

GEORGIA LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL TO WATCH MIDDLE SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

Rising Starr Middle School



2017-2018 School Statistics

Community: Fayetteville/Peachtree City, Georgia

Grade Levels: 6th – 8th grades

School Schedule: 7 period day (5 academic classes, plus 2 connections classes)

Student Demographics

Hispanic: 8.5%

White: 71.8%

African American: 9.1%

Asian: 5.8%

American Indian: 0.1%

Multi-race: 3.9%

Other: 0.8%

Male: 49.4%

Female: 50.6%

Free/Reduced Lunch: 9.2%

English Learners: 1.8%

Gifted: 33.7%

2014 CCRPI SCORE: 92.6

2015 CCRPI SCORE: 90

2016 CCRPI SCORE: 95.7

2017 CCRPI SCORE: 97.9

Designated in: 2004

Redesignated: 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016

- Rising Starr Middle School
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- Fayetteville
- Georgia
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School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- High and consistently improving academic achievement is the primary goal of the faculty and staff of Rising Starr Middle School. The focuses are on the quality and quantity of student learning and mastery of grade level standards.
- Rising Starr Middle School has a strong collaborative culture in which colleagues work together to develop instructional plans and assessments. Protected planning days allow for teachers to engage in professional learning communities in order to enhance student engagement and achievement.

- Teachers and support personnel utilize differentiation to address students' individual learning styles and needs. Flexible grouping allows opportunities for direct instruction, extra practice, or peer support. Collaborative projects encourage students to cooperate in a team environment and to learn from each other.
- Students receive ongoing and immediate feedback through student-teacher conferencing, grading, or 21st century classroom tools. Following assessments, students are given the option of retaking tests or quizzes or reworking projects. The student's final score is always based on meeting or exceeding the standard assessed, no matter how long it takes to complete the work.
- The 21st Century classroom has a direct effect on the academic achievement of RSMS students. Each classroom is equipped with an Active Wall or Active Panel, a microphone, student Chromebooks, and document camera in order to promote student learning. Blackboard Management System is a digital learning environment that allows students, parents, and teachers to access to classroom announcements, assignments, and other instructional resources. Instruction is personalized to fit individual student needs.



Developmental Responsiveness

- Rising Starr Middle School follows the Middle School Concept. The faculty and staff care for students and each other. Relationships are essential between all stakeholders in building.
- Connections classes provide hands-on experiences that allow students to explore future career and leisure activities. Students have access to a variety of sports, clubs, and fine arts opportunities before, during, and after school to promote different areas of interests and passions.
- Rising Starr has incredible support from parents and community members. Parents volunteer in the building throughout the day in various ways.
- The counseling staff coordinates a number of activities and programs that support the developmental needs of middle school students.
- Interdisciplinary opportunities are common throughout the subject areas. Additional interdisciplinary opportunities are driven by student interest through passion based projects.

Social Equity

- Rising Starr Middle School is committed to student achievement. Students are heterogeneously grouped. Gifted students, general education students, English language learners, and students with disabilities are served on mixed ability teams, which supports the individual needs of all students.
- Professional Learning Communities focus on collaborative discussion, learning, book studies, online research, and common planning to improve curriculum implementation, build common assessments, and continually modify instruction to best serve the student community. Teachers have common planning time in order to further foster the middle school model.
- Students are recognized in a myriad of ways at RSMS. In addition to team and classroom reward systems and the schoolwide Caught Ya program, students are recognized at the end of the year for academics, citizenship, improvement, and initiative. Most teams have awards at the end of each nine weeks to recognize students for accomplishments such as managing time wisely, giving 100% in class, or being trustworthy. RSMS also has many students participate in local, state, and national sports and academic competitions.
- Communication with parents and families is a priority for RSMS faculty and staff.
- The rules at Rising Starr are fair and consistently enforced. As part of a progressive discipline policy, students have consequences in the classroom and on the team before being referred to an administrator. The disciplinary and referral rates are low due to effective behavior management in the classrooms and clear rules and guidelines.

Organizational Supports

- Teachers and students are organized in teams. Each team has a connections teacher paired with the team in order to provide additional support to students.
- The administrative team provides a clear vision for collaboration, while at the same time providing autonomy for each teacher and teacher group.
- The daily schedule at RSMS provides time for initial instruction, remediation, and acceleration opportunities.
- PAWS (Play, Achieve, Work Succeed) is a weekly activity period for students to pursue an interest, acquire a hobby, or develop a skill. The program is designed to provide students an opportunity to learn something of special interest to them, either on their own or collaboratively with their peers.