



Irmo Middle School International Academic Magnet Annual School Report 2014—2015

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Irmo Middle School Improvement Council Members

Members

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Danny Koon
L. Thomas Solet
Brandon Boykin
Brenda Black Weathers
Juanita Caldwell

Appointed Members

Ebony Young
Jordan O'Keefe
Brian Jumper
Michael McNeil
Allaina Johnson
Brynley Farr

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April Garrett—Secretary
Arnie Wodtke—Vice Chair
Cheryl Cooley

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Paige Gersdoff—8th grade
Audrey Johnson—7th grade

Ex-Officio Members

Greta Avery (PTSO)
Tabitha Keeler (Past Chair)
Robert Jackson
Glenn Hutto
Vernon Sava
Danielle Major-Murphy



School Motto

*Creating successful
students for the
challenges of tomorrow*

Annual Message from Robert Jackson, Principal and Michael Cates, School Improvement Council Chair

As one of the highest performing middle schools in South Carolina, Irmo Middle is a fourteen time recipient of the Palmetto Gold Award for exemplary performance and improvement. Irmo Middle consistently proves that a school with excellent teachers and outstanding parental support can produce outstanding results. In recognition of our excellence, we have again earned Excellent Absolute and Improvement Ratings on our SC School Report Card. These results demonstrate that Irmo Middle remains a great choice as one of the top performing schools in the state of South Carolina.

Irmo Middle School serves 850 students in grades seven and eight. Next year, we will be adding 100+ sixth graders, which will enhance continuity for students and families. As an International Academic Magnet, we are able to offer a wide range of high school credit courses in English, mathematics, world languages and STEM Systems. As a result, our students are able to excel on high school readiness assessments. On the EXPLORE and PSAT assessments, record numbers of students met or exceeded performance benchmarks with several achieving perfect scores. This number has risen substantially over the past five years. Additionally, a significant percentage of our students excel in visual and performing arts, through course offerings such as: band, chorus, dance, and orchestra. This well-rounded approach provides the foundation needed for students to enter the top tier academic programs in high school and beyond.

Our school is helping all students develop the world-class skills and life career characteristics of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* by ensuring that all students demonstrate high levels of proficiency through our implementation of the International Academic Magnet. Our school-wide magnet (and partnerships with Expeditionary Learning "EL", PITSCO Education, and TransformSC) provides opportunities for students to excel through thematic, project-based learning that capstones in experiences called learning expeditions. In small peer groups, students conduct field work and action research (with local field experts) in order to solve real-world problems, where inquiry based learning is facilitated by teachers and aligned with the newly adopted South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards.

As we embrace a climate of continuous school improvement, our guiding principles for instruction will remain grounded in research-based practices and "data teams." We constantly seek ways to improve instruction and to increase learning opportunities for our students. Our core practices center around five key dimensions. They include curriculum, instruction, assessment, culture and character, and leadership. A special emphasis is also placed on advanced technology integration and magnetized thematic instruction, which guarantees each child, in every course, is given multiple opportunities to demonstrate his/her academic proficiency through project and problem based learning. Because of these instructional practices, we are seeing in-

creased numbers of students embracing the challenge of taking rigorous high school credit courses while still in middle school.

Our dedicated faculty and staff continues to spend many hours participating in (school, district and "EL" focused) professional development. Teachers share instructional strategies and work in data teams to ensure quality instruction and assessment in all courses. Faculty collaboration and sustained professional learning are key components of our plan for continuous improvement.

One of our hallmarks of success is our high level of parental and community involvement. Our School Improvement Council and our PTSO provide outstanding leadership and support, as well as help to map out the future direction of our school. As we continue to reflect on our desired outcomes and increase conversations about how to improve student learning, we will continue our tradition of excellence at Irmo Middle.

Robert S. Jackson
Principal

Michael Cates
SIC Chairperson

Irmo Middle School Mission Statement

The mission of Irmo Middle School is to shape a diverse community where students create high quality work, care for the well being of themselves and others, and engage in meaningful service which impacts local and global communities.

