



SCHOOLS TO WATCH – INDIANA SCHOOLS TO WATCH MODEL SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE



Nathaniel Scribner Middle School

2015-2016 School Statistics



Community: Urban
Enrollment: 867
Grade Levels: 5-8
School Schedule: elementary/middle school

Student Demographics

- 9.0% Hispanic
- 66.9% White
- 13.3% African American
- 9.0% Multi-racial
- 1.8% Asian
- 61.5% Free/Reduced Lunch

2015 National and State Schools to Watch
IDOE – “A” School

ISTEP+ Scores	2013	2014	2015
Math	86.5%	88%	63.2%
English/LA	73.5%	74.3%	64.9%
Attendance	96.7%	96.5%	96.8%

Designated in 2015

**Nathaniel Scribner Middle School • New Albany
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School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- Professional Learning Communities provide the foundation for collaboration by grade, department and school-wide.
- Common formative assessments drive instruction and have contributed to the overall scores in English and math, both of which rival or surpass state averages.
- Teachers work in partnership to provide instruction and are assisted by an English coach and part-time math coach.
- Curriculum is aligned with state standards and assessed through ISTEP+, Common Formative Assessments, SRI Testing, and Acuity with other classroom assessments
- Differentiated instruction is evident in classrooms
- Professional Development and other trainings are held in conjunction with the two other middle schools allowing for district-wide curriculum alignment with differences occurring in the number of free/reduced and the ELL students at Scribner

- Team and Data meetings are held consistently throughout the school year
- Learning goals have been outlined through a common and collaboratively planned district pacing guide
- A rigorous curriculum is designed using the Larry Ainsworth model, which is similar to Understanding by Design, but more teacher friendly
- A “Systems to Systems” approach allows meetings between Teachers/School Administrators and then School Administrators/District Leaders
- SMS communicates with parents and students via “Remind”, assignment agendas and agenda checks, newsletters, Facebook, and school website
- In the classroom, students have access to exemplars of strong work, such as writing samples and notebook samples. Teachers model proper techniques and skills to students
- CORE+ classes offer remediation for students in ELA and Math through data analysis most closely tied to corporation-wide CFAs, which is called “Name and Claim”. Students who are not in need of remediation take part in “enrichment” classes during CORE+ time
- Rigorous Curricular Design units are utilized at least once per semester by all teachers and more often in some classes (such as science)
- CORE+ intervention and acceleration classes provide focused learning for students with additional needs and opportunities to improve breadth of knowledge for others
- 90 minute ELA and Math blocks allow continuous instructional, practice, and study time as best practice
- Faculty created district-wide CFAs are given in 4.5 week cycles to regularly gauge student understanding
- A double block provides 7/8 students allows teachers to offer leveled reading strategies for the strengthening of literacy and competency in English, while Balanced Math offers students a stronger foundation in conceptual understanding
- RCD (Rigorous Curriculum Design) units in classes other than English and math provide students with project-based, standards-based instruction around Essential Questions and Big Ideas; these include authentic performance tasks, pre- and post-tests, and engagement strategies designed to maximize student involvement and achievement
- A data room houses scores which are used to determine which students need extra support and intervention; students who are doing well are provided with enrichment opportunities. A Core Plus period provides the time for this in two week rotations. Abbey Johnson from the NA Public Library works with students on reading initiatives

Developmental Responsiveness

- A wide range of communication efforts are made to parents, e.g. conferences, phone calls, monthly newsletter, One Call Now System. They feel that Scribner fulfills its duty as a partner in the development of students
- Cross Curricular units strengthen curriculum
- Service Learning projects involve a majority of students in a collaborative effort
- All grade levels hold special events throughout the school year to create lifelong relationships which also helps students transition to the high school
- Partnership developed with “Operation Parent” to provide workshops to parents on relative topics, e.g. Social Media, How to Parent Teenagers, etc.
- Adults are grouped into math/science and ELA/Social Studies teams in grades 5-7. 8th grade is grouped by department
- Students are intentionally placed into inclusive, heterogeneous groups
- Scribner is specially equipped to provide for the needs of ELL students and their families with an onsite language coordinator. As the ELL magnet school, Scribner provides services through the “New Neighbors” program that may be unique in the entire state
- Counselors, resource teachers, and support staff are teamed with each grade level to provide for student needs
- Specialized psychiatric resources are available through Wellstone
- Several technological tools, such as SmartBoards and iPads, are utilized in the classroom. Software, such as Moby Max, Cool Math, and EduTyping are used for game-based learning

