

COLORADO TRAILBLAZER SCHOOL TO WATCH



Rocky Heights Middle School



Designated in 2016:

Rocky Heights Middle School • Douglas County
School District • Douglas County • Colorado •
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School Web Site:
<https://www.sites.google.com/a/dcsdk12.org/rockyheights-middle-school/>

2015-2016 School Statistics

(Source: Infinite Campus)

Community: Suburban community in South Denver
Enrollment: 1500
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Traditional

Student Demographics

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|-------|-----------------------------------|
| 7.3% | Hispanic |
| 81.5% | White |
| 6.4% | Asian |
| .7% | African American |
| .3% | American Indian (Native American) |

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|------|--------------------|
| 2.8% | Free/Reduced Lunch |
| 4% | English Learners |
| 1.6% | Mobility Rate |

| AYP | % of Targets Met |
|---------------|--------------------|
| TCAPP Reading | Meets/Exceeds: 90% |
| TCAPP Writing | Meets/Exceeds: 80% |
| TCAPP Math | Meets/Exceeds: 90% |

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- The daily objective is posted in every class 100% of the time.
- In a recent walk through process, 100% of students explained the learning objective for that class.
- Teachers provide criteria for success using exemplars, rubrics, lists, and demonstrations.
- Teachers' academic feedback to students is actionable, clear, specific, and pertinent to the criteria for success.
- Each department writes a thorough Curriculum Map/Scope and Sequence, which is closely compared with state standards.

- Grade level teacher teams meet weekly to coordinate and collaborate their learning objectives.
- Elective teachers use monthly NWEA/Compass Learning data to further encourage and teach specific skills to increase academic growth for all students.
- Teachers incorporate the 4Cs (Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Creativity and Communication) and 21st Century Learning Skills into their lessons.
- Integrate technology, into all classrooms (1-to-1 Initiative).
- Using NWEA data, students write individualized goals in reading, writing, and math.
- Teachers specify criteria for success for daily and unit learning objectives.
- Each teacher utilizes a Balanced Assessment System for student success.
- Teachers access progress monitoring data to keep track of accommodations for students with individualized plans.
- A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is utilized to identify and support learners on both ends of the spectrum (low achieving and high achieving).
- Our ELL program consistently supports language proficiency through all levels of language acquisition.
- Dimensions in Literacy classes offered to sixth grade students needing intensive reading interventions.
- Collaborative support with Educational Assistants in many classes.
- SOAR (Succeed, Opportunity, Advancement and Reinforcement) is a summer enrichment program which provides students opportunities to succeed with innovative instruction.
- Early Flight, a transition program for incoming students to acclimate to middle school.
- Analysis of Balanced Assessment Data to assess instructional methods.
- Students have the opportunity to dialogue with teachers through Google Classroom and Edmodo.
- 6th grade conducts a cross-curricular unit called International Towne.
- Teachers often collaboratively plan lessons to support each other's learning targets, i.e., Math with Science, Science with Reading, Reading with Social Studies.
- Student-led conferences happen in September and February and focus on establishing short-term and long-term academic performance goals involving parents, students, and teachers.
- Infinite Campus provides parents and students web access to grades, assignments and attendance, news, and email communication.
- A variety of clubs are offered or started by students to contribute to the school and community, such as the Art Club, Nanowrimo, Archery, Battle of the Books, Debate Club, Chess Club, Drama Club, First Priority, Robotics and National Honor Society.
- One team of 8th grade students were recipients of a technology grant (Samsung) and were provided technology and guidance to incorporate technology into their learning.
- Students participate in academic competitions include Destination Imagination, Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, and essay contests.
- Academic interventions include organizational skills, supported core classes, intensive small groups.
- Teachers are trained and evaluated on Personalized Learning as well as Differentiated Instruction.