Initiatives and Strategies for School Improvement

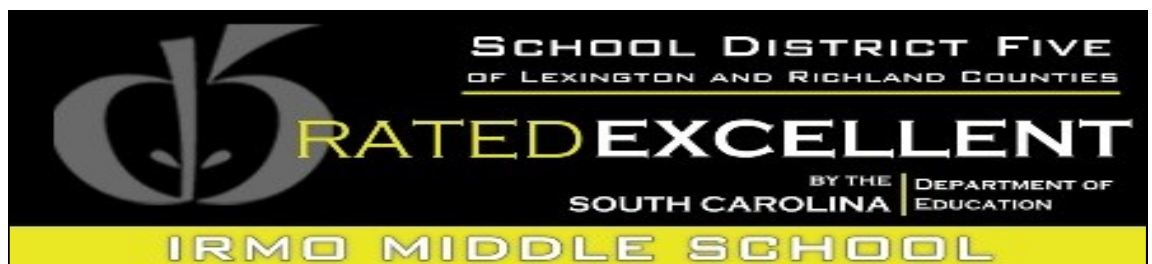


The Irmo Middle School Improvement Council meets monthly to plan, monitor, and evaluate improvements at the school level. Their work includes school planning, as well as communication between students, teachers, parents, and the school administration.

The Irmo Middle School Family would like to salute our SIC, PTSO, Booster Clubs, parent volunteers, and community supporters for their continuing support. We would also like to thank the School District Five Board of Trustees, and the District Office Staff.

Our PTSO serves as our primary fundraising group for school-wide projects and is the group that organizes and assigns volunteers, works on beautification, supports school celebrations and recognitions, and provides activities for faculty and staff appreciation and support. Our PTSO is a 501.c(3) charitable organization.

- A school-wide magnet initiative has been implemented for grades 6, 7, 8. The theme of our magnet school is international studies. It provides a seamless pathway for our students to gain admittance into the elite International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme[®] at Irmo High School. In this magnet, students enjoy a global teaching and learning experience that is framed around the research based framework of Expeditionary Learning (EL).
- Expeditionary Learning is our primary partner for school improvement and its five core practices and ten design principles inform school structure. Our school structures and future traditions such as Crew, community meetings, exhibitions of student work, and service learning will ensure that every student is known and cared for, that student leadership is nurtured, and that contributions to the school and world are celebrated.
- Implementation of PITSCO STEM Systems and Algebra Readiness courses that are designed to expose students to a variety of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classroom experiences that are robust and engaging.
- Continued implementation of the data teams process as a core belief for improved teacher performance and student learning. Collaboration with other middle school teachers is also a part of our "data teams" curriculum initiative. Articulation and communication with high schools and the Center for Advanced Technical Studies ensures that our students are well prepared to meet their goals.
- A robust tool for diagnostic assessment through NWEA's (MAP) Measures of Academic Performance. The computer-based MAP program is used three times a year to determine students' skill levels in reading, language, and math.
- Through common formative assessments, cross curricular teachers adopt minute-to-minute and day-by-day assessment-for-learning strategies that have been shown by research to powerfully increase student achievement
- Individual performance conferences are held with teachers and students regarding MAP performance growth targets and desired outcomes.
- 1:1 Chromebook technology integration into all classes where teachers are incorporating device usage with Google Apps for Education platform during instruction.
- Literacy libraries (with internationally themed titles) are maintained in all classes to support reading and writing initiatives.
- "READ 365" facilitates a daily literacy focus embedded into all classes. There is a designated time allocated for students to self-select reading materials that are challenging, stimulating, and capable of fostering a life-long pursuit of enriching literacy texts. In addition, all students are expected to read 25 books each year and write weekly in all classes.
- Targeted students receive prescriptive interventions through Literacy Lab, Targeted ELA sections, PITSCO Algebra Readiness, Math Matters, and USA Test Prep.
- Continued facilitation of the Challenging Horizons Program which provides after-school interventions and assistance to a targeted group of students.
- Academic Assistance is available for all students during posted times and when otherwise planned.
- School-wide adoption of the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports model aligned with Expeditionary Learning's Habits of Scholarship.
- Continuously championing our vision through the use of pervasive norms & communication protocols, interpersonal relationships, and artifacts within classrooms and public spaces.
- Meet the individual learning needs of all students, including high achievers and population subgroups through EL differentiated instruction and other school structures and processes (Crew).
- Advance EL relational character and performance character (habits of scholarship) to ensure that students meet the profile of the South Carolina Graduate.
- Expansion of our high school credit offerings to include Chinese 1, Computer Applications, and Introduction to STEM Systems. Currently we offer English 1, Algebra 1, Geometry, French 1, Spanish 1, German 1, and Keyboarding. Our End-of-Course Exam results in English 1 and Algebra 1 continue to be in the 99th percentile. We have plans to offer World Geography in the future.
- Students are afforded the opportunity to take one of four world language offerings or immerse themselves in a visual or performing arts sequence.
- Counselors meet annually with students to develop career goals, select courses, and create a plan to meet each student's desired outcomes. Students and parents work with their counselor and/or the Career Development Facilitator to develop an individual graduation plan (IGP) which will prepare them to graduate high school "college and career ready."
- G20-SLT "Teacher Leadership Team" has been working all year to implement our Work Plan Goals (increase student achievement, implement Crew, design/facilitate high quality projects in all classes).
- Teachers and students have been exposed to Digital Citizenship training to prevent cyber bullying and teach students how to establish a healthy digital footprint and conduct appropriate online discussions.





EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

Expeditionary Learning core practices create school environments that promote deep engagement in learning while supporting students to achieve at high levels.



School **CHOICE**
School District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties

- Each school must be uncommonly good at those things offered by most schools.
- Each school must be GREAT at something not commonly offered in other schools.

Stephen Hefner, Ed.D



The mission of Irmo Middle School is to shape a diverse community where students create high quality work, care for the well being of themselves and others, and engage in meaningful service which impacts local and global communities. As a newly transformed magnet and Expeditionary Learning (EL) school, there are a myriad of opportunities offered to students - from rigorous core courses that infuse global themes into the South Carolina standards, giving students a chance to make authentic connections to real-world scenarios, to unique exploratory courses that allow learners to develop and refine talents and think in new ways. Specifically, because of our designation as an EL school (earned in the spring of 2014), all students participate in Crew - a class structure designed to ensure that all students are known well by an adult and small peer group - and participate in collaborative work designed to yield high quality products and evoke deep thinking around authentic, complex problems.

Our beliefs about how schools look, feel, and function are hinged to the Expeditionary Learning design principles. Students and staff are encouraged daily to embody the tenets of these principles as they participate in the wonderful process of learning:

The Primacy of Self-Discovery: Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. Students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

The Having of Wonderful Ideas: Teaching fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

The Responsibility for Learning: Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both

individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of our school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

Empathy and Caring: Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones therefore students feel physically and emotionally safe.

Success and Failure: All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

Collaboration and Competition: Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

Diversity and Inclusion: Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. Students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

The Natural World: A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the Earth and of future generations.

Solitude and Reflection: Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need time to exchange their reflections with other students and with adults.

Service and Compassion: We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and our primary function is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.

School culture is created and sustained through practices that bring the community together, promote shared understandings, and encourage all community members to become crew, not passengers. This guiding principle rests on the fundamental belief that students are in control of their own learning, not passive receivers of knowledge.

In order to foster this belief and establish and uphold a strong school community, all IMS students participate in Crew, a course that meets weekly. During Crew, students develop relationships, dedicate time to service, and engage in conversations and check-ins related to academic progress and other school related issues.

We are committed to thinking deeply about issues that matter. We are committed to inspiring students to care about themselves and those around them. We are committed to changing the world.

Caitlin McKenzie
Caitlin McKenzie
Lead Teacher



Performing Arts Highlights

- Nine IMS Band students earned spots in the SCBDA Region Band:
Caitlin Boisture
Rachel Lofurno
Candace Evans
Devon Solet
Kailey Chapman
Evelyn Edgar
Ryan Barker
Cameron Ciriello
Calvin Guyette
- 18 of our students were in the Marching Band, which earned 4th place at Lower State and 10th at State.
- Congratulations to Claire Henke, 7th grader at Irmo Middle, for making All-State Band.
- The Honor Bands received Superior ratings at the SCBDA Concert Festival, which is the highest possible rating.



