



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

### Triad Middle School



#### Designated in 2007

Triad Middle School • Triad CUSD 2 • Madison County • Illinois • Cathleen Buller, Principal • 9539 US Highway 40, Saint Jacob • Phone (618)644-5511  
[cathie.buller@triad.madison.k12.il.us](mailto:cathie.buller@triad.madison.k12.il.us)  
<http://www.computer.com>

### 2007 School Statistics

Sources: 2007 Illinois School Report Card

Community: Rural  
Enrollment: 850  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: 45 Min. Core, 40 Min. Exploratory / Team Driven Schedule

#### Student Demographics

0.8%	Hispanic
95.5%	White
1.5%	African American
0.5%	Native American
0.9%	Multi racial/Ethnic
0.7%	Asian/Pacific Islander
14.9%	Free/Reduced Lunch
0.0%	English Learners

2005 AYP: Composite School Score 76.3% M/E  
2006 AYP: Composite School Score 83.9% M/E  
2007 AYP: Composite School Score 84.8% M/E

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Students are held to high academic standards as evidenced by products on display, observations of classroom instruction, high test scores and the numbers achieving honor roll status.
- The staff has spent a considerable amount of time aligning its curriculum to the state-provided framework. Curriculum review and realignment is ongoing and thorough. The curriculum is truly a "living" document.
- Interdisciplinary and cross-curricular units of study are the norm.
- Students engage in a variety of learning experiences, from exploration to experimentation, from journaling to oral presentation, and from cooperative group work to individual inquiry.
- End-of-unit projects are prominently displayed in the building. Students work under rubric-guided scoring on higher order learning activities, including designing, creating, and classifying.
- Students are on-task, because they are engaged in work that is relevant and has a real application to everyday life.

(Continued)

**Academic Excellence** *(continued)*

- Several student supports are in place, including READ 180, SMART, special education teachers, HABITS, ZAP, and on-site BD and TLS classrooms.
- Administration provides in-service on curriculum development, especially in the areas of reading, writing and math. The district's professional development website is aligned with its school improvement plan and facilitates enrollment in meaningful teacher education programs.

**Developmental Responsiveness**

- The team design has been manipulated in a progressive manner according to grade level and the developmental needs of students: grade 6 is divided into 5 teams of 2 classes; grade 7 into 3 teams of 3-4 classes; grade 8 into 2 teams of 5. Students receive daily PE instruction. Health is part of the curriculum at all 3 grade levels.
- Two social workers, a student advocate, and a full time nurse staff the Student Services department. Additional support is offered through the school's SMART process.
- Students are arranged in a variety of configurations, including small and whole class instruction as well as being paired with members of their peer group.
- Real life connections are made at all grade levels. Exploratory classes provide students with exposure to future careers and interpersonal skills necessary as adult members of society.
- Integrated units of study provide real world connections. Several school-sponsored service projects and character education classes teach the importance of caring for others.
- Exploratory classes are inquiry-based. Students are given opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence and make plans about their futures based upon results of these inquiries.
- Students are encouraged to reflect upon instruction and record those reflections in personal logs.
- A more equitable system of selecting representatives for student council has been put in place.
- Parents are kept informed through newsletters, email, homework hotline, student agendas, and team websites. Parent survey results are used to drive the school improvement process.
- The school has developed partnerships with several community organizations, including Bank at School, local law enforcement, the county animal shelter, and the city's food pantry. The annual History from the Bleachers program recognizes accomplishments of local service men/women.
- TMS provides several co-curricular activities, despite recent budgetary cuts. These include 16 athletic programs, Model UN, yearbook committee, student council, show choir, chorus, jazz band, pep band, and the spring musical. Close to 2/3 of the student body participate in these activities.

**Social Equity**

- The ZAP and HABITS programs send a clear message that homework is important to the learning process and that all students will be held to high standards of performance.
- Students demonstrate competence using a variety of methods and tools, including the fine arts, performance, portfolio assessment, individualized programs, and end-of-unit products.
- Administrative adaptations to curriculum, scheduling, and instruction are data driven and ongoing. Staff and parental input plays an important role in the school improvement process.
- Least restrictive environment is evident at TMS. Students move in and out of programs based upon current need and ongoing assessment.
- 

*(Continued)*

**Social Equity** *(continued)*

- Students are introduced to other cultures and traditions through cross-curricular units and novel studies.
- Students are surveyed annually at all grade levels. The results of these surveys drive alterations to curriculum and instruction, guide decisions made during the school improvement process, and bring about changes to school programs.
- Parents volunteer to help in classroom activities on a consistent basis. Families regularly attend school-sponsored assemblies and open houses.
- Students are honored at all grade levels for “doing the right thing.” These rewards include programs, such as AHA, Fun Friday, Friday Fling, and awards assemblies throughout the year.
- While the faculty is not culturally or linguistically diverse, it adequately reflects its student clientele.
- The school’s suspension rate is under 5% and is not overly punitive to one subgroup of the student body.

**Organizational Support**

- The school mission statement is posted in every classroom and serves as the driving force behind administrative and instructional decisions.
- The school improvement process is reflective of the school’s mission, is ongoing, and is driven by data from a variety of sources.
- Daily team plan time is built into the schedule and provides teachers with the chance to organize instruction, develop new programs, and work with administration to meet student needs.
- Professional development is offered at building, district, and regional levels and reflects the educational vision stated in the district’s strategic plan and the school’s improvement plan.
- The school uses the community as an important educational resource, as evidenced by its History from the Bleachers assemblies, career fairs, inclusion of the DARE program in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum, and service projects conducted throughout the school year.
- Administration and staff continuously work together as a group and through committee investigations to address the effectiveness of ongoing programs and areas of study.
- Dozens of student teachers and field observers from three local colleges/universities are mentored on an annual basis by teachers at TMS.
- Communication occurs at all levels: between students and teachers, teachers and teachers, teachers and administration, teachers and parents, administration and parents, and between the school and its community.