The logo for New Jersey Schools to Watch features a grey outline of the state of New Jersey. Inside the outline, there is a graphic of four overlapping circles in blue, red, purple, and yellow. Below the graphic, the text "New Jersey" is written in a bold, grey, sans-serif font, and "Schools to Watch" is written in a grey, italicized, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol (®) to its right.

New Jersey
Schools to Watch®

High-Performance in
Middle Level Education
Nick Bernice, Frank Corrado, Gail Hilliard-
Nelson, Pamela Vaughn
Leadership Team for NJSTW

Find this presentation at:

Schoolstowatch.njamle.org

(click on NJEA Powerpoint)

What is the National Forum?

The National Forum is a group of sixty-five educators, researchers, state and regional school leaders, national education associations and foundations dedicated to improving education for middle-grades students across the country. They came together in 1994 to begin the journey of reforming middle level education.

Some of the organizations who are members of the National Forum and participated in developing the criteria

Include...



BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation



W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION



THE
Edna McConnell
Clark FOUNDATION





A VISION FOR MIDDLE-GRADES SCHOOLS

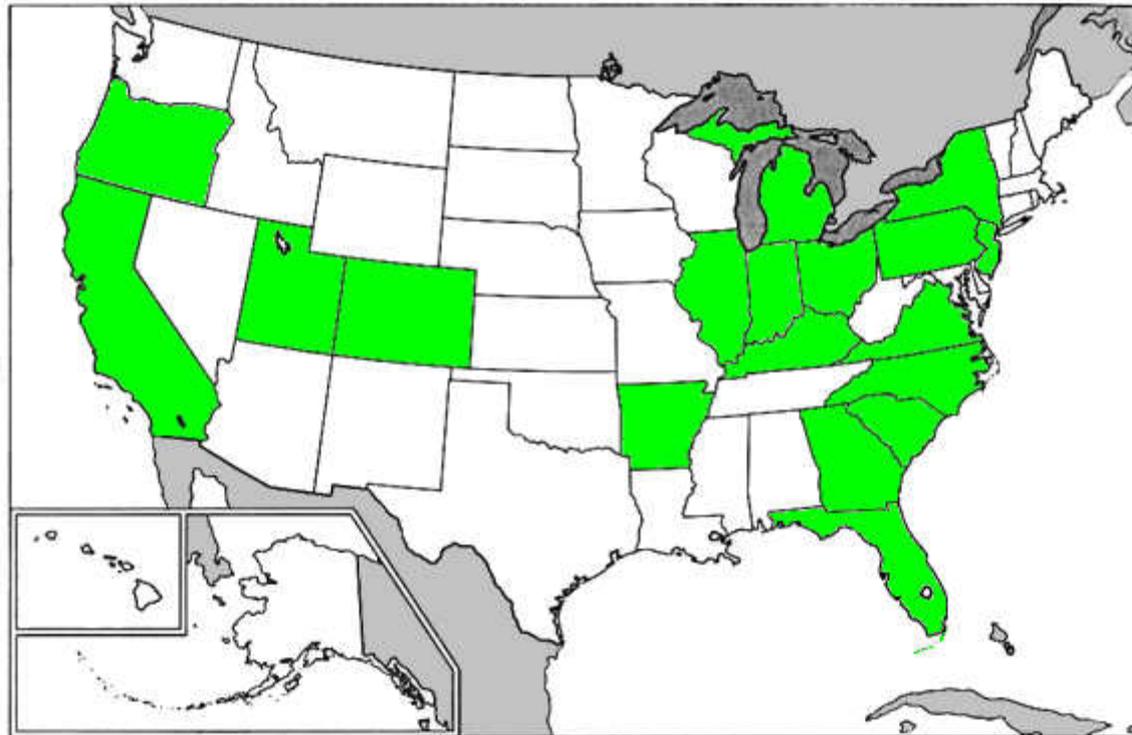
We, the members of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, believe that youth in the middle grades are capable of learning and achieving at high levels. We share a sense of urgency that high-performing schools with middle-grades become the norm, not the exception.

The National Forum to
Accelerate Middle Grades
Reform officially launched
Schools to Watch in 1999

In 2007 – New Jersey became
an STW state.

Currently there are **more than
130** Schools To Watch across
the nation.

Schools to Watch States 2009



Number of
STW States:
18

Nation's
Middle Level
Students in
STW States
61%

Arkansas
California
Colorado
Florida

Georgia
Illinois
Indiana
Kentucky

Michigan
New Jersey
New York
North Carolina

Ohio
Pennsylvania
South Carolina

Utah
Virginia

What are the key elements of an effective Middle Level Education?