- Orchestra students attended the Music in the Parks festival at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge. Concert Orchestra, Rated Excellent, 1st place. Honors Orchestra, Rated Superior, 1st place.



- The IMS Arts Department assembled a Performing Arts Ensemble consisting of our Chorus, Orchestra, Band and Dancers to perform "We Are The World 25 for Haiti" arranged by our very own Haley Calore for the District Five Board Members.
- SC Region Orchestra:
G. Chong, 7th gr, violin
B. Floyd, 8th gr, viola
L. Henderson, 8th gr, cello
C. Koverman, 8th gr, bass
H. Nates, 8th gr, viola
T. Singh, 7th gr, violin
- SC All-State Orchestra:
B. Floyd, viola, 8th gr
L. Henderson, cello, 8th gr
- SCMEA Concert Festival:
7th Orchestra: Excellent
8th Orchestra: Superior
Honors Orchestra: Superior



- Irmo Middle school students enrolled in advanced dance took a trip to Dutch Fork High School. Along with dance students from the entire district, Irmo Middle dancers took classes from local dance artists Caroline Lewis, Amanda Ling, Rikkia Kohn, Will Moore, and Stephanie Milling. Participating schools held a benefit concert that evening collecting canned goods for the Harvest Hope Food Bank.



- Irmo dancers held a Winter Concert themed "The Grinch." Each class performed works that they had been working on in class to show parents their progress.
- Our dance team, the Irmo Stingette, performed at a local coffee shop to bring awareness to their venue and serves as entertainment for their guests.



iAM...Global Leaders



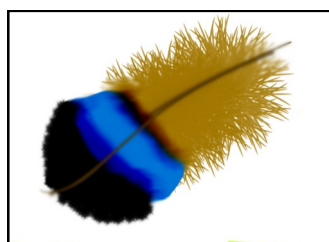
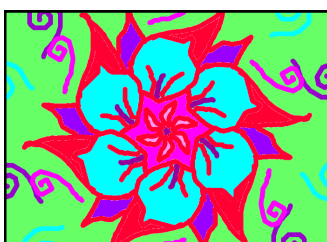
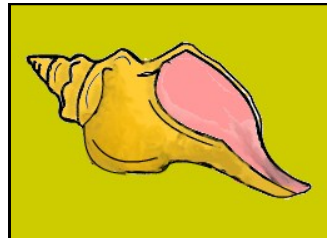
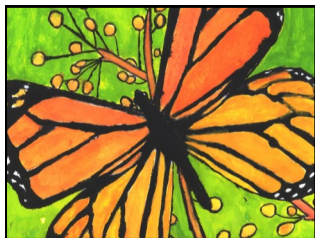
Robert S. Jackson
Principal



Glenn Hutto
A.P. for Instruction

Visual Arts

The art represented here is a unique assortment of digital creations from various students using the Sumo Paint App on the Chromebooks issued to the students this year. Many students have discovered the process of digitally preparing aesthetic and eye popping creations.



Vernon Sava
Assistant Principal



Danielle Major-Murphy
Assistant Principal

General School Highlights

IMS Greenhouse



- Sherry Harrison was the grand prize winner of the 12th annual "Win a Wireless Lab Sweepstakes" from digital content provider Discover Education and technology service provider CDW-G. As part of the prize, Irmo Middle will receive 20 notebooks, an interactive whiteboard, three wireless access points, notebook cart, document camera, a printer and a \$5,000 digital media grant from Discovery Education.



- Regan Moore, 7th grade science teacher at IMS, was awarded an MCEC Bright Ideas \$1000 grant for her Tomato Grafting and Garden Composting project!

- Liz Magee received this year's SC Mentor of the Year award at the Council for Exceptional Children conference. Winners of this year's awards were nominated by other members of SCCES, representing educators, advocates and students across South Carolina.



