

STRATEGIC SCHOOL PROFILE 2008-09

Middle and Junior High School Edition

**Walter C. Polson Upper Middle School
Madison School District**

FRANCIS J. HENDERSON, Principal
 JILL L. HALE, Asst. Principal
 Telephone: (203) 245-6480

Location: 302 Green Hill Road
 Madison,
 Connecticut

This profile was produced by the Connecticut State Department of Education in accordance with CT General Statutes 10-220(c) using data and narratives provided by the school district or testing services. Profiles and additional education data, including longitudinal data, are available on the internet at www.sde.ct.gov.

TYPE OF SCHOOL

School Type: Traditional/Regular Education
 School Grade Range: 7- 8

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Enrollment on October 1, 2008: 639
 5-Year Enrollment Change: 1.4%*

*Between 2003 and 2008, grades changed

INDICATORS OF EDUCATIONAL NEED

Need Indicator	Number in School	Percent in School	Middle/Jr. High Schools	
			% in District	% in State
Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals	10	1.6	1.6	25.1
Students Who Are Not Fluent in English	3	0.5	0.5	3.7
Students with Disabilities	66	10.3	10.3	11.7
Students Identified as Gifted and/or Talented	29	4.5	4.5	7.6
Students in Grades Above School's Entry Grade Who Attended Same School the Previous Year	314	96.3	96.3	92.1

PROGRAM AND INSTRUCTION

Instructional Time	School	State Middle/Jr. High Schools
Total Days per Year	183	181
Total Hours per Year	1,074	1,016

State law requires that at least 180 days of school be offered to students in kindergarten through Grade 12, 900 hours of instruction to Grades 1-12 and full-day kindergarten, and 450 hours to half-day kindergarten students.

Average Class Size	School	District	State
Grade 5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 7	22.4	22.4	20.5

Enrollment in Selected High School Level Courses			
Percent of Grade 8 Students Taking	School	District	State
Mathematics	50.0	50.0	34.2
World Language	96.9	96.9	49.0

Required Hours of Instruction Per Year in Selected Subject Areas		
Grade 8	School	State
Art	22	33
Computer Education	22	15
English Language Arts	168	229
Family and Consumer Science	0	13
Health	22	24
Library/Media Skills	0	6
Mathematics	168	152
Music ^E	0	24
Physical Education	68	53
Science	168	144
Social Studies	168	143
Technology Education	0	23
World Languages	134	77

^EElective hours also offered

World Language

Formal instruction (at least 1 hour per week) in French and Spanish starts in Grade 7 in this school. Statewide, 71.3% of elementary and middle schools that serve Grade 7 start world language instruction by this grade.

Lunch

An average of 25 minutes is provided for lunch during full school days.

Special Programs	School	Middle/Jr. High Schools	
		District	State
% of K-12 Students in Bilingual Education Program or Receiving English as a Second Language Services	0.5	0.5	3.7
% of Identified Gifted and/or Talented Students Who Received Services	0.0	N/A	69.9
% of Special Education Students Attending This School Who Spent Over 79% of Their Time with Their Non-Disabled Peers	93.9	93.9	76.8

LIBRARY AND COMPUTERS

Free on-line access to periodicals, newspapers, and other resources is available to all Connecticut schools through the Connecticut Digital Library at www.iconn.org.

Instructional Computers and Library Materials	School	Middle/Jr. High Schools	
		District	State
# of Students Per Computer	3.3	3.3	2.6
% of Computers with Internet Access	100.0	100.0	99.4
% of Computers that are High or Moderate Power	100.0	100.0	97.0
# of Print Volumes Per Student*	16.8	16.8	21.0
# of Print Periodical Subscriptions	21	21	28

*Because a certain number of volumes are needed for a library of adequate breadth and depth, a small school may need a higher number of volumes per student.

SCHOOL STAFF

Full-Time Equivalent Count of School Staff	
General Education: Teachers and Instructors	45.40
Paraprofessional Instructional Assistants	0.00
Special Education: Teachers and Instructors	7.30
Paraprofessional Instructional Assistants	10.81
Library/Media Specialists and/or Assistants	2.00
Administrators, Coordinators, and Department Chairs	3.00
Instructional Specialists Who Support Teachers (e.g., subject area specialists)	0.00
Counselors, Social Workers, and School Psychologists	3.50
School Nurses	1.00
Other Staff Providing Non-Instructional Services and Support	11.41

In the full-time equivalent count, staff members working part-time in the school are counted as a fraction of full-time. For example, a teacher who works half-time in a school contributes 0.50 to the school's staff count.

