

**Sherwood Middle Academic Magnet School
East Baton Rouge, Louisiana**



TRANSCRIPT: “A RIGOROUS, WELL-ROUNDED CURRICULUM”

DEBRA HALE, TEACHER: The kids are very capable here. If I teach it to them, they ought to be able to do it and if they can’t do it, to me, that shows that I didn’t do a very good job in my teaching.

MISSY FRYE, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR: These teachers teach from bell to bell—there is not down time—they’re on their feet and they are teaching.

MISTI SEGURA, TEACHER: We have to differentiate—plus, we have to teach them. We’re looking for an increase in their personal scores so we look at reading levels, we look at test results, but we also really started looking at student interest.

STUDENT: My teacher—she’s fun. She doesn’t want you to get nervous, like, “Oh my God, I can’t do this.” She wants you to try to do it and if you can’t do it, well, she will help you. And she makes little slogans and she tries to get you involved in math: “Math is not boring; you can do this—math is everyday life.”

STUDENT: I look forward to going into my English class because I like learning more stuff in there that I can use later in life and my teacher, she doesn’t make it boring. She doesn’t just sit around and say you have to do this. She explains it and she makes it fun for us.

SARAH MATTHEWS, TEACHER: I think pretty much as a whole here, we really look at individual student needs to figure out how and what to teach but we all base it on the state curriculum.

PHYLLIS CRAWFORD, PRINCIPAL: We have high expectations. They might just require this, but we’re going to require more. We expect a lot in the math department. The kids come in, we don’t even do sixth-grade math; we do seventh-grade math, but those that need some of the sixth-grade math, we give them double math so that they can have a seventh-grade math but also go down and pick up some of the things that they are missing in sixth-grade math. So we do the double math.

CHAD SEGURA, TEACHER: A student can leave Sherwood Middle with high school credit Algebra I and high school credit Geometry, which is really quite impressive.

WAYNE TALBOT, DIRECTOR OF FINE ARTS: This school, even though it’s not a performing arts magnet, integrates the arts throughout their curriculum and Phyllis is a big promoter of that. She takes that from her classroom experience. As she said, when I was in the classroom, we always used the arts to further educate and evaluate.

MARCY FAUST, TEACHER: At the end of the year we send out these cards to all the parents and the students and they select all their core courses first and then they choose from a list of electives, and they rank their first choice, their second choice, and their third choice and we try to place them from there.

ERICA BADEAUX, TEACHER: I like to look at our electives as really applying all of the principles you see. In a lot of the sciences, whether it's physical, life, or earth, or even ninth-grade physical science for credit that we do have here, you see it, but the concepts are sort of pulled out. It's middle school, so you don't see the broader spectrum of a higher discipline. So when we have marine science or forensics or pre-law, Mr. Berthelot is able to take the concept of, you know, U.S. history and wars, and how that has affected our judicial system now, and they play it out, and they have roles, and then speech comes in, and they're actually doing mock trials. And then in forensics, they see techniques used in all classes and their lab techniques and they learn about scientific inquiry. But then, they have to apply it going through an entire criminal case. You know, collecting the evidence, analyzing the evidence, using all the tools and microscopes. So it's really application and I feel like with any middle school, that's really where we're weakest—is applying the concepts that they learn and so for us, I really believe that it's a strength, these elective courses, and they're fun. And they tend to be non-traditionally taught.

PARENT: I do not care when I enter this school, at what time of the day, morning, noon, or night, I can walk past these classes and these kids are in their seats or on the floor doing whatever, but they are engaged.