



# GEORGIA LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL TO WATCH UPSON-LEE MIDDLE SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE



## Upson-Lee Middle School



Designated in 2005;  
Redesignated 2008, 2010, 2014

Upson-Lee Middle School • Thomaston-Upson County  
School District • Upson County • Georgia • Principal,  
Rhonda Gulley • 101 Holstun Drive, Thomaston, GA  
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## 2016-2017 School Statistics

**Community:** Upson County

**Enrollment:** 880

**Grade Levels:** 6-8

**School Schedule:** 7:55-3:10

**Student Demographics**

3.4% Hispanic

58% White

33% African American

<1% Asian

5.2% Multi-race

51% Male

49% Female

100% District-wide Community Eligibility Program  
(CEP)

<1% English Learners

9.7% Gifted

**2008 AYP:** Met 12 of 12 indicators

**2009 AYP:** Met 12 of 12 indicators

**2010 AYP:** DNM - Met 11 of 12 indicators

**2011 AYP:** Met 12 of 12 indicators

**2012 CCRPI Rank:** 80.2

**2013 CCRPI Rank:** 79.7

**2014 CCRPI Rank:** 74.5

**2015 CCRPI Rank:** 77.8

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Standards-based Instruction delivered using research-based best practices with the support of Instructional Strategy and Instructional Technology Coaches
- Differentiated instruction that engages students in active learning and is tailored to individual student needs and learning styles.
- Incorporate literacy instruction in all curriculum areas
- Extensive use of Thinking Maps and Write from the Beginning and Beyond for critical thinking processes
- Gifted/Honors resource class in addition to the Cluster Grouping Model with all academic teachers holding gifted endorsements
- 1:1 Chromebook Initiative
- Provide Extended Learning Time during regular school day two to three days per week for acceleration, extension, and remediation in addition to Lunch and Learn, After School Tutoring, etc.

## **Georgia Lighthouse Schools to Watch** ***Upson- Lee Middle School***

- Professional Learning Communities to develop grade level units and common assessments
- Data driven instruction and practices monitored through awareness walks
- Every classroom equipped with state of the art technology (interactive whiteboards, student response devices, slates, 1:1 Chromebooks, document cameras, and wireless capability)
- High Impact practices, such as differentiation, assessment for learning, RTI, Higher Order Thinking Skills, and fluid/flexible grouping present throughout the curriculum
- Science, Math, Technology, Engineering project-based learning – Solar Car and Robotics
- Exceptional student achievement results in regards to closing achievement gaps
- Accelerated classes formed to allow high school credit for 8<sup>th</sup> graders taking Algebra I and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature and Composition.

### **Developmental Responsiveness**

- Teaming model to create small learning communities (3 member teams sharing a Science teacher and a Social Studies teacher)
- Interdisciplinary approach to reinforce important concepts and address real-world problems
- Science, Math, Technology, Engineering project-based learning – Solar Car and Robotics
- College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards
- Connections classes including art, music, band/chorus, multi-media, agricultural science, math and reading strategies, and keyboarding
- One to One Chromebooks in every academic classroom
- 2 Instructional Strategy Coaches and 1 part-time Instructional Technology Coach
- PBIS- a school wide positive behavior plan that recognizes Knightly behavior
- School wide Fight Free Program
- Comprehensive Bullying prevention program
- Advisor/Advisee Program (meets on Mondays) – Goal-setting, Bullying, Character Education with Williams & Williams, LLC.
- Celebrations of excellence for academics, attendance, citizenship
- Strategies to promote student responsibility in good citizenship – SMART goals, Agendas/Organizers, Student Leadership Team, Service Clubs, etc.
- Extra-curricular activities (clubs, dances, sports)
- Parent Involvement Coordinator, Parent Mentor, Community/Student Mentoring Program, Two Counselors, Behavior Interventionist, EL Teacher, Nurse

### **Social Equity**

- School wide heterogeneous grouping with differentiated instruction with all students held to high academic standards
- All academic teachers certified in gifted instruction and trained in differentiation for all students
- Content-based Co-Teachers
- Accelerated short-term interventions for students
- Grade-level collaborative planning for all professional learning communities ensure equitable teaching and learning opportunities
- Love and Logic and Mindset training

## **Georgia Lighthouse Schools to Watch** ***Upson- Lee Middle School***

- Behavior Intervention Specialist, Counselors, EL Teacher, and a Media Specialist
- Professional Learning/Data Room
- Advisor/Advisee Program
- Knight Buddies program to support students new to the school
- Student of the Month nominations based on Knightly Behavior
- At-Risk students provided with focus team support (RTI)
- Multiple opportunities to develop leadership including Student Leadership Team, Peer Helpers, opportunities in support of the community, etc.
- School/home communication via newsletters, School Reach, e-mail, outside information sign, web-based grade book, team correspondence and meetings, open houses, social media, etc.
- Active PTO, School Council and Partners in Education

## **Organizational Supports**

- On-campus professional learning opportunities to further the goals of the school improvement plan as part of a professional learning plan
- The principal is the instructional leader, heading a leadership team that is representative of the faculty; the mission of the leadership team is to plan, document and guide school improvement
- Instructional coaching program provided for all core academic subjects in addition to collaboration with colleges, regional agencies, and professional organizations
- A Co-Teacher provides adaptive curriculum and instruction as a instructional strategist assigned to each content area to support the SWD students
- Professional Learning Communities plan three times per week with monthly targeted professional development days.
- Protected RTI Wednesdays to discuss progress monitoring
- Strong inclusion program; 95-100% inclusion for Science. Social Studies and Language Arts classes; 80-85% inclusion for math and literature/reading
- Budget, professional learning, and resources aligned with School Improvement Plan
- Network, online and physical resources are in central locations to foster collaborations
- Timeline, support, and monitoring for implementation of instructional initiatives to foster pervasive, consistent, and effective practices