

Our History

Russell Middle School, named after Charles M. Russell, is located in Colorado Springs at the foot of Pikes Peak. We have over 700 students in grades 6-8. Our excellent staff of over 40 teachers are well recognized for their excellence by Colorado Springs Public School District 11.

Russell Middle School opened as a junior high school in September of 1971. In that first year the enrollment was 950 students. Our students came from five different junior high schools in District 11. At the time Russell opened, the Vista Grande area in the "Springs" was just beginning to grow and we were drawing students from both Vista Grande and Village 7 communities.

Enrollment increased to 1,150 students our second year, which required a 9-period day with split sessions. The third year we grew to 1,400 students and began a year-round school program called Concept 6 (which was designed by our former principal, Dr. Ricketts). We continued on year-round until the fall of 1982. We then went off year-round operation and began a traditional schedule with a 6-period day.

During the 1980's, our student population remained between 650 and 800. In the 1993-94 school year Russell began its transition from a junior high school (grades 7,8,9) to a middle school (grades 6,7,8).

Russell has instituted a Wall of Fame honoring former students who serve as role models for our present scholars. Wall of Fame winners include a Fulbright Scholar, a doctor, a district attorney, a professional football player, a social worker, a Colorado Springs Fire Fighter of the Year, teachers, pilots, and musicians!

Russell has had nine Crystal Apple Award winning teachers and an honorable mention. We have had three District 11 Educational Support Personnel Award winners and two honorable mentions.

Our sixth, seventh, and eighth grade core teachers are comprised of teams to help strengthen academic efforts. These teachers, along with the rest of the staff have worked diligently in recent years to bring Russell Middle School a plethora of awards and accolades. During the 2005-2006 school year, Russell Middle School received an overall academic performing rating of "average" with an "improvement" status in academic growth of students. Colorado Springs School District 11 also used Russell Middle School as a pilot site for the *Response to Intervention* (RTI) program which is not being used throughout the district and nation.

During the 2006-2007 school year, the technology program at Russell received a complete overhaul as two new teachers implemented the nationally recognized Project Lead the Way pre-engineering program of *Gateway to Technology*. Academic achievement wise, the school went from "average" to "high" and once again receiving an "improvement" status once again in academic growth.

The next school year, 2007-2008 started a trend through 2010 in which Russell achieved "Higher Achievement" and "Higher Growth" on the Colorado Growth Model. This also marked the first time Russell received the Colorado Trailblazer School to Watch award. In the fall of 2007, the entire staff of Russell Middle trained to implement the Positive Behavior Supports (PBiS) program which improves school culture and climate by "frontloading the positives".

The following school years, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 Russell became an exemplar site (2008-2009) and a best practices site (2009-2010) for PBiS and RTI in Colorado Springs School District 11. Also between these two years, Russell reduced its discipline referrals by 13%. All of these efforts lead to Russell becoming a *Colorado School of Character* for the school years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

In the 2010-2011 school year Russell once again became re-designated as a Colorado Trailblazer School to Watch, the only middle school achieving that honor during that school year.