

What are the characteristics of a developmentally responsive middle school?

Successful schools for young adolescents are characterized by a culture that includes:

- ▶ Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so.
- ▶ Courageous, collaborative leadership.
- ▶ A shared vision that guides decisions.
- ▶ An inviting, supportive, and safe environment.
- ▶ High expectations for every member of the learning community.
- ▶ Students and teachers engaged in active learning.
- ▶ An adult advocate for every student.
- ▶ School-initiated family and community partnerships.

Therefore, successful schools for young adolescents provide:

- ▶ Curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory.
- ▶ Multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to their diversity.
- ▶ Assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning.
- ▶ Organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning.
- ▶ School-wide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety.
- ▶ Multifaceted guidance and support services.

Reference- This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents, National Middle School Association, 2003.