



**GEORGIA PARTNERSHIP  
FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION**

**Bus Trip 18 Rider School Reflections**

**Da Vinci Academy at South Hall Middle School**

Inspired scholars living the fun and joy of education for the future tasks in their jobs and personal lives. Teaching teamwork and respect in the middle grades is challenging but these scholars are living it. The students are responsible for school cleanliness. Teamwork abounds.

Excellent! Arts integration everywhere. Kids were totally engaged in their learning. Students here are given opportunities to explore their areas of passion.

I was extremely impressed with not only the format of the school, but the motivation of the students and the passion that the teachers have for teaching. Lots of interdisciplinary work, inquiry-based learning, independent learning and creativity were prevalent throughout the school.

I really enjoyed the students' depth of knowledge of the arts. By them having flexibility in choosing the subjects they are interested in, it makes them work harder to succeed in that academic area.

Great school! Kids were very engaged in all the classrooms I visited. All stakeholders were passionate about DVA.

Engaged! Everyone was engaged in the learning process. The students seemed very relaxed and comfortable. They were motivated and enthusiastic. I love allowing them the freedom and the flexibility to learn at their own pace using their individual talents.

Impressed with energy, flexibility and manners of all!

Freedom!!! Freedom to learn what you want to learn! I love what Dr. Krisel said; "If you align children with their passions they can learn anything." This environment enables students to grow/progress/create/achieve in accordance to their natural interests – which naturally ignites their internal motivation, creating a self propelled education....one of the most satisfying & effective modes of education.

Parental involvement, hands-on learning, & students have a voice in what they want to see at their school.

No high school transition in place – teachers are concerned.

Great use of technology in the classroom.

Awesome school! Would like to see more minorities accepted into the program.

I loved the fact that the students were able to display their talents.

The Da Vinci Academy was wonderful. I learned that student focus on their interests is the best strategy to engage students in the learning process. I like the way teachers teach & let the GPS standards guide instruction, but they do not spend time posting/displaying the standards. That time is spent planning & instructing.

I love the idea of kids being able to explore and create while learning. You can definitely see the caring and loving involvement of the whole community. I would love to see this program grow to include high school.

Loved the Cloud Computing. Appreciated the fact that each student is identified with their passion, which ignites learning. Construction, creating & communicating – 21<sup>st</sup> century skills with a Renaissance – well rounded student.

Embracing the evolution of teaching and learning. Less text – more tech. Some areas of H.S. level of work will earn student H.S. credit in middle school. Parent participation is a must. Diversity – not so much; but in line with area population. Wonder what data is for S. Hall M.S. in relation to area population?

Put children where their passions are and they will learn faster. Every kid was engaged. Everything contributes to learning - student cleaning – the kids clean the building. They make math fun – create games. Cloud computing.

Inspired by DaVinci principles: Idea of gifted endorsement not just being a resource for teachers to reach full academic potential, teacher as facilitator, every student used laptops, self selected learning, “cloud computing” amazing resource for the children/teachers and how can we eliminate “all that does not contribute mightily to learning.”

I was very impressed with the level at which these students were learning. Students were taking high school level language, math and science. A proposed partnership with Gainesville State will allow them to take college courses. The use of technology was incredibly efficient, engaging and purposeful. Students were also exposed to problems in the community and how to solve those problems.

Fantastic, motivational, interesting, 100% student and faculty involvement. Hands on learning, great test scores, (little diversity), and dedicated teacher and students. School maintained by students and not custodial staff. No lunchroom workers.

Students are very motivated here. The school has an amazing family like feel to it. I love the projects that the students are able to do. I wish I would have seen more minorities at the school.

It was impressive to see students at this age perform and present information. No one can tell me that learning is age restricted. There were some bright individuals at the Da Vinci Academy.

I love the fact that they base their learning experiences around themes. The GPS is creatively taught through themes. It was also very interesting to see how they are taking steps to save money by not having custodians or cafeteria staff. The Da Vinci-principal statues initiated a creative introduction to our visit.

Kids work together, choose projects and clean school.

Incredible! Amazing! This school seemed to be a blend of a Montessori & Covey Habits of Leadership. The students were engaged in the learning process, articulate and innovative. Truly, a school of distinction! Unique!

I loved my visit to Da Vinci Academy. I have never seen anything like it!! I was very inspired by the administrators, teachers, students and parents. I loved the creativity that is used in each and every classroom. I saw and learned many different strategies and ideas that will help me as an educator.

Dream school created by people thinking outside the box. I like the project-oriented/hands on approach. Evolution on education needs to happen because students are not learning the way they use to learn. Remember, no one knows everything so surround yourself with skilled and talented people.