. All classes have high expectations and high levels of student engagement.		
5	Curriculum, instruction, school-wide strategies, pacing, assignments, homework, assessment, grading and reporting, enrichment projects, and activities in each content area are consistent and coherent across the school.		
6	The school has an operational and formalized structure of distributed leadership that embraces a clear and current vision and mission for the school. The mission and vision are clearly articulated to all stakeholders including students and parents. Groups meet independently and regularly with a clearly articulated system of norms, collaborative purpose, communication, and ability to make meaningful decisions. Such groups might include district-wide teacher leadership development, content or grade level professional learning communities, intervention and referral teams, interdisciplinary teams, or some other form of collaborative professional learning. The school is an organized system of learners and leaders.		
7	The school is an integral part of the community. It seeks support from the community, including but not limited to parents, institutions of higher education, business, non-profits, and local government. It provides support to the community such as service projects, volunteer services, and the use of school facilities.		
8	The school has an operational, school-wide progressive discipline plan. All middle level students receive consistently fair and equitable treatment. The suspension data reflect that no subgroup is being unreasonably suspended.		

	<b>The NJSTW Deliberative Dozen</b>	<i>We're There</i>	<i>Not Yet</i>
9	The school's programs for middle level students are replicable by other schools, even those schools with challenging and diverse populations.		
10	<p>The school meets the minimum academic eligibility requirements in one of two ways:</p> <p>a. The school meets the AYP Benchmark for <u>total students</u> for the current and prior year's state assessments in mathematics and language arts literacy administered to students in grades 6-8</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>b. The school shows a three-year upward trajectory for total students for state assessments in mathematics, language arts literacy, and science administered to students in grades 6-8</p>		
11	The school does not have any unanswered or ongoing civil rights violations.		
12	By the time the application is submitted, the entire administration and faculty will have participated in an extensive and ongoing discussion of the New Jersey Schools to Watch <sup>®</sup> Self-Rating and participated in the development of the application. If selected, the school will honorably fulfill the obligation of sharing its success with others statewide and nationally.		