Early adolescence is a unique period of development. Both the community of Pleasantville and the Middle School staff recognize this as a time of transition for intellectual, educational, physical, personal, and social growth. This is a time when natural forces, technological advances, contemporary societal views and expectations greatly affect perception, motivation, and achievement; a time when increased sophistication does not imply the maturity nor the ability to cope with these challenges. With this understanding, it is necessary to address the requirements of early adolescents to prepare them to be responsible and contributing members of society.
Academic Excellence—At Pleasantville Middle School we are committed to challenging all students to achieve to their highest potential. To this end, high academic standards are set with an emphasis on essential skill development, concept application, analysis and synthesis. A variety of differentiated activities are employed to ensure that students remain challenged and engaged. Both formative and summative assessment techniques are on-going and used to make data-driven instructional decisions.

- Academic Rigor is a Priority with Clear Student Expectations
- High Test Scores on NYS Assessments
- Accelerated Math & Science Classes
- Foreign Language Begins in 6th Grade
- Interdisciplinary Instruction Through Project-Based Learning
- Technology Integration (e.g., Mobile Laptop Carts, Interactive SMART Boards, ENO Boards, MP3 Players, Nooks, etc.)
- Differentiated Instruction
- Formative Assessments
- Aligned Curriculum to CCLS Through Comprehensive Curriculum Analysis
- Integration of Literacy Strategies Across Content-Areas
- Extended Learning Opportunities (e.g., Formal Programs: FIRST LEGO League Robotics, Science Olympiad, Math Olympiad, MATHCOUNTS Competition Series, etc.)
- STEM Course Offering (e.g., STEM-Based Project Learning)
- Green Paw Garden Curriculum-Based Connections (e.g., Farm-to-Table, Soil Testing, Composting, Pleasantville Community Garden Partnership, etc.)
- Built-In Flex Period
- Tier 2 Academic Intervention Support Services
- Learning Walks
- Commitment to Professional Development Teacher Opportunities
- Research-Based Best Practice Faculty Meeting Exchange
- Vertical 5-8 Strategy Instruction (e.g., Cornell Notes, ESSC, Word Walls, etc.)
- Relevant and Enriching Field Trips to Augment Instruction

A place where project-based learning & collective problem-solving are valued...
Developmental Responsiveness—At Pleasantville Middle School, we are committed to addressing the unique developmental challenges of young adolescence, and to the development of the whole child. To this end, close trusting relationships are established and maintained between adults and students. Our guidance counselors remain with their students throughout their four years of middle school, enabling them to become stable, trusted adult mentors for each child. Each year the Guidance Department facilitates many developmentally appropriate workshops for our students. For example, a puberty workshop for fifth grade girls and sixth grade boys in a open-forum is conducted every spring. Additional workshops on topics such as bullying, cyber-bullying, decision-making, peer pressure, and substance abuse prevention are offered to all students. In order to foster creativity, and curiosity, as well as social skill development, our teachers provide structured, supportive environments while differentiating instruction. Through the use of a wide variety of mediums and instructional strategies, as well as the explicit teaching of study and organizational skills, our teachers address the diverse needs of our inclusive classrooms. Activities throughout the year are socially significant and relevant to young adolescents, providing students with opportunities to address personal and career interests. In all Health classes, students address decision-making, conflict resolution, and personal management strategies. In Home and Career Skills classes students explore career options, healthy lifestyles and sustainability.

- Strong Alliances Between Faculty & Families Supporting the Young Adolescent
- Counselors Serve as Adult Mentors (e.g., Counselors Loop with Students)
- Group and Individual Counseling by Psychologists and School Counselors
- Formal RTI School-Wide Process (e.g., Child Study Team)
- Formally Trained PBIS Team
- Student Run Kindness Program, “Panther Pride Unified—We Stand for Kindness”
- Homebase Advisor/Advisee Program
- Interest-Based & Interdisciplinary Learning (e.g., Extended Learning Expo, Career Day, etc.)
- Active Student Government (e.g., Peer leadership opportunities)
- Variety of Extracurricular Clubs & Activities (e.g., Performing Arts, Forensics, etc.)
- Substance Abuse Prevention Workshop Facilitated by Pleasantville Police Youth Officer

A place where exploring personal interests are valued…
Social Equity—At Pleasantville Middle School, every child is provided with the resources, opportunities and supports they need to reach their highest potential. Resources are allocated in a manner which is democratic, socially equitable, and fair. Many of our programs foster each student’s personal development and ensure that all students, staff, parents and families are integral contributors to the school community at large. At our middle school diverse cultures are appreciated and celebrated, and outside contributors such as our parents and community members are encouraged to participate in cultural events. Although we are not an extremely diverse community in regard to ethnicity, every effort is made to ensure that all students and their families are made to feel valued and respected as members of our school community. Heterogeneous, fully inclusive classes with physical, emotional, social and academic supports are in place to meet the needs of diverse learners, and special education teachers and curriculum leaders are critical members of grade level teams who ensure that this happens. General and special education teachers meet regularly to adapt instruction and assessments. Additional support or enrichment is available to all students through “Activity Period” and this block of time affords students the opportunity to meet with any teacher whether it be to receive remediation, tutoring or extra time for practice, as well as work on an extended learning projects.

- Fully-Inclusive Heterogeneous Classes Supported by Staff
- Universal Screenings (e.g., Screenings Administered Two Times Per Year)
- Assistive Technologies to Meet Individual Learning Needs
- Cultural Awareness Through Interdisciplinary Instruction (e.g. Passport to Americas Project, etc.)
- Self-Assessment Surveys (e.g., “Panther Pride Unified”)
- Flexible Grouping
- Wellness Day (e.g., Fosters a positive school climate of holistic wellness—one that celebrates acts of kindness and mindful behaviors)
- Clinton Street Senior Citizen Center Partnership (e.g., Senior Citizen Tea, Veterans Jazz Band Performance, etc.)

A place where community and kindness are valued…
Organizational Support—The Pleasantville Middle School is committed to supporting and sustaining a consistent movement towards excellence. To this end, structures and routines have been set in place and a shared vision and mission is clearly articulated for all members of our school community. Our organization structures and processes serve as the foundation for building a high-performing standards-based middle school that ensures both academic excellence and personal growth for all children.

- District-Wide and Building Mission Statement
- District-Wide and Building-Level Annual Goals
- All Staff are Knowledgeable about the Essential Elements of Middle Level Education Collaborative Model for Curriculum Evaluation
- RTI Problem-Solving Team Meetings
- Faculty Meetings (e.g., Offer Team Building and Staff Development Opportunities)
- Inter-Building Department Meetings
- Leadership Team (e.g., Common, Regular Meeting Time)
- Professional Development (e.g., Commitment to In-Service and Turnkey Training)
- School Website (e.g., Parent & Community Communication Tool)
- E-School Data Parent Portal
- Weekly Parent e-Bulletin
- Site-Based Committee
- Parent Teacher Association (e.g., Involved in All Aspects of the School: Green Paw Garden; Health & Safety; Cultural Arts; Western & Eastern Hemisphere Day; Performing Arts; After-School Offerings; etc.)
- Partnerships with Local Universities
- Building-Level Teams (e.g., Advisory Committee, Kindness Committee, Team Leader Committee, etc.)

A place where organizational support and structures are valued...