

A graphic of a spotlight shining down from the top center of the page, creating a yellow cone of light that illuminates the title and parts of the text below.

Spotlight School

South Warren Middle
Warren County

GRADES SERVED: 7-8

South Warren Middle School has achieved success through a strong, positive culture shared by both the school and the wider community. The school's growth is largely due to this collaborative partnership. Its mission is to provide a rigorous, supportive and engaging environment that ensures learning for all students. This mission is embraced by everyone involved at South Warren, driven by consistently high expectations upheld throughout the school year.

Clear behavioral and academic guidelines are communicated daily to students and staff: Spartans will Work together, Obtain excellence, Respect others and Demonstrate responsibility. These expectations are visible throughout the building and in every classroom. The school's vision is to foster an inclusive culture where students are challenged to become empowered learners, effective communicators, productive collaborators, critical thinkers and successful global-minded citizens.

Faculty encourage students to take ownership of their learning, behavior and overall culture, both academic and social. As students grow into more independent learners, they are guided to develop initiative, competence, self-reflection and agency—skills that enhance lifelong learning. The school's ultimate goal is to inspire and educate thriving global citizens.

PRINCIPAL AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

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DEMOGRAPHICS

45.3% Economically Disadvantaged

9.9% Students with Disabilities

7.4% English Learner Students

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS SCHOOL:

- 1.** Strategies for celebrating student success in and out of the classroom
- 2.** Scheduling and staffing intervention and enrichment opportunities to meet the needs of all students
- 3.** Maintaining focus and alignment of “Big Rocks” utilizing the comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP), walkthrough data and posted reminders

SERVICES AND STRATEGIES USED TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS

South Warren Middle School implements the positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) framework to establish clear procedures and expectations for students' daily routines. This research-based approach promotes respect, reinforces positive behaviors and creates a structured learning environment that supports effective behavior management. Rather than responding to misbehavior, PBIS is proactive, recognizing and rewarding positive actions. The consistent routines across the school help students feel secure and contribute to a reduction in disciplinary issues.

The school emphasizes three instructional priorities known as the "Big Rocks," which are evidence-based strategies for improving student achievement. These include: daily writing across all classes for learning demonstration or publication; increased student engagement through Kagan cooperative learning structures and cognitively engaging tasks; and the use of powerful tasks that span the rigor divide, incorporating high cognitive demand, academic strategies and engaging qualities.

A structured professional learning community (PLC) process supports collaboration among teachers in each content area. Teachers analyze a variety of academic data to guide and personalize instruction, use formative and summative assessments to inform planning and group students, and establish and clearly communicate success criteria and daily learning goals.

Students performing at or below the 40th percentile on standardized assessments are considered for intervention in reading and math. In addition to assessment data, teachers consider classroom performance when determining support needs. Tier 2 students receive help through a SWORD class, spending 40–50 minutes with core teachers to develop essential skills. Math intervention includes targeted small group instruction, frontloading and the use of resources like i-Ready My Path and iXL. Reading support also includes i-Ready My Path, iXL, Reading Plus and small group instruction.

Tier 3 intervention offers a smaller class size and extended instruction time. Math support includes i-Ready My Path, iXL, Moby Max and small group work, while reading support incorporates i-Ready My Path, iXL, Scholastic Action and targeted small group instruction. Student placement in intervention is fluid and reviewed quarterly by interventionists and core teachers to ensure appropriate support based on academic progress.

WHAT DATA SUPPORTS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICES AND STRATEGIES OFFERED?

- Ranked as a Blue School, which is the highest performance level for three consecutive years.
- Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA) Score Rankings:
 - Writing: 10th in state, top 2%, 2 in region
 - Math: 25th in state, top 5%, 1 in region
 - Reading: 27th in state, top 5%, 1 in region
 - Social Studies: 11th in state, top 2%, 1 in region
 - Science: 32nd in state, top 6%
 - Overall Score: 20th in state, top 5%, 1 in region

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

South Warren Middle School was designated as a Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school in 2022 due to the performance of students with disabilities. In response, the school pursued professional development focused on the co-teaching and inclusion model. With full support from administration and staff, the school committed to this approach to better meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Since implementing the model, student performance has improved significantly. Special education teachers and their co-teaching partners continue to receive training and coaching on effective co-teaching strategies. By prioritizing the least restrictive environment for instruction, the school has seen notable achievement gains over the past two school years.

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

The best advice for schools aiming to improve student achievement is to prioritize and clearly identify areas in need of improvement. It is important to involve the entire faculty and staff in selecting two to three key focus areas, or “big rocks,” to ensure collective buy-in. Once these priorities are established, school leadership must be intentional about holding all staff accountable to the expectations aligned with these focus areas. These priorities should directly inform and support the school’s mission and vision for success.



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