



NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOLS TO WATCH MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

Apple Valley Middle School



Designated in 2009

Apple Valley Middle School • Henderson County Schools •
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2009-10 School Statistics

(Source: 2009 NC School Report Card.)

Community: Rural
Enrollment: 812
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Traditional

Student Demographics

72% White
18% Hispanic
8% African American
2% Asian

50% Free/Reduced Lunch
12% English Learners

2007 AYP: School of Distinction

Met 27 of 29 performance targets

2008 AYP: High Growth, School of Progress

Met 29 of 29 performance targets

2009 AYP: Expected Growth, School of Distinction

Met 25 of 25 performance targets

(Visit <http://www.ncreportcards.org> to view this school's data for prior years.)

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Apple Valley Middle School is located in western North Carolina just south of Asheville, and yes, it is one of the nation's largest apple producing areas. This school of about 820 students is on a plateau between the Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountains, and is an important part of the Hendersonville community. Even with such a high percentage being disadvantaged, the school thrives and is continually striving to reach higher growth. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming, and the community supports the school in a variety of ways.

Academic Excellence

- Real life applications of curriculum were observed in all subject areas.
- A huge variety of strategies, activities, and assessments are used—oral presentation, hands on experiments, group discussions, think/pair/share, conferencing, peer tutoring, peer editing, proportional art, games, note taking, lecture, silent reading, essential questions, projects, oral/written tests, etc.

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Academic Excellence *(continued)*

- Teachers have professional development once a month and are required to develop a unit around their essential questions.
- As students improve, they are moved to more advanced classes.
- Students are given the opportunity to improve their grades each week through Friday Finale.
- Teachers meet in teams to discuss student needs on their teams, and they meet to discuss the students with the students' teachers for the next school year. The eighth grade teachers also meet with high school teachers to discuss students' needs.

Developmental Responsiveness

- The school strictly enforces a no bullying policy.
- The school has a large support service base. A health center is on campus. The center employs a physician's assistant, nurse, and therapist. The school has a homeless counselor, dispute counselor, family counselor, attendance counselor, twelve peer mediators, and a Newcomers Center (This helps with Hispanic students who do not speak English).
- Students have opportunity to discuss concerns with each other, teachers, and the administration.
- Families are very welcome at Apple Valley. Monday nights are open to the Hispanic community. Teachers meet with parents to discuss their children and to help the parents with adjustments into a new culture. Open houses and orientations are held each year. All teachers have websites for parent /student use.
- The school has many sponsors and is supported by Blue Ridge Community College. The school has taken itself to the community. Students are involved in many community service projects.
- The school offers athletics, clubs (both during and after school), and clubs that include shared interests with the high school.

Social Equity

- All teachers have high expectations for all students.
- The school has adapted to meet the needs of its population. The school has gone to the community - not the community to the school. Respect is given to all cultures.
- Students have the flexibility to move into classes when they are academically ready.
- Students voice their opinions through the student council. Students present ideas to teachers and administration.
- The school uses a variety of rewards systems such as honor rolls, students of the month, spirit award, most improved award, and teacher give a number of rewards for various skills. Teachers are also given awards.
- Although the staff is not diverse, many speak Spanish and one teacher is learning an Indonesian language because the school now has one student who only speaks this language.

Organizational Support

- The school shares a vision. This vision is based on community. The school sees itself as the heart of the community, and it involves itself in any way possible to help those it serves.

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Organizational Support *(continued)*

- The faculty, staff, and students see the principal as the person who holds the school together, but they also see the administrative staff as a well-balanced team.
- Each teacher is required to develop a lesson around an essential question for their subject areas. Staff development focuses on this one day a month.
- The school has a variety of partners in the community who support the work at Apple Valley.
- The school has a benchmark meeting after every local test. The No Zero policy also drives the data information.