Write your most significant element on an index card. Use the push pins to put your idea on the wall under one of the four Schools to Watch Criteria:

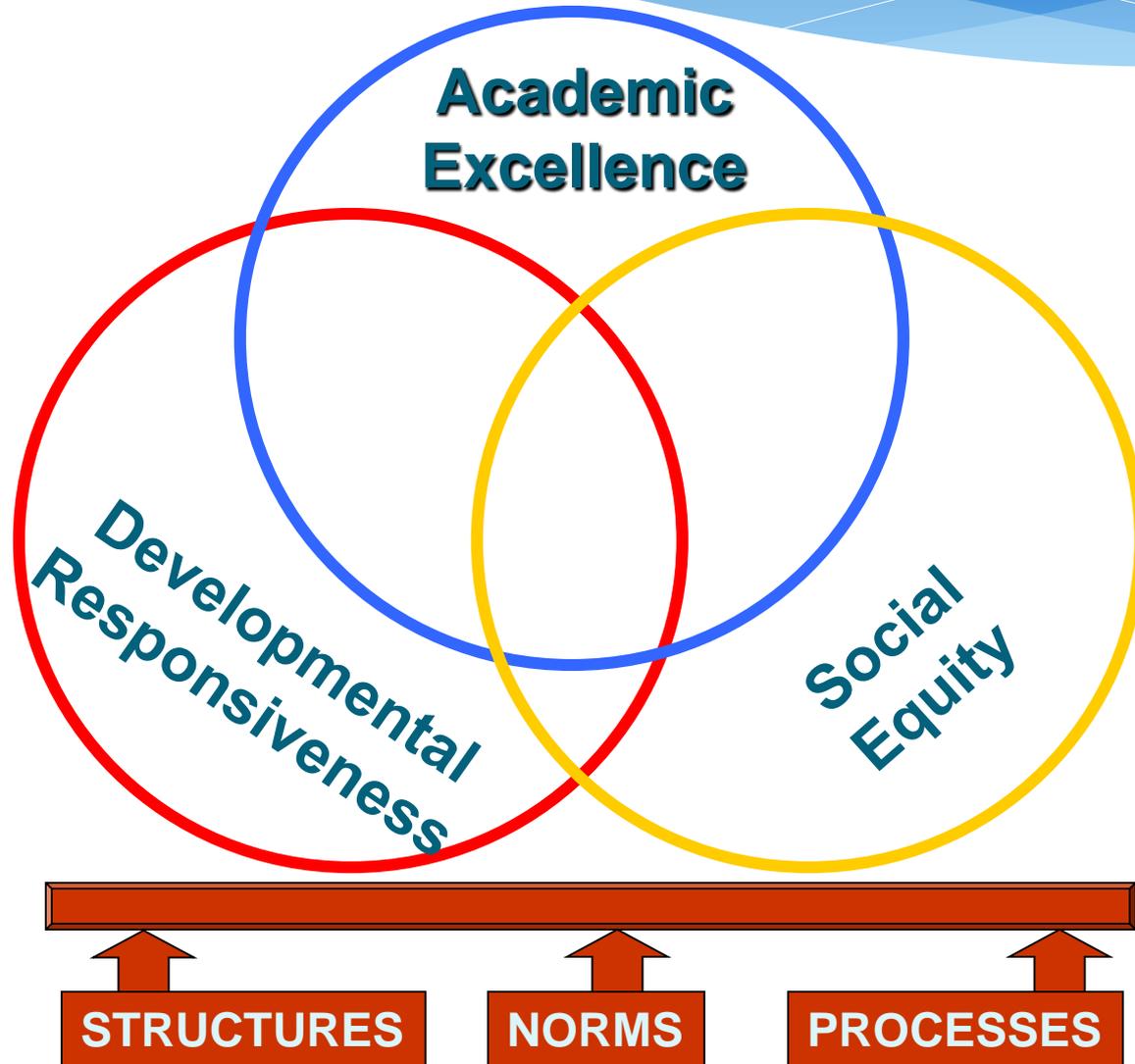
Academic Excellence

Developmental Responsiveness

Social Equity

Organizational Structures

The STW Criteria



Academic Excellence

Vision Statement

“The school challenges all students to use their minds well, providing them with the curriculum, instruction, assessment, support and time they need to meet rigorous academic standards.”

STW Criteria

- **All students are expected to meet high academic standards.**
- **Curriculum, instruction, assessment, and appropriate interventions are aligned with standards and are rigorous.**

Developmental Responsiveness

Vision Statement

“The school creates small learning communities of adults and students in which stable, close, and mutually respectful relationships support all students’ intellectual, ethical, and social growth.”