IMS Composting



- Team iGrow has raised over \$2000 selling over 30 different items grown from their greenhouse project. This included a trip to the State Farmers Market, where they sold out of their tomatoes, squash, and cucumbers.

- Composting our waste from the cafeteria is in full swing, thanks to funding from DonorsChoice of \$800 to purchase composting materials and \$250 from the Richland County Soil and Water Conservation District.



- Odessa Hilton was one of five South Carolina finalists in this year's Samsung "Solve for Tomorrow" contest. Picked for her proposal to implement math lessons into recycling efforts in the classroom, she received two Samsung Galaxy tablets for her classroom and a teacher development course from PBS TeacherLine.

- Irmo Middle School has again earned an Excellent Absolute and Improvement Rating on the 2013 School Report Card. Congratulations are extended to all students, parents, faculty, and staff members who were instrumental in our reception of this recognition.



IMS Student Government



Shannon Avery
14-15 Teacher of the Year

Arnie Wodtke
14-15 Support Staff of the Year

IMS Beta Club



Athletic Teams

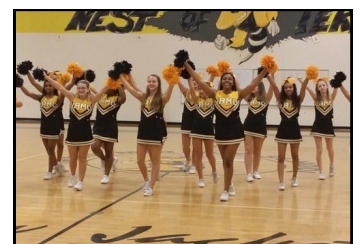
C-Team Football



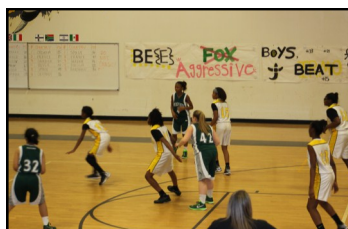
The C-Team Boys Basketball



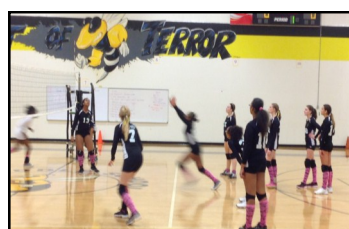
C-Team Cheerleading



C-Team Girls Basketball



C-Team Volleyball



C-Team Track and Field



IMS Dance Team



We have several of our students participating in JV sports at Irmo High School:

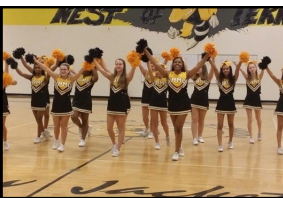
- JV Soccer • JV Cross Country • JV Softball/Baseball • JV Wrestling • JV Swim Team
- JV Tennis • JV Golf • JV Lacrosse

Student Highlights

IMS Stem Lab



IMS Cheerleading



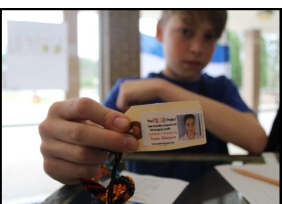
IMS Science Olympiad



IMS Orchestra



IMS Pulsera Project



- Students at Irmo Middle School had an opportunity to hear a first-hand account of tragedy, survival, and the critical role education has played in helping to bring “freedom” to people in war-torn countries. Jacob Atem, who escaped civil war in Sudan by wandering for years in the African bush with thousands of other orphaned boys, later dubbed the “Lost Boys,” spoke to seventh and eighth graders at the International Academic Magnet school on Feb. 13. Atem said he hoped his story inspired the students to take advantage of the opportunities their school and nation provide for them.

- Congratulations to the top three winners in the Science Fair competing with Expeditionary Learning projects.

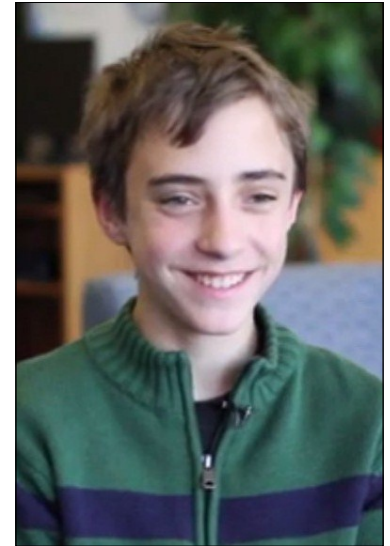
- 1st:** "Can Nanotechnology help Clean up Ocean Oil Spills?"
By Mrs. Gordon's classes
- 2nd:** "Getting the Gross Out"
By Mr. Cooley's classes
- 3rd:** "Icone Speakers"
By Mrs. Brown's classes

- We are pleased to announce that 54 8th graders have excelled academically with their performance on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and have earned the 2014-15 Junior Scholar distinction. In addition, we would like to recognize and congratulate all teachers and parents who made it possible for them to achieve this honor.