Teachers and Instructors	School	Middle/Jr. High Schools	
		District	State
Average Number of Years of Experience in Education	9.9	9.9	14.0
% with Master's Degree or Above	80.0	80.0	75.8
Classroom Teacher Attendance, 2007-08: Average # of Days Absent Due to Illness or Personal Time	10.6	10.6	9.0
% Assigned to Same School the Previous Year	85.0	85.0	86.7

HOME AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Teacher E-Mail Addresses: All teachers at this school have been issued e-mail addresses.

Online Homework Information: A portion of the school's website is devoted to homework pages.

The following narrative about how this school promotes and supports parental involvement was submitted by this school.

The Madison Public Schools and the Walter C. Polson Middle School are committed to a strong school-home communication with parents and families.

The Madison Public Schools Infoline and the Walter C. Polson Infoline are designed to electronically communicate information related to district and school news and events including emergency school closures, delays, and early dismissals. Parents sign up annually through the district website. Additionally, the Polson Infoline is used to keep parents informed and to recruit volunteers for a variety of school sponsored activities.

The district and the school are committed to making school-home communication an ongoing process and not an event. The results have been very positive. At Polson each teacher is encouraged to create their own website which can be accessed from the school website. This allows parents and students to preview upcoming classroom events and assignments. During 2008-2009 a very high percentage of the Polson teaching faculty had their own website. Each teacher is equipped with a teacher computer and an e-mail account which they can access from home. E-mail has been the communication tool of choice for most parents and teachers. Additionally, each teacher is given a voice mailbox that they can access from school and home to receive and respond to parent messages.

Additionally, to strengthen school-home communication, progress reports are sent at the midpoint of each trimester and report cards are sent home every twelve weeks. Polson also hosts evening events for parents in the fall and in the spring, PTO meetings are held monthly with the principal in attendance, the school website serves as an informational center for parents (the Polson PTO has a link from the school's homepage) and parent mailings are sent on a regular basis. Parents are encouraged to join a variety of PTO sub-committees on a voluntary basis. A strong school-home communication plan is a priority for the Madison Public Schools and the Walter C. Polson Middle School.

SCHOOL DIVERSITY

Student Race/Ethnicity		
Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent
American Indian	2	0.3
Asian American	19	3.0
Black	6	0.9
Hispanic	5	0.8
White	607	95.0
Total Minority	32	5.0

Percent of Minority Professional Staff: 2.9%

Non-English Home Language: 1.4% of this school's students (excluding prekindergarten students) come from homes where English is not the primary language. The number of non-English home languages is 6.

EFFORTS TO REDUCE RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION

Below is the description submitted by this school of how it provides educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from diverse racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.

The Polson Rights and Freedoms (posted in every classroom) support and encourage respect, diversity, accountability, and positive interactions between students. Polson school initiatives to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation included the award winning program entitled Perspectives, written and performed by Daniel Hand High School students. The program focused on tolerance, diversity, and respect. In the spring of 2009 the Polson Faculty adopted the Polson Core Values focused around the word PRIDE; Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Enthusiasm.

Polson school wide initiatives in this area included: Celebrations and recognition of Black History Month and Woman's History Month, Asian – Pacific Day, continuation of the Polson Leo Club (in school community service organization working in conjunction with the Madison Lion's Club).

The 8th grade teachers deliver a thematic unit related to tolerance and diversity in U.S. History. Students in the grade eight English classes study novels specific to the Holocaust and the impact the Holocaust has on our society. The grade seven geography curriculum focuses on the understanding of cultures around the world with specific emphasis on Asian and Latino cultures. The grade seven English department introduced a unit focused on individual differences and exceptionalities. This unit culminated with a day long event including a number of guest speakers.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR

Physical Fitness: % Reaching Health Standard on All Four Tests*	School	District	State	% of Schools in State with Equal or Lower Percent Reaching Standard
Grade 4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 8	59.0	59.0	36.8	94.1

*Includes tests for flexibility, abdominal strength and endurance, upper-body strength and aerobic endurance.

