

**Central Academy Non Graded**  
**4601 Sophie Ave.**  
**Middletown, Ohio 45044, 513/420-4537**



**Principal-Dianne Suiter**  
**Secretary-Sherry LeForce**  
**Phone: 513.420.4537**  
**Student Hours, Grades K-8: 8:00 AM - 2:45 PM**  
**Total enrollment - Central Academy – 330**  
**School designation: Effective**  
**Minority students: 38%**  
**Economically Disadvantaged: 56%**  
**Attendance rate: 95%**

#### **Mission**

We believe that all children can learn. It is the mission of Central Academy school community to provide a secure environment which nurtures individual growth and encourages constructive risk-taking. In cooperation with parents and community, the staff will challenge students to reach their full potential, and to become lifelong learners.

#### **Profile**

Central Academy opened in 1991 as a school of choice to parents and students in the Middletown/Monroe City School District. Today, Central Academy Nongraded, in the Middletown City School District houses over 300 students ages 5 to 14, with an elementary for grades K-5, and a middle school for grades 6 -8. The educational program at Central is based on the philosophy of multiage, non-graded education. Students are grouped by two and three year age clusters rather than grade levels, and move through the curriculum at their own individual pace.

The multiage, non-graded concept is based on research which shows students can progress at their own pace and are not bound by grade level restrictions. This philosophy also decreases the amount of competition between students and lets each student succeed at his/her own level. Students are grouped in classrooms according to ages: 5-7 year olds, 7-9 year olds, 9-11 year olds, 11-13 year olds. This variety of groupings allows students to be placed where they will perform to the best of their ability.

Curriculum is taught through integrated thematic unit instruction. The same curriculum is followed as the rest of the district, but in a different manner. The skills are covered through hands-on learning, literature-based reading, developmentally appropriate activities, cooperative learning activities, journal writing, individual conferences and direct instruction. Thematic units are taught school-wide and are based on district curriculum and lifelong learning skills. Skills and curriculum are assessed through authentic methods including teacher observation and conferencing. Reporting to parents is done through the use of narratives rather than grade cards, and a series of family conferences held throughout the year.

The entire staff at Central participates on a site-based leadership team. The weekly meetings provide a forum for any building concerns or decisions. The staff together makes the decisions about building procedures, thematic units, teaching strategies, staff development needs, building goals, and meeting individual student needs.

Parental involvement is a major factor in our success. Parents participate in three/four conferences a year in which goals are set for each individual student and narrative reports are given

explaining their progress. The parent organization – TEAM, (Together Everyone Achieves More,) provides input into school issues, and coordinates volunteers for the classrooms. Volunteers help daily with classroom centers, computers, math drill, reading practice and writing workshop. Volunteers help throughout the year on special projects such as field day, portfolio making, bookmaking, book fair, and family nights. TEAM also plans and manages fund-raisers in order to provide classroom materials, assemblies, and field trips.

From the youngest student forward, all students are asked to consider how they fit into the learning community, what they have to contribute, what their responsibilities are to each other, and how they can help others. As students grow older, that thinking reaches outward to consider the same questions about themselves and the school as a whole, the Middletown community, and the world. We seek to give students experience and critical thinking skills needed for being an active participant in a democracy.

Applications to attend Central are open to all Middletown families, and students are accepted on a first-come first-served basis depending on availability of space. An equal percentage is accepted from each of the other seven elementary schools in order to keep our population diverse. **March 18<sup>th</sup>** is the **deadline for first round acceptance**, so it is wise to get applications in early.

Central continues to be a nationally recognized school. Visitors from many different states and countries come to observe our multiage, non-graded school in action. Many of our staff members have become resource people for other schools; presenting at conferences and helping others to better understand democratic, progressive education. Our partnerships with other educational initiatives (Miami University and John Goodlad's National League of Democratic Schools) continue to provide opportunities for staff growth and learning through inservices, visits to other schools, and attendance at seminars and conferences.

**T.E.A.M. - Together Everyone Achieves More**

