

**Certification Report
Advanced Learning
Posted January 2004**

School Mercer Middle School

Program Spectrum

The *Spectrum* program at Asa Mercer Middle School is offered through integrated blocks of language arts and social studies at each grade level. Staff is committed to providing a program which offers an array of services to our gifted students while simultaneously growing a strong, rigorous program that prepares capable students who may not have the support and resources needed to navigate the entrance system for these advanced classes. It is our goal and mission to raise the bar for all students and to help create a climate of high expectations and academic achievement at Mercer.

The Language Arts/Social Studies block uses existing grade level curriculum maps and goes deeper, further, broader, and faster with the curriculum. Higher-level thinking strategies, project-based learning, and critical inquiry add to the depth of the curriculum. Student expectations include performance at least one year above grade level, and the desire and willingness to work at an accelerated pace. Student outcomes include increased motivation and performance, higher-level thinking skills, and well-adjusted students who are being challenged academically.

Strengths/Commendations

High energy, reflective teaching staff

Staff clearly “tuned into” needs of Spectrum learners

Clear articulation of process for teacher-identified students to be included in Spectrum classrooms

Deep understanding of rigor through extensive teacher training and teacher study group around issues of rigor and acceleration

Development and use of curriculum maps which are regularly reviewed and revised by grade level.

Areas to be Strengthened

Building robust numbers of students within the program

Continued work on curriculum development and sharing of ideas with other sites