

In 2004, John Winthrop Middle School emerged from an \$18 million building renovation plan, resulting in a “cutting edge” facility with the latest in technology and materials as well as completing the transition from a junior high school to a middle school in both concept and structure.

At John Winthrop Middle School we believe that every student is unique and important. Our school philosophy is based on the needs and characteristics of both students and teachers. Our challenging educational programs and activities focus on learning through exploration, interaction, and discovery. These programs relate ideas, concepts, disciplines, and skills to each other. The programs provide a wide range of opportunities and options to help students not only to progress but also to excel.

JWMS is student centered and has the following goals for each individual:

To help each student

- understand him/herself better
- learn to make decisions
- learn how to organize materials, time, and information
- learn to listen to and follow directions
- develop skills, knowledge, and interests
- explore new areas
- achieve success in his/her endeavors

The academic structure at JWMS is the team concept. The 340 seventh and eighth grade students and academic teachers are divided into four teams; in addition there is a fifth team comprised of the elective/exploratory teachers. Teachers get to know students very well through team meeting. All teams of teachers meet five times a week. The teachers have specific goals for these meetings:

- To plan ways to assist each individual student
- To establish common expectations for all students
- To plan team activities/interdisciplinary units/field trips/assemblies
- To discuss student behavior and plans of action
- To meet with parents and other school personnel

JWMS also prides itself with having unique programs and activities which make the school special.

- Student achievement is recognized often. In addition to the quarterly honor rolls, each month concludes with a Monthly Meeting when students and staff gather in the auditorium to spotlight students with student-of-the-month nominations from all subject areas and highlight student work, volunteer hours, and athletic achievements both in and out of school.
- A highlight is our social development (Advisor/Advisee) program called ACT (Advisory Connection Team). Each teacher is assigned a group of 10-13 students which meets weekly on Wednesday morning all year long (a time allotment built into the schedule).The goals change monthly (Respect, Tolerance, Caring and Compassion, etc.), and activities and discussions relate to the monthly goal. In

- theses small groups teachers and students bond well and have a place to discuss problems and concerns.
- The active Student Leadership group, chosen by classmates, sponsors a wide range of student-suggested activities such as dances, fun nights, fundraisers, and charity events. These students take the initiative to think up and follow through with ideas by meeting on a regular basis during and after school. They garner participation from the student body, which results in well-attended and successful projects.
 - Every morning for seventeen minutes, all students and teachers begin the day with a Reading Period, an opportunity for and encouraging reading for pleasure.
 - The writing-across-the curriculum program includes a separate writing class for all students, and all teachers on the teams teach the writing classes.
 - JWMS offers a plethora of activities during the school day (activity period twice a week), after school (interest clubs, drama and musical productions, enrichment/fun classes, interscholastic and intramural sports), and in the evening (project shows, Community Unity Night, concerts). Several “special days” are held during the year: Positive Youth Development Day, Wellness Day, and the Walkathon to fundraise for fieldtrips.
 - Parents are an integral piece of our school community, assisting with special events, field trips, and the annual “Walkathon” fundraiser. A very active Parent Council meets regularly during the year to develop school programs and discuss ways to enrich the school community.
 - John Winthrop Middle School has been recognized in many areas over the years: Math Counts, state-wide debate winners, Fox 61 Student News Award to name a few. In 2008 and for the first time in its history, JWMS proudly was awarded the Connecticut Association of Schools Exemplary Climate Award and the NELMS Spotlight School Award, acknowledging our evolution into an excellent middle school, serving the students, staff, and community to the best of our ability.

All in all, JWMS is an incredible school of which to be a part, as a student, parents, or teacher/staff member.