- RCDs create real-world situations that are significant to students. By working in teams on RCD units, students develop 21st Century skills, such as working collaboratively and resolving conflict
- “Zero Period” classes are provided at New Albany high school to challenge Scribner students
- Core+ enrichment classes allow students to engage in a variety of interests
- Scribner offers student council to 7th and 8th graders by election
- There is a universal open-door policy among administrators, teachers, and students
- Parent conferences are student-led, with active participation by parents and teachers
- Visual and performing arts are well-supported
- Many extracurricular activities are available to interest students, such as drama, art, and chess clubs, Campus Life, intramural athletics, and sports
- Counselors are very responsive and effectively deal with relational and other issues as needed. They embrace positive youth development, are proactive, and make life easier for the teachers by providing support for students and their families throughout the year
- PBIS focuses on anti-bullying issues and offers students two types of rewards for following rules respectfully and assisting others
- Transition programs from 4th to 5th grade are strong and help prepare younger students for the middle level experience

Social Equity

- Scribner Middle School creates inclusive, heterogeneous classes with guaranteed and viable curriculum. Supports are meaningfully placed so that students are appropriately challenged
- CORE+ classes offer intervention and remediation for those in need and enrichment for those who do not. CORE+ classes are fluid, so that students can move on once they have demonstrated understanding of the skills in question
- Teachers are trained to provide varied approaches, such as RCD units and flipped lessons, to help students develop mastery of standards
- Staff utilizes CFA data to inform curricular and pacing decisions. Planning time is used to modify instructional plans
- All students have equal access to valued knowledge in all school classes and activities
- Every classroom has SmartBoards
- There are 5 computer labs, including one in each grade level wing
- The district is in the planning stages of a 1:1 device with iPads
- Scribner demonstrates a dedication to including all students in the mainstream whenever possible through the use of co-teaching, instructional assistants, interpreters, and assistive technology
- A great deal of interest-based classes are available, such as band, choir, orchestra, PLTW, PE, visual arts, and world languages
- The school demonstrates an interest in the cultures of students by placing flags representing the countries from which its students come in two locations within the building
- Students are encouraged to share their cultural experiences to enrich classes such as social studies
- Scribner hosts several family nights to invite families into the school
- The “New Neighbors” program provides ENL families a voice in the school and support for ELL students and families, as well as teachers who deal with them in their classrooms
- PTO sponsors “Awesome Attitude and Attendance”, “Success Cards”, “Student of the Month” to recognize and reward students
- The culture of Scribner Middle School is one that is very welcoming to all stakeholders
- Good communication between the school and home is meaningful and appreciated by the parents
- Monthly team and staff meetings are held for staff collaboration on student performance. These data meetings provide valuable feedback on student performance
- Diversity is present in the building
- Peer tutoring enjoyed by the students

Organizational Support

- Teachers receive PLC time twice per week to meet with grade level and departments for reflection and planning
- As students enter and exit Scribner each year, district administrators assure successful transitions through educator training and vertical alignment of standards and skills
- RCD units and CFAs are created by teachers within the district and undertaken by all members of the district
- To meet the needs of all Scribner students, “Zero Period” allows students to be challenged at nearby New Albany High School
- CFAs, along with classroom assessments, drive teacher reflection about student learning. Through the “Name & Claim” initiative, teachers “draft” students to receive intervention for two cycles each grading period to ensure that all students gain mastery
- Building Committee, leadership team, grade level teams, and department teams ensure that staff have the support necessary to succeed
- Partnerships with IU Southeast and University of Louisville inform teacher observation, preparation, evaluation, and hiring
- Staff attend several college and career events at universities throughout the area
- Families are involved on panels that guide district planning
- School goals and plans to meet those goals are communicated to parents via a variety of media, during student-led conferences, and through community outreach
- Alternative to suspension program named Ready for Life is currently in its second year and provides those students with a half day program of core classes that follows the established curriculum
- Mentoring program in place to assist first year teachers new to Scribner
- Structures in place for student recognition, involvement, and exploration of interests
- Strong feeder programs in place from elementary schools to middle school
- The “Three Big Ideas” and “Four Critical Questions” drive the PLC as well as everything within the school climate
- District grade level meetings are held for articulation and for ensuring smooth transitions from one grade level to the next and from one school to the next
- Grade-level communication “calms parents’ fears” regarding these transitions and keeps them abreast of activities and requirements for each content area
- 5th grade and 6th grade are in areas separate from 7/8 to help create a school-within-a-school feel as well as to promote the idea that the 5-8 configuration can work within the confines of one middle-level building
- Wednesday collaboration provides a delayed start to the day so that teachers can work in PLCs to plan ways to embrace all students and include them in the process for helping them to be successful