Connecticut Mastery Test, Fourth Generation, % Meeting State Goal. The Goal level is more demanding than the Proficient level, but not as high as the Advanced level, reported in the No Child Left Behind Report Cards.

Grade and CMT Subject Area	School	District	State	% of Schools in State with Equal or Lower Percent Meeting Goal
Grade 4 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 5 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Science	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 6 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 7 Reading	95.5	95.5	74.9	95.9
Writing	90.0	89.7	62.9	98.1
Mathematics	95.2	94.9	66.0	98.5
Grade 8 Reading	91.7	91.4	68.4	95.0
Writing	93.0	92.2	66.5	96.9
Mathematics	93.3	92.7	64.5	97.7
Science	87.7	87.5	60.6	94.2

These results reflect the performance of students with scoreable tests who were enrolled in the district at the time of testing, regardless of the length of time they were enrolled in the district. Results for fewer than 20 students are not presented.

For more detailed CMT results, go to www.ctreports.com.

To see the NCLB Report Card for this school, go to www.sde.ct.gov and click on "No Child Left Behind."

Student Attendance	School	District Middle/Jr. High Schools	State Middle/Jr. High Schools
% Present on October 1	97.2	97.2	96.2

Disciplinary Offenses

Disciplinary offenses committed by students include all serious offenses, offenses involving drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, and all incidents resulting in suspension or expulsion. In the 2007-08 school year, 25 students were responsible for these incidents. These students represent 3.9% of the estimated number of students who attended this school at some point during the 2007-08 school year. For more information and data on disciplinary offenses, go to www.sde.ct.gov, click on "CEDaR" and then on "Student Data."

Number of Incidents by Disciplinary Offense Category, 2007-08		
Offense Category	Location of Incident	
	School	Other Location
Violent Crimes Against Persons	0	0
Sexually Related Behavior	3	0
Personally Threatening Behavior	9	1
Theft	2	0
Physical/Verbal Confrontation	1	0
Fighting/Battery	0	0
Property Damage	1	0
Weapons	1	0
Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco	0	0
School Policy Violations	11	0
Total	28	1

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

The following narrative was submitted by this school.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Accreditation process, which began with development of a self- study based on the NEASC standards, culminated with a three day visit from the NEASC Visiting Team in September of 2007. The visiting team's final report serves as the framework for future school improvement efforts. Building level professional development time has been and will continue to be dedicated to developing timelines and action plans related to the recommendations and commendations from the NEASC Final Report. The NEASC Two Year Report is due to the NEASC Commission in October 2009. Prior to submission, faculty and staff, parents, and student representatives will review the document.

In every area of school improvement the Polson parent population is represented. Ongoing communication with school and home keeps parents informed and the parents are represented by the Polson PTO Executive Board, which meets monthly with the principal, to discuss all aspects of the school community. Additionally, general meetings are held at different times of the year for parents to attend.

In 2008 a special education coordinator for the middle school level was added and this has improved special education programs and services.

SUPPLEMENTAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

The space below was optionally used by this school to describe aspects of the school not presented elsewhere in the profile.

Polson Middle School had a population of 636 students during the 2008-2009 school year. Working collaboratively with administration and faculty at Brown Middle School (grades 5 and 6), a comprehensive middle school program for students in grades five to eight has been established.

As a result of the diligent efforts of core teachers, instructional specialists and subject area coordinators, the number of students mastering the core curricula as demonstrated on the Connecticut Mastery Test, 4th Generation, has been at or above state goal in all areas with good consistency and improvement in scores. In 2008-2009 in Reading, Writing, and Math over ninety percent of students scored at or above goal and in Science (grade 8 only) 87.7 percent of students were at or above goal.

Outside of the classroom students were involved in extracurricular activities through interscholastic and intramural program offerings throughout the school year. Additionally, the academic intramural program provides a variety of opportunities for students to engage in fun and interesting content related activities. Finally, community service is an integral part of the school community led by members of the student council, the LEO Club, and content teachers.

The 2008-2009 school year involved more Polson students in community service projects than ever before. Operation Kids Care, fundraising for children with cancer, food and clothing drives, are examples of student initiated projects to support the school and the community.
