

A. R. Rucker Middle

Rams

Our demographics

School principal: Anita Watts **Began at school:** 2003 **In district:** 1994 **In education:** 1994
Grades served: 6 – 8 **Enrollment:** 540 **Economic status:** 71% free & reduced lunch
Diversity: 33% White, 52% African-American, 12% Hispanic, less than 1% Asian, 3% Other
Number of teachers: 41 **Classified:** 12 **Administrators:** 3 **Counselors:** 2 **Media specialist:** 1
Other: Full-time Nurse, PMD nurse, four 29-hour employees
Teachers with advanced degrees: 54.3% **Teacher attendance:** 94.5% **Student attendance:** 94.7%

Our mission

The mission of A.R. Rucker Middle School, in partnership with parents and community, is to prepare students to become productive, global citizens and life-long learners by providing a quality education.

Our facilities

Date main building was built: 2002 **Date of renovations:** N/A
Square feet: 120,000 **Number of computers:** 266 **Number of classrooms:** 54
Specialty areas: 5 computer labs • 1 iPad cart • one-to-one Chromebook in each class

Our school programs

- **Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW)** is designed for students between the ages of 11 and 16.

Too many students leave the middle grades unprepared to succeed in rigorous high school studies and unable to take advantage of all high school can offer. By ninth grade, many struggling students have fallen behind and are on a path to become high school dropouts.

Through SREB's middle grades initiative, SREB states are among the first in the nation to implement strategies that address the crucial middle grades and key transition into high school. Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) helps states, districts and schools look at what they expect, what they teach and how they teach young adolescents to prepare for success in further education.

Our school, in partnership with MMGW, is committed to improving school and classroom practices in the middle grades by implementing a framework of Key Practices and conditions for continuous improvement. The MMGW brochure, *Making Middle Grades Work: An Enhanced Design to Prepare All*

Middle Grades Students for Success in High School, details the essential elements and other components of the framework.

- **RAM Tough Book Clubs – R(eading) A(nd) M(eeting)** – Clubs are small voluntary book clubs held during lunch. Teachers facilitate small groups of students who choose to meet and discuss a particular book while they eat lunch.
- **Food for Thought** – Students who demonstrate they are exemplary readers and writers are invited to a quarterly lunch in the media center. The focus of these luncheons varies. Local authors may describe their writing process, the media specialist might book-talk great new books or students might design book promotion tools to air on Rucker AM. Other reading incentives include Clemson/Carolina reading program and the SCJBA voting party.

Our co-curriculum, clubs, athletics

- **Beta Club** – This nationally recognized organization runs the school bookstore and provides many service-related projects for its members.
- **Football** – This sport is available to our 7th and 8th grade students.
- **Basketball** – This sport is available to our 7th and 8th grade students.
- **Volleyball** – This sport is available to our 7th and 8th grade students.
- **Cheerleading** – This sport is available to our 7th and 8th grade students.
- **Band** – All interested students are encouraged to participate. We strive to provide instruments for students who may not be able to afford one. The band performs at pep rallies, ballgames and semi-annual concerts. Rucker also provides classes for Chorus and Piano Lab.
- **Step Team** – The Rucker Step Team is comprised of 6th through 8th grade students who exhibit a strong sense of dedication and cooperation. These students practice two to three times weekly to unify their step performance. Steppers compete in competitions, perform in community service events and perform at school functions.
- **Robotics** – Students build and program robots that complete specific tasks. They also research major problems that affect the world and present creative ways to solve the problems. The team has qualified for state competition and looks forward to a new season thanks to PTA sponsorship.
- **Relay for Life School** – A.R. Rucker sponsors a team each year for Relay for Life as part of our community service.
- **Rucker AM** – This news crew prepares the broadcast each morning. Anchors, technical directors and special correspondents develop the content of each program.

- **Jr. Civitans** – This nationally recognized organization heads up community-service projects for the school.
- **First Priority** – Student-led evangelical club.

Our parents/parent support programs

- **School Improvement Council** – This group meets on a monthly basis to discuss school-related issues and concerns.
- **Parent-Teacher Association** – The PTA, along with the executive board, meets monthly with an administrator and teacher representative to discuss items of interest and concern. The PTA sponsors a yearly fundraiser as well as other activities for the school.
- **Sharp Schools** – A website that keeps parents informed about class activities, upcoming deadlines and student progress. Parents can register on this site to receive email alerts about upcoming homework and projects.
- **PowerSchool for Parents** – A website parents can use to view a student’s grades and attendance.
- **Facebook** – A website to view news and pictures of our school community. Search “Rucker Middle.”
- **ConnectED** – An automated phone system used to inform parents and students of important school announcements. Messages are sent weekly.
- **Parent Focus Group** – This group meets every other month to discuss school issues and concerns. This information is relayed to SIC.

Our school strengths

- **Student Centered** – In all administrative decisions made at A.R. Rucker, the student comes first.
- **Literacy Focus** – The school works to ensure students are actively making gains in literacy. Students participate in literacy blocks where they gain strategies to use in class.
- **Open Minded Staff** – The teachers at A.R. Rucker are willing to try something different if a student will benefit. Teachers share ideas to help one another.
- **One-to-one** – One-to-one technology has increased student involvement of technology.

Our improvement/growth areas

- **Achievement Gap** – There is a clear need for a larger number of our students to become engaged in all academic areas. We believe our test data would show positive gains as we continue to work to close the gap between our higher and lower socioeconomic students, mainly in the areas of ELA and math.

Our honors & awards

- **Beginning Teacher of the Year** – Our school has had two recipients for teacher of the year.
- **Volleyball** – Our volleyball team was undefeated three times.
- **Basketball** – Our girls’ and boys’ basketball teams have been undefeated four times.
- **Relay for Life** – Our school raises money each year for Relay.
- **Band/Chorus** – Our band and chorus participate yearly in the Carowinds festival of music. Our students are also nominated for All-County Chorus and Band.
- **Junior Scholars** – Our students continue to qualify for Jr. Scholar status.
- **S.C. Jr. Book Award** – Rucker Rams have placed in this program three different times.
- **One-to-One** – Each student will receive a Chromebook to better improve their global learning.
- **ST-ARTS** – Students are nominated for the ST-ARTS program, a program for the arts.
- **Robotics** – Grand Champion for Pee Dee region in 2014-15 and 2015-16; first place in state for Gracious Professionalism in 2015-16; and first place regional for Core Values in 2016-17, 8th grade won small middle school divisionat Regional Tournament, 2017.
- **National Board Certified Teachers** – Our school has four nationally board certified teachers.