



# What is Schools to Watch®



Schools to Watch® is an initiative launched by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform in 1999. Through the Schools to Watch® initiative, the National Forum identifies schools across the United States that are well on their way to meeting the Forum's criteria for high performance. Forum members believe that three things are true of high-performing middle-grades schools:

- They are academically excellent – these schools challenge all students to use their minds well.
- They are developmentally responsive – these schools are sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence.
- They are socially equitable – these schools are democratic and fair, providing every student with high-quality teachers, resources, and supports.

To achieve this level of performance, high-performing schools establish norms, structures, and organizational arrangements to support and sustain their trajectory toward excellence. They have a sense of purpose that drives every facet of practice and decision-making.

Pickens County Middle School is one of only 20 Lighthouse Schools to Watch in Georgia. With a total of 483 middle schools in Georgia, that means only 4% of Georgia's middle schools are designated as Lighthouse Schools to Watch.

PCMS was first designated as a Lighthouse School to Watch in 2009; re-designated in 2012; and received a second re-designation this year. Pickens County Middle School is proud to be a Georgia Lighthouse School to Watch and will continue to strive to meet the needs of all students.