- Congratulations to the winners of the IMS Science Team who competed in the South Carolina Regional Science Olympiad competition. This meet included 20 smaller events, in which students had to create robots, analyze data, build instruments, and test unknown substances. IMS students won eight medals and four ribbons in various events.



- Congratulations to our 15 students who received a perfect score on PASS 2013.
- The IMS Student Council, the G40, attended The State Leadership Rally at Airport High School. The students participated in workshops and gathered ideas for implementing leadership and service opportunities at our school. The students have participated in two community fundraisers: Operation Santa and Relay for Life.



- Congratulations to 8th grader, Noah Overcash, for his award winning app. It was an idea born of necessity...an app that allows parents to pay their children for the chores they've completed. He says the idea came to him after doing his chores and not getting an allowance in “quite a while.” Overcash entered Columbia's first Startup Weekend event. According to Columbia Business Report, the event is “a marathon, 54-hour surge of ideas and business planning, attracted 122 people at IT-oLogy, and its organizers declared it a success both for the turnout and for the strength of ideas that emerged.” Participants in the competition were of all levels of expertise, ranging from software developers and professional business people all the way to Noah who marked his 13th birthday at the event. Overcash will receive six months of services as an incubator affiliate for winning second prize for his internet-based program.



- The Irmo Town Council heard a presentation from Irmo Middle School's “Monarchs and Milkweed” project, a mission designed to save the monarch butterfly population. The global project was developed in alignment with the school's internationally-focused magnet theme. To preserve a butterfly population now threatened with distinction, the students are encouraging people to plant the food that would help them survive – milkweed. They asked the town to consider planting the milkweed in the town park.



- In 2014, Mrs. Hilton's students participated in Sonoco Recycling's annual RETHINK Contest by making creative projects out of used materials. Pictured is 8th grade student, Mina Heidari, whose lamp incorporated old CDs and pop tabs, and won the Middle School Division of the Midlands Regional Contest.

