

*Inspire Every Mind.*

Christopher Kilroy, Principal  
Grant Ambroz, Asst. Principal  
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Lelania Roberds, Secretary

**North Middle School has officially received the Colorado Department of Education designation to be a *School of Innovation*. What does that mean? It means that North has committed to the following mission:**

North MS is a dynamic and challenging educational setting that has experienced a wide range of successes and challenges over the years. Among the oldest schools in Colorado Springs, North opened in 1924, and throughout its long history, has served thousands of students. North has worked hard to adapt as public education, resources, and the community we serve have changed over the years. Currently, North MS is in our third year of Performance rating after a single year of Turnaround status - an achievement attributed to the strength and participation of the entire North community. North offers a range of activities, including academic supports, SEL groups, sports, and an extended school day; North MS is, in fact, a dedicated community school.

Traditionally, schools implement personality-driven initiatives to address localized needs, resulting in a collection of individual efforts that last only as long as the originator remains in the building. We believe that North families should be able to come to school for this critical support, regardless of the current leadership or area of need. Because most of our student population is receiving Free or Reduced meals, our commitment to this effort is urgent. The need for long-term commitments to the total welfare of all North students is evident. These commitments must encompass academic, social-emotional, and physical supports that include access to an extended school year, counseling services, after-school tutoring, positive adult supervision, food, clothing, and laundry.

North staff and administration have identified - and are in an ongoing process of instituting - various initiatives to support positive growth, including academic interventions, culture shifts, and management-model changes. The previous academic focus at North targeted a myriad of cohorts. Still, it failed to fully address the equity issues, e.g., an underrepresentation of impoverished students and students of color in advanced academic programs. The growing number of advanced students at North revealed a lack of attention given to this diverse population. In response, we instituted The Talent Development Model of instruction to better meet all advanced students' needs. The equity-based Gifted and Talented Academy works explicitly with a

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representative cohort of North students who benefit from Gifted and Talented programming while providing flexibility in class levels and embedding social-emotional supports to address Gifted and Talented students' unique needs.

North has also developed an Alternative Experiential Learning Environment with the support of Title 1 funding that provides an equitable, neutral space and closer supervision and guidance for our alternative learners. The program includes a robust experiential component for physical outlets like mountain biking, rock climbing, and trips to local museums and organizations. The intent is to create an individualized learning environment for core academics where alternative learners can thrive without typical classroom distractions. Students develop relationships and create a close-knit group in this space, learning to give and take in a healthy personal growth atmosphere.

All students have access to extra academic support through Homework Club and math and language arts tutoring after school. A before-school Learning Center offers homework assistance, tutoring, study skills coaching, and computer access. In addition, we will provide an extended school year through June to provide math, language arts, social-emotional support, and experiential activities. For students needing more intensive counseling services, we partner with Thriveworks Counseling to offer a full-time mental health clinic at North providing professional services to students and families. We are a Care & Share Neighborhood Pantry, and we offer a fully stocked laundry facility with the option to drop laundry off to be washed.

North MS is the epitome of a real Community School, continually striving to meet the student's needs, the family, and the neighborhood. With a desire to solidify what North offers and institute what we envision, North has applied for and received the designation as a **School of Innovation from the Colorado Department of Education.**

So on behalf of all the staff at North, we appreciate your support and commitment to this great school.

Chris Kilroy, Principal