



NJ SCHOOLS TO WATCH

GROWING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING!

MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR'S GUIDE



Leonia Middle School



Designated in 2014

- Leonia Middle School • Leonia Public Schools
- Bergen County, NJ
- Dr. Nicholas Bernice, Principal
- 500 Broad Ave, NJ 07605
- (201) 302-5200, Fax (201) 461-1510
- www.leoniaschools.org

2013 School Statistics

Community: The Leonia Middle School is comprised of students from the New Jersey communities of Leonia and Edgewater. These suburbs are well known for not only their close proximity to New York City but for their diverse populations dedicated to the arts and committed to their school systems.

Enrollment: 490
Grade Levels: 6 – 8

School Schedule: There are eight bell periods per day, each are 45 minutes long. Every student has a Math, Science, Language Arts, and Social Studies core class. Both Spanish and French are offered as World Languages and cycle exposures include Science Literacy, Music Theory, Art, Writers Workshop, Art History, Civics, and Holocaust Studies.

Student Demographics

- 37.4% Asian
- 33.6% White
- 21.5% Hispanic
- 6.7% African American
- 0.8% Other

Academic Excellence

- From Leonia Middle School's (LMS) 2013 NJ School Report Card:
 - This school's academic performance is very high when compared to schools across the state. Additionally, its academic performance is very high when compared to its peers.*
 - This school's college and career readiness is very high when compared to schools across the state. Additionally, its college and career readiness is very high when compared to its peers.*
 - This school's student growth performance is very high when compared to schools across the state. Additionally, its student growth performance is very high when compared to its peers.*
- In 2010, LMS became a Columbia University Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project School. The goal was to improve student reading and writing as evidenced by the quality of individual student work. In 2013, LMS was deemed a Teachers College exemplar school. LMS hosted and provided Professional Development for a full day for a collection of teachers from another middle school, which was embarking on the first year working with the Readers and Writers Project. They watched our teachers at work and had time to ask questions of teachers and administrators.
- Social Studies teachers now use multiple digital resources to vary historical perspectives and reading levels. There are full digital labs for the exclusive use of the 7th and 8th grade Social Studies teachers.
- For the past three years LMS served as a field test school for an internet based Science program called Readorium. The 6th grade Science classes completed 10 days of Readorium work. After which, 43% of participating students made progress in their reading level as measured by the online DORA assessment.

- Leonia’s Public Schools use a data driven framework for academic decision making. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test data is the foundation of this framework. Using these data to inform classroom instruction we have seen an increase in LMS students who meet or exceed their individual average growth target suggested by Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA).
- Every teacher in the building has access to their class roster of MAP, NJASK, and guided reading level data. Scores are available and each child’s progress is looked at individually.
- Academically at-risk students are identified and, for them, specific strategies are put in place; these data and strategies are logged on a form and progress is tracked over the course of the year. Then, the form is given to the student’s teachers for the following year, providing insight into what strategies were successful the previous year.

Developmental Responsiveness

- LMS has many supports in place both for students who excel in academic classes and for those who struggle. They include the after school homework club, peer-tutoring, and teacher assistance. LMS also has Language Arts Plus and Math Plus classes that provide additional instruction and supplemental support for those students who are identified as at-risk from the available data.
- This year we began “Student Stress” discussion groups after mostly our highest achieving students indicated that they were feeling anxious about grades, parental pressures, academic acceptances into competitive high schools, and the transition to high school.
- The Leonia Middle School Advisory Program was developed with the goal of enhancing our school climate. A committee was developed to assist in creating lessons and for the scheduling of advisory. The faculty and students were surveyed to discover what the school community felt were the current and pressing issues facing middle school students. Our topics and lessons are didactic and change based on the year and needs of our students. We survey our students at the end of each year to ask them their perceptions about Advisory and the topics covered that year.
- In Advisory, students and their faculty facilitator discuss topics relevant to the needs of our students. Some topics include; respect, tolerance, bullying, cyber bullying, bully bystanders, career readiness, trust, responsibility, citizenship, fairness, caring, sexual harassment, cliques, sexting, positive leadership and healthy relationships. In addition, the goal of building skills and positive character traits is at the core of our program.

Social Equity

- Being entered into a Focus School status in 2012 drew attention to the achievement gaps that existed among the various subgroups in our school. We take great pride in closing the gaps identified and realizing the gaps that existed among other subgroups. We have done remarkable work in minimizing the test score differences among our Asian, White, and Hispanic populations over the last three years.
- LMS maintains a Portfolio program in the core subject areas. Students who apply can participate in an assessment and enter into a class best differentiated for the advanced rigor the student may intrinsically seek.
- The LMS Leadership Team is composed of students, faculty, and parents. The team discusses and makes recommendations on a broad array issues including school safety, academic offerings, staff development, and community involvement.
- LMS Students participate in the annual Peace Project sponsored by the Leonia Organization for Peace.

Organizational Support

- There are many school structures that are in place to insure the smooth running of the school that fosters teacher professional development, accountability, and academic progress for all.
- Our school is organized in teams. Each team member participates in our Intervention & Referral Service for the students who are identified socially or academically at-risk.
- The principal’s morning message is to keep everyone up to date on things that are happening on that day and in the days and weeks ahead. It is also used to disseminate information on important topics like teacher evaluation, and instructional design tips.
- Each day students are provided with either a Student Safety Tip or a Good Student Tip.
- Technology has helped organize many operational areas including common forms stored on the shared network drive, curriculum mapping using Atlas software, OnCourse for individual and common lesson planning, and grade book and data sharing functions in the Genesis student management system.
- Every parent has live grade book access through the web-based Genesis Parent Portal.
- LMS has a very active Home and School Association (HASA) which supports many efforts by keeping parents informed with parental workshops, raising funds for technology initiatives, and providing assembly programs for students.
- HASA has run parent workshops in the evening on topics that are of concern such as: *Talking to your Children about the Facts of Life, Internet Safety Night, Reducing your Digital Footprint*, and has participated in our *Parent Data Night*.

LMS Extra-Curricular Activities	LMS Sports Programs
National Junior Honor Society	Boys’ Soccer
Student Council	Girls’ Soccer
Jazz Band and Band	
General Chorus	Girls’ Volleyball
Chorale	
Select Chorus	Boys’ Basketball
The Lion’s Roar (Newspaper)	Girls’ Basketball
The Knitting Club	
Drama Club	Boys’ Baseball
Service Club	
MathCounts	Girls’ Softball
Battle of the Books	
Brainbusters	Track & Field
Environmental Club	
	Wrestling