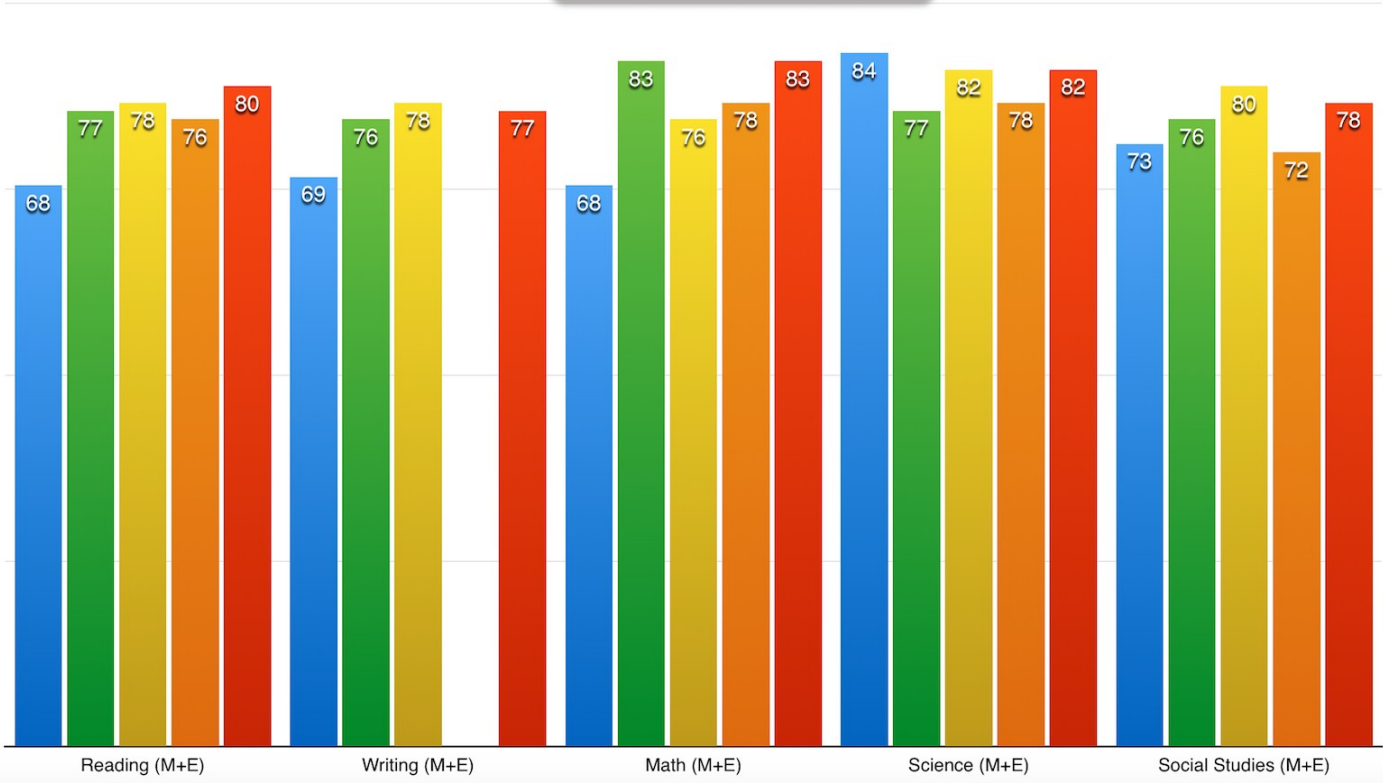
- Beta Club students at IMS led a campaign to raise funds to help make wishes come true for local children with life threatening illnesses. The IMS Beta Club presented the Make-A-Wish Foundation with a \$1,007 check on Feb. 23.

- Irmo Middle School is participating in the Pulsera Project, a non-profit campaign that gives Nicaraguan youth weavers a market to sell their intricate bracelets and raise funds for educational programs. Students at the school have sold \$1961 to help this cause.

