

A graphic of a spotlight shining down from the top center of the page, creating a yellow cone of light that illuminates the school name.

# Spotlight School

**Farristown Middle**  
*Madison County*

**GRADES SERVED: 6-8**

Farristown Middle School is a Title I school located in Madison County and serves about 450 students in grades 6-8. The school takes pride in two main areas of focus: positive culture and climate and high-level academics. Teachers prioritize the individual needs of students, doing everything possible to support their academic growth. While staff encourage students to work hard each day, they also make time for celebrations to foster a positive school culture. With a strong commitment to both culture and academics, everything else is built around this foundation.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**49.7% Economically Disadvantaged**

**14.91% Students with Disabilities**

### PRINCIPAL AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

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## WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS SCHOOL:

- 1.** The power of staff buy-in through a strong school culture and climate inspired by Jostens Renaissance®
- 2.** Strategies for implementing a behavior program (SUCCESS) that fits your school's needs
- 3.** Engagement techniques that spark curiosity and enhance classroom learning
- 4.** How to create an effective Response to Intervention (RtI) block that provides both intervention and enrichment for all students

## SERVICES AND STRATEGIES USED TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS

The staff at Farristown Middle School maximizes every available service and strategy to meet student needs, making this a key strength of the school. The teachers at Farristown collaborate within departments to ensure standards are consistently addressed. Their goal is to teach grade-level standards while utilizing RtI and multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) time to close learning gaps that have emerged along students' educational journeys. Additionally, students receive tutoring both during the school day and after school to further support their academic growth.

The staff at Farristown Middle School have worked collaboratively to develop student-friendly targets for the standards, ensuring they are viewed from the students' perspective.

Strategy plays a crucial role in the work done during professional learning communities (PLCs) at Farristown Middle School. Teachers collaborate to share effective structures and strategies, with a focus on engagement for the 2024-2025 school year. Nearly all staff members have received Kagan training, and they are actively learning and implementing Building Thinking Classrooms to further enhance student engagement.

Farristown Middle School builds strong partnerships with parents and the community to help students reach their highest potential. They work closely with parents to help them find resources that support students' social-emotional needs. The school receives support from the community through guest speakers, field trips and donations. Additionally, they offer a variety of clubs, activities and sports to keep students engaged and connected to the school community.

The staff at Farristown Middle School offer support based on student needs, including daily check-ins with team teachers to identify those needing social-emotional support. A universal screener helps target small group or individual needs. Restorative practices are refined to provide additional educational support after discipline issues, while those affected by the issues also receive targeted assistance.

## WHAT DATA SUPPORTS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICES AND STRATEGIES OFFERED?

- The school has considerable evidence showing that its academic programs are effective, including Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA) and iReady data.
- Students have demonstrated consistent growth over the past several years.
- For the 2023-2024 school year, the number of Proficient and Distinguished students in math grew by 7%, achieving a long-standing goal.
- The school's scores in all content areas are higher than any other middle school in the district.
- Science scores were ranked fifth in the state in recent years.
- The RtI programs used by the school show significant growth for students, including progress among the lowest-scoring students.

## WHAT CHALLENGES HAS THE SCHOOL FACED? HOW WERE THEY OVERCOME?

Farristown Middle School faces challenges with behavior, social-emotional needs and mental health issues. The school has developed a system for addressing these problems as they arise, while also considering each case individually. For social-emotional issues, there are a variety of resources available, such as lessons, classes and counseling. When these options aren't effective, the team works together to find the best solution within the available resources. A similar approach is used for mental health issues and behavior, although behavior follows a more structured set of consequences. The school has fine-tuned a behavior check-in program into its own version, called SUCCESS.

## WHAT ADVICE DOES THIS SCHOOL SUGGEST TO SCHOOLS ON THEIR JOURNEY TO SUSTAINED ACHIEVEMENT AND TRANSFORMATION?

- Build a positive culture; when that is achieved, teachers and students will give 110% every day.
- The culture is based on the understanding that any task requested is for the benefit of students, and nothing is done without purpose.
- Once a positive culture is established, focus shifts to addressing academics.
- Everyone must be on board with the goal of success, continuously learning and improving.
- Progress requires consistent effort from the entire team to keep moving forward.



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