- Assessment, presentation, and content are differentiated based on learning styles, interests, and readiness.
- Activities and assessments are often discreetly differentiated within the class for different learners.
- 6th grade students participate in 90-minute blocks of reading and math with 48-minute classes of Science, Social Studies and elective classes, and 3 minute passing times.
- 7th and 8th grade students participate in 54-minute core classes, 48-minute elective classes, and 3 minute passing times.
- Elective classes include PE, Band, Drama, Art, Spanish, French, Chinese, Orchestra, Vocal Music, eSTEM, Digital Media, and World Cultures.
- The Drama Department puts on two musicals every year with a cast and tech support of over 100 students for each performance.
- Core classes are scheduled by hand with balance of gender, ethnicity, behavior, and abilities and matching personalities, as much as possible.
- Nighthawk Television is comprised of students learning to communicate through film by creating short films, live broadcasts, a full-length movie, and attending film festivals and film conferences around the country.
- The RHMS Yearbook won the national NSPA award for the 186 page yearbook created by 22 groups of students using video magazine stories, web content, events that happen outside of school and life within the walls of RHMS.
- Our Media Specialist/Teacher-Librarian supports students and staff by co-teaching, building a collection of materials to support innovative instructional practices.
- Teachers are adept with a Balanced Assessment Practice and review benchmark data to refine instruction and differentiate or personalize instruction to provide meaningful solutions for student success.

Developmental Responsiveness/Social Equity

- Our Step Forward Program focuses on bullying, encouraging students who struggle with social and listening skills.
- The Mental Health Department schedule individual and group counseling frequently to meet the social/emotional needs of students.
- ROCK (Reaching Out and Connecting with Kids) is a school wide opportunity to connect with kids during the first 15 minutes of each day.
- ROK (Respect, Own It and Be Kind) is a “Positive Behavior Support” (PBS), which involves collaboration with students and staff to problem solve and build upon the school’s existing strengths.
- Restorative Practices is a key aspect in counseling and discipline procedures.
- All 6th and 7th graders completed an on-line interest survey, and all 8th graders have completed the first 2 steps of the ICAP process using Naviance.
- All GT students have completed Smart Goals for their Advanced Learning Plans in Naviance.

- All IEP students complete a transition plan for high school including interests and goal setting.
- All staff, administrators, teachers, and classified, have an “open door” policy for students, parents, and each other.
- Our Student Council meets weekly to plan school events, fund raising, and suggestions for school practices.
- SAC (School Advisory Counsel) meets monthly to discuss topics of interest regarding RHMS practices, data and/or pertinent information regarding our school.
- Special education scheduling and interventions are based on student needs and ability, not on their label.
- Special education students are in their least restrictive environment that their growth needs.
- Social issues from all classes are addressed and connected to our own diversity.
- Multiple viewpoints are often encouraged and contrived in whole class and group discussions within the Restorative Practices.
- Teachers greet and converse with students in hallways, at the door, in lunch, and during activities. Smiles and encouragement abound.

Organizational Support

- Vision and mission are posted in classrooms, hallways, meeting rooms, and student planners.
- Students are adept and familiar with walk-through practices performed by the administration.
- Administration actively participates in Master/Mentor meetings, Leadership Team meetings, weekly staff development, and all core team meetings.
- Our Leadership Team develops a Long Range Plan for weekly staff development based on data analysis, curriculum, & instruction.
- All staff have input for school practices, scheduling, and expectations via team meetings, open-door communication, and discussions.
- School practices are often refined or initiated quickly. We respond to district initiatives efficiently and with practicality.
- School, community, and self-pride are emphasized regarding our achievement, growth, and continued success.
- Feedback from observations is shared via face discussions, Walk-Through Forms, feedback template, written notes, and/or email.
- The RHMS Building Leadership Team conducts weekly staff development that is differentiated for all staff.
- Mentor teachers follow up training by individually coaching.
- Individual coaching includes regular collaborative planning, discussions about training topics, guidance in areas of refinement, observation and feedback, and co-teaching to model strategies.
- Training topics are explained, text/purpose/rationale are read, expectations are modeled, time for collaborative and individual planning is provided, and implementation is monitored.
- In Team Meetings, we are proactive instead of reactive.

- SAC and our Building Leadership Team participate in discussions about our mission and vision, School Performance Plan, data, our recognitions, and suggestions for school improvement.
- Collectively, Administers, Staff, Parents and Students express pride in our High Achievement/High Growth status and how we compare to eight other middle schools in the area.