

██████████ Middle School

Site: ██████████ Middle School

Score: 87

Description of Visit

Location = 8

At ██████████ Middle School, multiple signs with the name of the school made it very clear that I was at the right place. The main entrance was clearly marked, but visitor parking spaces were not designated. The school grounds appear to be well maintained, although the parking lot could benefit from a restriping. A visitor's eye would be caught by the attractive displays visible on several classroom windows. Along with signs indicating the school name, many other signs were displayed, regarding such things as arrival and departure procedures and rules, parking for the Teacher of the Year, Principal, Assistant Principal, and School Secretary (but not visitor parking), and various warning signs throughout the parking lot. However, the only welcoming signs were small stickers mounted on the entrance doors. The awning in front of the main entrance would benefit from a pressure washing. There was no flag on the flagpole. Painted paw-prints on the sidewalk directed me to the entrance and displayed school spirit.

Office environment = 9

The front lobby was very large, open, clean, and well-lit. Many examples of student work were on display. Several seating areas were available, and the lobby was accented with several green plants. The office was small and had limited seating, but appeared to be neat and well-organized.

Office Service Personnel = 8

Upon entering the office, the receptionist promptly gave me a friendly greeting, although it was clear she was distracted by other tasks and a student who was also in the office. I asked for information about the school. I was given a visitor name tag and a pen, along with directions to the school's guidance office. I filled out the visitor name tag and left the office. As I filled out the tag, the receptionist called the guidance office to notify them that a visitor was coming. No escort was provided or offered, and I continued to the guidance office. The directions I was given were clear and I exited the stairwell directly into the guidance office.

The receptionist knew exactly where to send me . . . to the school's "salesperson." I met with a guidance counselor, who was an outstanding ambassador for her school. She

greeted me with a handshake and an enthusiastic welcome. She described several programs which were available at the school, as well as additional items which made her school “the best middle school in [REDACTED]” When I explained that my family and I had not settled on a home in the area yet, she described process for enrolling my student at the school if we wound up living outside the district. She displayed a high level of interest in my student, making me feel as though I were being recruited . . . a very positive experience.

Information = 10

Abundant useful information was provided (key school personnel, school lunch info, dress code, FAQ list), along with accompanying explanations. The guidance counselor provided a pre-organized packet of materials, along with her business card and directions on how to obtain further information from the district’s web site. The school is obviously well prepared for visits from information seekers. The guidance counselor escorted me back to the office as I prepared to depart, stopping at the office to obtain some additional information about the school for me (ABC’s data, school brochure).

Scoring Summary

| | | |
|---------------------|----|-----------|
| Location: | 8 | (x1) = 8 |
| Office Environment: | 9 | (x3) = 27 |
| Personnel: | 8 | (x4) = 32 |
| Information: | 10 | (x2) = 20 |

Total: 87

NOTE: Personnel score would be 10 if I had not been sent unescorted into the school from the office. In addition to the serious potential problems that can result from sending unknown individuals unescorted into a school, other districts across the country have been victims of “ambush journalism,” where reporters have posed as visitors in order to see how much access they could gain to a school without being challenged. When reporters are successful with these tactics, the inevitable results are sensational headlines and news stories designed to provoke fear and raise concerns about school security. Such stories can create a very negative perception, not only at the offending school, but throughout the entire district as well.

High School

Site: High School

Score: 92

Description of Visit

Location - 8

Upon approaching the school, the road sign is clearly visible and well maintained. Seeing High School in large letters on the front of the building eliminates any doubt for visitors. There was abundant visitor parking near the entrance to the school. Visitor spaces were marked by painted letters in each space, but not by signs visible from a distance. Nearly all visitor spaces were full during this visit. There were no signs directing visitors to the main office. There is a "One Way" sign at the main driveway entrance which is badly damaged, rusty, and in need of replacement. The landscaping as a visitor approaches the school is very inviting, with tree-lined drives, freshly painted curbs, and benches in front of the building adjacent to a nicely maintained garden area. The American Flag was properly displayed on the flagpole. School spirit is in evidence, with school colors abundant throughout the campus.

Office Environment - 10

The main entrance opens into a very large lobby, which is very well lit. The lobby was open, clean, neat, and organized, with plenty of student work on display demonstrating school spirit and pride. The office was easily located, and was very accommodating and comfortable. Furnishings appeared to be relatively new and were well maintained, clean and arranged in a manner that flowed efficiently. The office was relatively quiet and free of traffic during this visit and promoted a sense of order and organization.

Office Service Personnel = 9

The receptionist greeted me promptly and professionally. When I requested information about the school, she suggested that the guidance department would best be able to assist me, and she pointed me to the guidance area, which was located behind the reception area. The counselor greeted me promptly and was very helpful and welcoming. She did not have access to a pre-assembled packet of information. However, she was able to quickly locate numerous pieces of appropriate information and present them to me.

The counselor spoke enthusiastically about available programs at the school, and asked questions about my student. She escorted me back to the reception area to obtain additional materials for me, and engaged the two staff members at the reception desk to

discuss what made their school distinctive and inviting. All three staff members were active participants in this discussion. One receptionist spoke glowingly about her experiences at the school and praised the principal for being very hands-on and knowing each student by name. When I mentioned that my family and I were relocating to the area, this receptionist handed me her daughter's business card (real estate broker) and suggested I contact her. This receptionist also obtained one of the principal's business cards for me, added her own contact info on the back, and invited me to call if I had any further questions.

Information - 9

The guidance counselor assembled a packet with useful information, including a PTSA newsletter, a high school course catalog and course selection forms, a brochure describing the school, and another pamphlet listing the clubs and organizations available for students, along with a list of school sports. I was also referred to the district web site for further information.

Scoring Summary

| | | |
|---------------------|----|-----------|
| Location: | 8 | (x1) = 8 |
| Office Environment: | 10 | (x3) = 30 |
| Personnel: | 9 | (x4) = 36 |
| Information: | 9 | (x2) = 18 |
| Total: | | 92 |