

## SCHOOLS TO WATCH MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE

### School Name



#### Designated in 2009

Emerson Middle School • Park Ridge-Niles Community Consolidated School District 64 • Cook County • Dr. Victoria Mogil, Principal • 8101 N. Cumberland, Niles, Illinois 60714  
 • Tel (847) 318-8110; Fax (847) 318-8701 • Website: [www.d64.org/ems/](http://www.d64.org/ems/)

### 2008 School Statistics

(Source: Illinois Interactive Report Cards—[www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net))

Community: Chicago Suburban drawing from Park Ridge and Niles, Illinois  
 Enrollment: 811  
 Grade Levels: 6-7-8  
 School Schedule: Team block; 40-45-50-60 minute periods depending on grade and subject .

#### Student Demographics

- 5% Hispanic
- 85% White
- 1% African American
- 5% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 4% Multi-Racial/Ethnic
  
- 2% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 1% English Learners

2007 Base: 89.4% Met/Exceeded Standards  
 2008 Growth: 3.5 points since 2007  
 2008 AYP: 92.9% Met/Exceeded Standards—  
 AYP targets achieved in 8 of 8 areas

(Visit [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) to view Emerson's past data.)

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- District-wide alignment of curriculum with Illinois Learning Standards
- High achievement levels for all subgroups, including Students with Disabilities
- Continual re-creation of programs for academically needy students—We do what it takes!
- Exceptional Encore offerings with 22 and 28 core and non-core electives for seventh and eighth graders
- Hands-on learning occurs everywhere, and student work is visible throughout the school. Science is particularly challenging in eighth grade through use of the Introduction to Physical Science curriculum
- District-wide use of Educational Ends that focus on assessment of aspects of student learning beyond AYP
- Innovative schedule that with varied class lengths depending on the grade and subject. 200-minute contiguous core block at seventh and eighth grade
- Emphasis throughout the school on cross-curricular connections and on comprehension skills
- Team and district plan time devoted to use of data to promote student academic growth
- Highly qualified, early-adolescent-loving faculty, over 85% of whom hold Masters degrees and all of whom use a variety of methods appropriate for their students and to their curriculum

### ***Emerson Middle School***

#### **Developmental Responsiveness**

- Teams at all grade levels are the heart of our students' experience; special education and gifted students are on team
- Specially-developed sixth grade program successfully bridges youngsters into Emerson
- Seventh and eighth graders loop with the same set of academic teachers
- Emerson staff notable for being advocates for their youngsters, not just advisors
- Course offerings and teaching methods wide-ranging and tailored to student interests
- Instrumental music offerings are varied and deep
- Opportunity to create "Teen Leisure Clubs" exists for all students and staff
- Strong intramural and interscholastic sports programs and daily physical education meet students' need to move. Emerson is a NASPE "Stars School", which is a major national recognition
- Three-year comprehensive health education program in place
- Two social workers and a counselor run a variety of groups and meet with students individually
- Although teams must set aside advisory time from their block if they want a period as such, Emerson staff take care of kids, and it shows. When polled yearly, over 95% state there is at least one person in the school who is interested in them and to whom they could turn with a social, academic or emotional problem
- The tenets of Emotional Intelligence are woven into many class assignments, as are service learning and student interests
- 100% parent contact yearly

#### **Social Equity**

- All students are part of heterogeneously-grouped teams and ability grouping is minimal in classes
- Special education structures vary yearly depending on the needs of students. For the few students who need them, academic classes may be co-taught, taught in small groups or supported by an assistant.
- STRIVE students, who are primarily on the autism spectrum, are a part of every class at Emerson
- Although only 1% of our students are ELLs, over 70 languages are spoken in our students' homes; we work to honor and incorporate those backgrounds
- The only activities that do not include every student who wants to participate are seventh and eighth grade volleyball and basketball because of space restrictions. Everything else is highly inclusive, including our musical, during which more than 25% of the students will be on stage
- Formal career education programs in sixth and eighth grade
- Student successes recognized through teams, honor roll, principal's Friday Announcements, assemblies

#### **Organizational Support**

- District 64 has a rotation of early-release Wednesdays, and teachers have professional time at the building, department and district levels, as well as several Professional Learning Days of their own design
- Teacher leaders support staff learning, including a building Quality Improvement Team, department chairs and liaisons and team leaders
- Emerson is an active Association of Illinois Middle-Level Schools Demonstration School
- Communication tools for families include the online Parent Portal assignment review program, our web page, twice-yearly conferences, Homework Hotline, e-mail and voice mail and *The Emerson Enquirer*
- We use our communities' libraries, family services, Niles Teen Center, police school resource officer, and the district's Senior Volunteer program
- We host student teachers from several area sites
- Our Parent-Teacher Organization is active in providing quality events for our students and families

#### **Focus for the Future—Continuing Improvement**

- The Response to Intervention Model—Will build on existing Tier 2 structures and practices in place to assure student academic and emotional growth
- Will complete a district study of a flex period