

# ▶ J.M. Alexander Middle School



## A Message from the Principal

To our John McKnitt Alexander Middle School families:

This is the first School Progress Report for J.M. Alexander Middle, part of our effort to keep families fully informed about our students' academic progress, our staff and our school environment.

As you will see, J.M. Alexander had a composite proficiency rate on the state End-of-Course math test of 58 percent. Those scores have increased somewhat, particularly among our eighth-grade students. That is good: About three-fifths of our students demonstrated proficiency in math. But we still have work to do.

The state introduced a new reading test in 2007-2008. As a result of more rigorous expectations, reading scores declined across the state, including in CMS. Since the new test covers different material from that covered in the previous test, direct year-over-year comparisons are not necessarily accurate.

We did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the standard set for schools by the No Child Left Behind Act. J.M. Alexander has a diverse student body, which means that we have many targets to meet for AYP—37 in all, and we met 28 of them.

So what are we doing to improve our students' academic progress? We are using differentiated instruction, a flexible teaching approach that adapts the curriculum to individual learning needs. We are also using data to help identify if, and how much, a student is learning. Finally, we are focusing on helping every student improve reading skills, because we realize that these skills are the key to our students' success throughout their education.

Our faculty is strong, with most of our teachers (96 percent) highly qualified. Most of our teachers (68 percent) have four or more years of

*(Principal's message continued on back.)*

## KEY FACTS

### Principal

Joanna Smith

email: [joanna.smith@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:joanna.smith@cms.k12.nc.us)

### Grades

6 - 8

### School Population

- 1,492 Students
- 93 Teachers
- 4 Assistant Principals
- 3 Counselors
- 39 Support Staff

### Student Demographics

- 52.7% African American
- 27.9% White
- 10.1% Hispanic
- 9.2% Other
- 37.0% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch

### Learning Community

North

Area Superintendent:

Monique Gardner-Witherspoon

16630 Northcross Drive

Huntersville, NC 28078

980-343-1457

email: [monique.witherspoon@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:monique.witherspoon@cms.k12.nc.us)

*Data effective as of spring 2008.*

## J.M. Alexander Middle School

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<http://pages.cms.k12.nc.us/jmalexander>



CMS 2010 Strategic Plan Goals	Key Performance Measurements	CMS 2010 Goal	School Result 2007 - 2008
<b>High Academic Achievement</b>  <i>Disparity between socioeconomic groups is shown as a positive percentage when non-economically-disadvantaged students outscore economically-disadvantaged students; a negative percentage indicates the reverse.</i>	Students performing at or above grade level overall <sup>1</sup>	—	<b>57.7%</b>
	Students performing at or above grade level in Reading	95%	<b>48.2%</b>
	Students performing at or above grade level in Math	88%	<b>58.0%</b>
	Students performing at or above grade level in Writing	80%	<b>57.2%</b>
	Disparity between racial/ethnic groups in Reading	10%	<b>49.5%</b>
	Disparity between racial/ethnic groups in Math	10%	<b>73.0%</b>
	Disparity between racial/ethnic groups in Writing	10%	<b>33.5%</b>
	Disparity between socioeconomic groups in Reading	10%	<b>25.3%</b>
	Disparity between socioeconomic groups in Math	10%	<b>23.9%</b>
	Disparity between socioeconomic groups in Writing	10%	<b>27.0%</b>
<b>Effective Educators</b>	Teachers deemed “highly qualified” having appropriate educational backgrounds and state certification(s) for the grade levels and subjects they are teaching	96%	<b>98%</b>
	National Board-certified teachers	16%	<b>5%</b>
	Teachers with graduate degrees	35%	<b>29%</b>
	Teachers’ average years of experience	10.4	<b>10.5</b>
<b>Adequate Resources &amp; Facilities</b>	Student/Computer Ratio	5:1	<b>4:1</b>
<b>Safe &amp; Orderly Schools</b>	Passed the CMS “safe school audit”	YES	<b>YES</b>
	Parents perceive the school as safe <sup>2</sup>	70%	<b>46.2%</b>
	Students perceive the school as safe <sup>3</sup>	80%	<b>30.2%</b>
	Teachers perceive the school as safe <sup>1,4</sup>	—	<b>72.1%</b>
	Number of incidents resulting in in-school suspensions <sup>1,5</sup>	—	<b>8.5</b>
	Number of incidents resulting in out-of-school suspensions <sup>1,5</sup>	—	<b>26.9</b>
<b>Freedom &amp; Flexibility with Accountability</b>	Principal has been granted additional freedom and flexibility <sup>1</sup>	—	<b>NO</b>
<b>World-Class Service</b>	Parents perceive the school as responsive <sup>2</sup>	80%	<b>65.7%</b>
<b>Strong Parent &amp; Community Connections</b>	Parents that give the school either an A or B grade <sup>1,2</sup>	—	<b>37.9%</b>
	Number of volunteer hours <sup>6</sup>	Increase by 25% district-wide	<b>24.0</b>
	Number of business and community partnerships	Increase by 25% district-wide	<b>6</b>

<sup>1</sup>Not a Strategic Plan goal

<sup>2</sup>Based on completed parent surveys

<sup>3</sup>Based on completed student surveys

<sup>4</sup>Based on completed teacher surveys

<sup>5</sup>Incidents per 100 students

<sup>6</sup>Per 100 students

# CMS Accountability Measures

In this section, we are highlighting several key performance indicators for our school and its students.

## ► Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Our school **DID NOT** make AYP  
(28 of 37 goals met)

The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires that every school make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). State test results are used to set AYP proficiency targets for every grade. Targets are set for the school as a whole, as well as for nine separate subgroups. The subgroups are: white, black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian, multiracial, economically disadvantaged students, students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities. A school's attendance and graduation rates are also measured for AYP.

The subgroup measurements are intended to prevent an overall score from masking poor results by one or more subgroups. Because the number of subgroups can vary depending on a school's diversity, the number of targets varies also. Some schools may have only a few targets to meet; others may have as many as 41.

AYP is an all-or-nothing standard that says every target must be met. No Child Left Behind also requires that every student be proficient by the 2013-2014 school year.

For a more complete overview of AYP, visit [www.dpi.state.nc.us/nclb/abcayp/overview/ayp](http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/nclb/abcayp/overview/ayp)

For details of AYP results for our school and its student groups, visit <http://ayp.ncpublicschools.org>

## ► ABC Designation

Our school's designation: **Priority School**  
(*DID meet growth expectations*)

**Proficiency: 57.7%**

The North Carolina ABCs program was introduced more than a decade ago to better target school improvement efforts. Two basic measures determine a school's designation: the Average Growth of students (at right); and the Performance Composite, which measures how well students performed against a set standard of proficiency.

Schools are given one of seven designations (in descending order): Honor School of Excellence; School of Excellence; School of Distinction; School of Progress; No Recognition; Priority School; Low Performing.

For more information about ABCs, visit <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs>

## ► Average Growth

State Standard: 80%  
**Our School: 80.9%**

Each year, the state sets individual growth expectations for each student. A student is expected to perform as well, or better, on the End-of-Grade (EOG) assessment for the current year as he or she did, on average, during the previous two years. The Average Growth is calculated by comparing *actual* performance versus *expected* performance and then averaging the difference across all students and all subjects. The score above reflects the combined growth rate of all of our students. A school classified as making expected growth would have a score of 80% or higher.

## ► Students Making or Exceeding a Year's Worth of Growth

State Standard: 60%  
**Our School: 53.6%**

This measurement assesses whether students have learned as much as they are expected to learn in one year. Expectations are set for each student based on individual performance for the previous two years. Across the state, about half of students typically meet or exceed their growth expectation. High growth is defined as a score of 60% or higher and having met expected growth.

## ► Amount of Growth for Students in the Lowest Achieving Group

**Our School: 88.9%**

Narrowing the achievement gap is widely recognized as one of the biggest challenges in public education. The lowest achieving group for CMS includes certain minority groups and those receiving free or reduced-price lunch. If lower-achieving students grow at a faster rate than better-achieving students, the achievement gap is narrowed. When the above percentage is higher than the Average Growth for the school (see Average Growth above), the school is closing the achievement gap.

## ► Positive Responses to Student Surveys

**Our School: 53.8%**

Student feedback is a subjective, but essential, component of the measure of our school's performance. We want all of our students to have a caring, supportive environment at school. This is a measure of the positive reaction from our students covering the areas of school safety, engagement and encouragement.

For more information on our school's performance, visit <http://pmd.cms.k12.nc.us>

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REACH FURTHER. **Global competitiveness starts here.**

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*(Principal's message continued.)*

teaching experience, and many of them (29 percent) hold advanced degrees. We also have a stable staff with a low staff turnover rate (10 percent).

Last school year, J.M. Alexander was one of 40 schools to pilot the School Quality Review process, a comprehensive evaluation of our school that involved students, parents, teachers and administrators. We will use what we learned in this review to make J.M. Alexander stronger and more effective for all of our students.

We will all continue to work on raising achievement. We will begin our Extended Learning program to help support our students during second quarter and continue until End-of-Grade testing in May. This program provides students an opportunity to work with teachers after school on topics they find difficult. I am confident that we will continue to see improvement in student achievement. J.M. Alexander

has a supportive and orderly environment in which students and teachers treat each other with respect. That will continue. In addition, we have a strong and supportive group of parent volunteers who work with us to support the school's programs and initiatives.

Our students have access to a full range of middle-school courses, including honors language arts and math on all grade levels as well as French, Spanish, drama, dance, choral, orchestral music and band, art, keyboarding, exploring careers and health and physical education. At J.M. Alexander, we are focusing on preparing our students to be lifelong learners as well as successful students.

Sincerely,  
Joanna Smith  
*Principal*

## What is the School Progress Report?

In 2006, we introduced the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Strategic Plan 2010* outlining our vision and strategy to educate our students to compete locally, nationally and internationally.

The plan outlines seven areas of concentration: high academic achievement; effective educators; adequate resources and facilities; safe and orderly schools; freedom and flexibility with accountability; world-class service, and strong parent and community connections.

In this report, you will notice how our school performed in the 2007-2008 school year compared to the stated 2010 goals. On page 3, you will also find an explanation of federal and state accountability measures with a specific emphasis on growth.

As educators and parents, we have a common goal of preparing our children to compete in an ever-growing global community. This goal requires constant dialogue between school and parents, so please feel free to contact the principal or any staff member at our school with your questions, concerns or suggestions.

