

SCHOOL PROFILE

Rhea Valley Elementary

Rhea Valley Elementary School is located in the southeastern corner of Washington County, Virginia. It is bordered by Tennessee and the Jefferson National Forest. Students travel from the mountainous communities of Konnarock, Green Cove, Taylor's Valley, and the town of Damascus and its surrounding area to attend school.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Economically, the climate and terrain provide good agricultural conditions; however, only a small percentage of families depend solely on farming. A community survey showed that Rhea Valley Elementary School parents are primarily skilled workers. Many parents travel outside of the community for employment. The outlook for future growth in the area appears to be favorable due to the increased availability of farmland for development and the upgrading of State Route 58 between Damascus and Abingdon. In the more mountainous areas of the community, tree farming has become popular and profitable for businesses.

The community offers many opportunities for outdoor recreation, and tourism is becoming a staple of the local economy. The Holston River and numerous mountain streams provide excellent sites for camping, fishing, and family outings. The Appalachian Trail, a walking trail that extends from Maine to Georgia, draws hikers to this area year-round. In addition, the Virginia Creeper Trail provides visitors and local residents with biking, hiking, and horseback riding activities.

SCHOOL HISTORY

Rhea Valley Elementary opened in 1981 to serve the students of the Rhea Valley community and surrounding areas. The school originally included kindergarten through seventh grade. In 1991, grades five through seven were moved to the newly created Damascus Middle School. In 2003, the fifth grade was returned to Rhea Valley Elementary.

Rhea Valley Elementary was originally designed as an open classroom structure. In 1994, walls were added to make the classrooms more self-contained. Currently, each grade is housed in a four-classroom pod, with the exception of fifth grade and preschool programs which are housed in the new wing of the building in individual classrooms.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The average enrollment at Rhea Valley Elementary is 460 students. Of those, roughly 97% are Caucasian and 3% are other races (African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American). A large percentage of students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price school breakfast and lunch.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Rhea Valley Elementary School includes kindergarten through fifth grade, as well as three pre-kindergarten classes. The faculty and staff hold a high expectation of learning for all students. There is evidence of mutual respect, courtesy, and a genuine concern for all students in the learning environment. The faculty strives to instill a love of learning in all students and to develop a positive attitude toward education. Each teacher uses a variety of instructional techniques and methods to assess the success of students. These methods include teacher observation, portfolios, projects, cooperative learning, higher order skills, specific tests in subject areas, Standards of Learning tests, and other forms of assessment.

Instruction is provided by classroom teachers in the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students also attend weekly classes in the specialty areas of physical education, art, music, library, and guidance. Title I programs are available to provide academic support through reading specialists, Reading Recovery teachers, Kindergarten Intervention, and tutoring. Special education services are provided to students who qualify. Rhea Valley Elementary School also offers a pre-kindergarten program that is directed toward four-year-olds. The Early Childhood Special Education Program is an early intervention program that targets children who are two to six years of age and have a developmental delay in one or more of the following areas: adaptive and social behavior, motor development, communication and/or cognition. Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) is a program of the Washington County Schools that provides enrichment opportunities for students who qualify. Numerous supplemental programs are made available to students including Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) through the Washington County Sheriff's Department, 4-H, and Second Step.

Extracurricular activities available in the community include Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and youth sports including football, cheerleading, basketball, wrestling, soccer, and Little League baseball and softball.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Rhea Valley Elementary has a strong PTA organization as well as an active volunteer program. The school also receives support from local organizations such as The Justin Foundation, The V.T. Rector Foundation, and local residents and churches. Donations from local sponsors make it possible to provide a backpack food program for needy students, and a school-based Adopt-an-Angel project is conducted at Christmas.