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PLUS 10

Characteristics Of Exemplary Middle School Programs

1. A philosophy based on the unique needs and characteristics of the young adolescent
2. Educators knowledgeable about and committed to the young adolescent
3. A balanced curriculum between the cognitive (subject-centered) and affective (student-centered) needs of the young adolescent
4. Teachers who use varied instructional strategies
5. A comprehensive advisor/advisee program
6. An interdisciplinary team organization at all grades
7. A flexible block master schedule
8. A full exploratory program
9. Both team planning and personal planning for all teachers
10. A positive and collaborative school climate
11. Shared decision-making in which the people closest to the "client" are involved in the decision-making process of the school
12. A smooth transition process from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school
13. A high-quality extracurricular program including intramurals, interest-based mini-courses, clubs, and social events
14. A physical plant where teams are housed together for core classes and large areas for full team sessions
15. A commitment to the importance of health and physical fitness for all students on a regular basis
16. A commitment to regular involvement of families in the education of young adolescents by keeping them informed of student progress and school programs and by giving them meaningful roles in the schooling process
17. A positive connection between school and the community through student service projects, business partnerships, and use of community resources within the school curriculum
18. Consistent use of cooperative learning strategies in the classroom
19. An emphasis on the use of higher-order thinking skills and hands-on instructional strategies
20. Empowerment of students whenever possible

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