School Testing Highlights

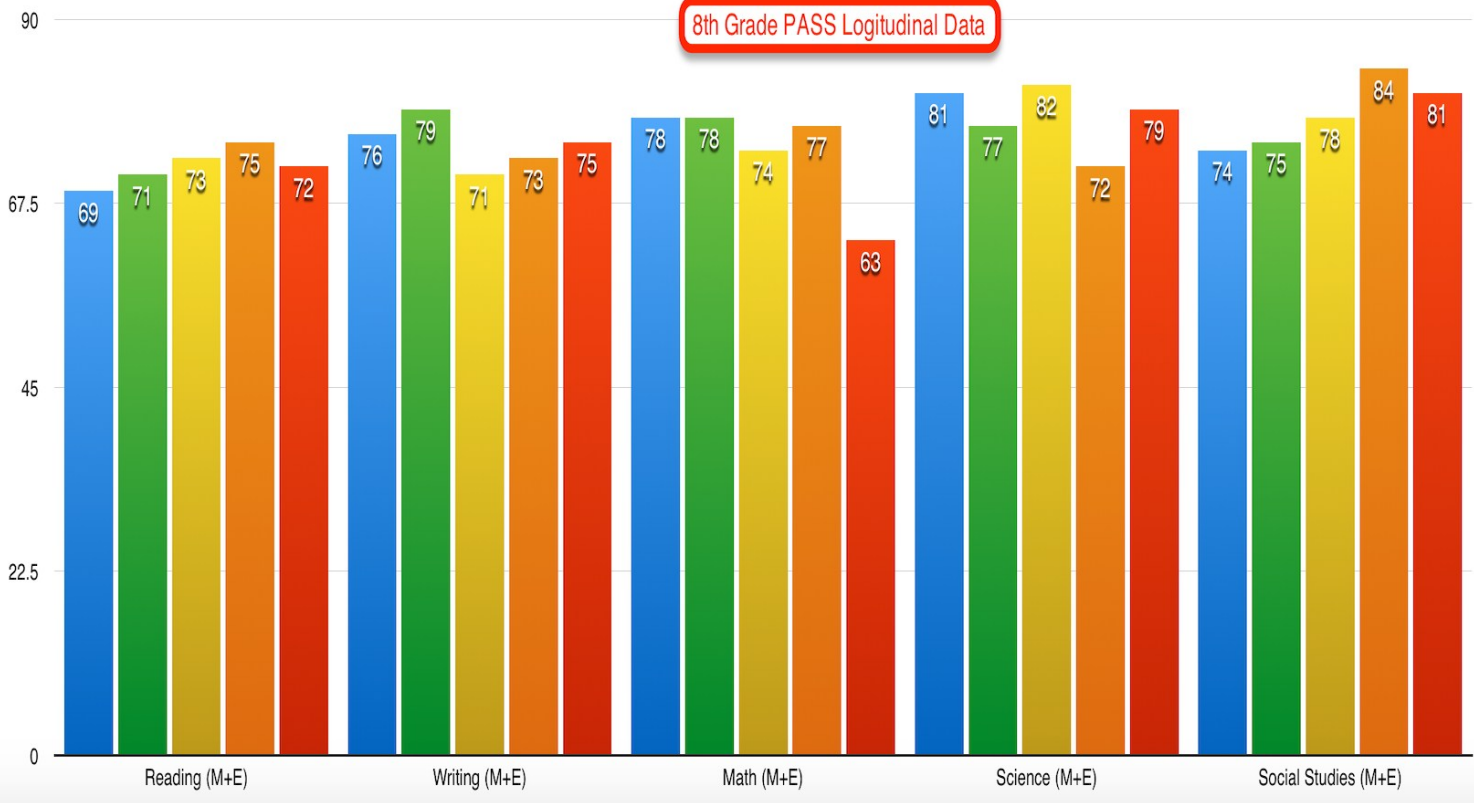
■ 2014 ■ 2013 ■ 2012 ■ 2011 ■ 2010

7th Grade PASS Logitudinal Data



■ 2014 ■ 2013 ■ 2012 ■ 2011 ■ 2010

8th Grade PASS Logitudinal Data



iAM #IrmoSTRONG Celebration

We are striving to make sure each child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.

Students come together every semester to celebrate their achievement in reaching our school-wide expectations at the iAM #IrmoSTRONG Celebration. There are five specific goals that we ask students to reach: earning all As and Bs, making right choices, no tardies or unexcused absences, no dress code violations, and no ID violations. Students who achieve three out of the five goals are invited to attend the celebration at the end of the semester where they dance, enjoy snacks, play games, receive Irmo gear, and hang out with friends. This year, over 300 7th and 8th grade students attended the #IrmoSTRONG Celebration.

In addition to the #IrmoSTRONG Celebration, students are rewarded for doing what is right in other ways. Teachers commend students for showing Integrity, Respect, Motivation, and Ownership in class by giving students Buzz Notes to acknowledge those who are displaying our core school values. Students exchange Buzz Notes to sit by a friend at lunch, and weekly drawings for prizes from our local community partners. Additionally, buzz notes make students eligible for quarterly drawings for prizes such as Tervis cups, Nike Elite socks, and Vera Bradley gear. Quarterly tardy parties are another incentive designed to encourage students to make it on time for class. Students enjoy music, snacks, and hanging out with friends. Irmo Middle School is proud that almost half of the student body has zero tardies to class, and this number is consistently increasing as the school year continues.



Let's Connect:

Friend and follow us on the web!

Facebook: facebook.com/irmomiddle

Blog: www.irmomiddle.blogspot.com

Twitter: Principal Jackson: @IMS_Principal

Twitter: IrmoMiddleSchool: @IrmoMiddle

YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/user/IMSYellowJackets