STW Criteria

- The school creates a personalized environment that supports each student’s intellectual, ethical, social, and physical development.**
- The school provides access to comprehensive services to foster healthy physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.**

Social Equity

Vision Statement

“The school has high expectations for all their students and is committed to helping each child produce work of high quality.”

STW Criteria

- **To the fullest extent possible, all students, including English learners, students with disabilities, gifted and honors students, participate in heterogeneous classes with high academic and behavioral expectations.**

Organizational Structures & Processes

Vision Statement

“These are the norms, structures, and organizational arrangements that support and sustain a school’s trajectory toward excellence in all areas.”

STW Criteria

- A shared vision of what a high-performing school is and does drives every facet of school change.
- The principal has the responsibility and authority to hold the school-improvement enterprise together, including day-to-day know-how, coordination, strategic planning, and communication.



The National Forum Today: Action and Advocacy for Middle Level Education

Awarded two Investing in Innovation Grants by the US
Department of Innovation:

[Ed Week Announces 13 awards: August 2010](#)

And Transforming Leaders which developed the

[Developing Leaders Curriculum for Middle Grade Leadership](#)

Most recently (October 8, 2015) the National Forum was again
recognized for its innovative work with s SEED Grant for Teacher
Preparation in Middle Grades.

NJSTW Partners



at the **CORE** of middle level
EDUCATION



DREW

WILLIAM
PATERSON
UNIVERSITY

Center for Future Educators 
AT THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



World-Class Education



NJEA joins NJAMLE to sponsor NJSTW





<http://njschoolstowatch.org/about-njstw>

New Jersey's Schools to Watch:

Belhaven Middle School, Linwood, NJ

[Black River Middle School, Chester, NJ](#)

Carl H. Kumpf Middle School, Clark, NJ

[Leonia Middle School, Leonia, NJ](#)

Mountain View Middle School, Mendham Borough, NJ

Spotlight Schools:

Grover Cleveland Middle School, Caldwell, NJ

[Union Hill Middle School, Union City, NJ](#)

Common Threads

While each school faces different challenges related to its location, student demographics, levels of district support, and other factors, we have seen common themes emerge.

Our Schools to Watch:

- Know and articulate the academic outcomes they seek. In some cases, the outcomes are prescribed by the state or district; in others the faculty have adopted the outcomes recommended by their various disciplines.
- Are taking deliberate steps to help students achieve those outcomes by making strategic changes in curriculum, teaching, and school services.
- Enjoy a high degree of family & community involvement (but are never satisfied with their current levels).
- Demonstrate a high level of faculty commitment.

Common Threads

- **Have set benchmarks for implementing their strategies, and hold themselves accountable for specific results. We cannot stress too much the importance of data in the lives of these schools.**
- **Strategically concentrate their energies on important focus areas. As a result, the changes in each school are burrowing deeply into its culture.**
- **Have strong, visionary leaders who can articulate challenging goals, and motivate faculty and staff to reach those goals.**
- **The schools are filled with happy, positive, and involved students and adults who are all actively learning!**

Is your school ready to think about applying to become a School to Watch?

NJSTWs are **NOT** perfect!!!

They do not need to have 100% perfect test scores, perfect kids or even perfect teachers!

But they must be on a trajectory of improvement and growth, they must be doing the things we have mentioned that make them innovative and interesting places to be for students, teachers and families.

We would especially be interested in talking with schools that have had significant challenges and have found innovative ways to make academic achievement for all students.

Steps to Follow to Apply for NJSTW

Talk with Colleagues and Administration, Share the Rubric
(<http://middlegradesforum.org/rubric/>)

Principal should complete the Readiness Checklist
(<http://schoolstowatch.njamle.org/readiness-checklist>)

School reviews and discusses Self-Rating Rubric

If you think you are ready, form a Committee to develop your application
Contact State Directors for Link to Electronic Self-Rating Rubric
Submit application (schoolstowatch@njamle.org)

NJSTW will conduct a review of the application and, if appropriate, a team will conduct a day-long site visit.

Thank You!!!

The New Jersey Schools to Watch

Core Team:

Frank Corrado and Gail Hilliard-
Nelson, Directors
Robert Mullen
Joseph Pizzo
Frank Rudnesky
Pamela Vaughn

Leadership Team:

Nicholas Bernice
Amanda Davidson
Jennifer Feeley
Charles Seipp

And a very special thank you to the New Jersey Association for Middle Level Education and New Jersey Education Association!

Join us at the NJAMLE Conference on March 11, 2016 at
Kean University!