

SCHOOL PROFILE
Holston High School

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

In 1964, Holston High School opened its doors to students in grades 8-12 as a result of the consolidation of Liberty Hall and Damascus High School. Today, Holston is a four-year school that is part of the Washington County School System. The school's current enrollment of 323 come from Damascus as well as the smaller rural communities of Alvarado, Bethel, Friendship, High Point, Green Cove, Konnarock, Lodi, Rhea Valley, Rush Creek, Shallow Ford, Taylor's Valley, White Top, and Widener's Valley.

The school is one of four public, four year high schools serving an attendance area of approximately 220 square miles in Washington County, Virginia. Holston High School offers a variety of challenging academic courses along with career and technical programs. The school operates on a modified block schedule. The first and last classes of the day meet 47 minutes for the course of the school year, while three block classes meet for 90 minutes each for one semester.

For the 2015-2016 school year, the school enrollment is 320 students in grades 9-12. Holston High School is currently operating with 27 faculty members, 2 administrators, 2 secretarial staff, 3 custodians, a school nurse, a school resource officer, a school counselor, and 2 mental health counselors. The teacher to student ratio is 14:1.

QUICK FAQS

School Type	Public High School, Grades 9-12
Founded	1964
School District	Washington County Public Schools
Superintendent	Dr. Brian C. Ratliff
Principal	Ms. Kendra Addison
Assistant Principal	Mr. Jackson Barker
Athletic Director	Mr. Travis Gray
Enrollment	320
Color(s)	Scarlet, White, and Black
Athletic Conference	Crooked Road Conference (47), Group 1A West
Mascot	Cavalier
Feeder Schools	Rhea Valley Elementary, Damascus Middle School
Accreditation Rating	Met AYP, Fully Accredited
Awards/Recognition	One of only four schools in the state of Virginia and ranked 296 of 500 selected Top High Schools in the Nation for <i>Newsweek's</i> Beating the Odds list 2013 VHSL State Golf Champions 2015 Gene "Pappy" Thomson Award Winner 12 Time Virginia Honors

Band Award
W!SE Financial Top 100 Schools in the Nation
2015 Virginia Gold FFA Chapter, 2010-2015 Star Appalachian Area
FFA Chapter
2014, 2015 Claudia Dodson VHSL Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity
Award

SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

Holston High School - Mission Statement

Holston High School is committed to continuing its tradition of offering students excellence in education. Working together with community stakeholders, we will create a learning environment that nurtures academic success and provides for the individual needs of all students.

Holston High School - Vision Statement

Our staff accepts the responsibility with the support of the parents and community to provide a program that enables each student to achieve his or her highest potential academically, socially, and physically in order to become responsible and productive citizens.

Holston High School - Belief Statements

We believe successful schools:

- Provide safe, healthy, and dynamic learning environments.
- Employ and retain highly qualified staff.
- Have well-defined curriculum and programs that are aligned with state and national standards.
- Involve all stakeholders as partners.
- Respect all.
- Are accountable.
- Align budgets with priorities.
- Result from effective communication from and to every level.
- Engage and communicate with families.
- Provide opportunities for participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

We believe effective instruction:

- Is research-based.
- Assumes all children can learn.
- Meets the unique needs of each child.
- Prepares students for success.
- Educates the whole child.
- Elicits high performance consistent with abilities.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Holston High School is fully accredited by the Virginia Department of Education. The administration, faculty, and staff utilize data from testing to indicate areas for improvement. Holston High School has met all Annual Measurable Objectives in all areas this past school year. The charts below illustrate student performance.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Holston High School has focused on areas of needed improvement. These areas are a concern, but they offer an opportunity for improvement and growth. Academically, those areas include Algebra I, Geometry, and Virginia and U.S. History. Concerning other areas of concern, we have increased our focus on school safety, professional development, and facility improvements. Holston High School has made improvements on the SOL-related goals and has met or exceeded the goals for facilities, safety, and professional development.

Algebra I and Geometry

Holston High School is currently working within the School Improvement Plan to implement strategies to improve student learning in these areas. Both of these subjects were identified as areas that needed improvement in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 School Improvement Plan. These areas have been an area of focus for several years. Currently, Holston High School meets the state accreditation benchmark. However, Holston High School has set goals and has taken steps to not only meet state requirements, but to exceed expectations and show measureable improvement in the areas of Algebra I and Geometry. Several remedies have been put into place, such as: team teaching, increased focus on SOL Standards by Question, disaggregation of assessment data, tutoring and remediation, and more attention to best teaching practices.

Virginia & U.S. History

Holston High School has identified the subject of Virginia and U.S. History as an area for improvement and this is noted in the 2015-16 School Improvement Plan. Although the SOL scores for this subject have met or exceeded the county and state expectation in past years, Holston High School experienced a moderate decline in scores over the past year. While this decrease was not significant enough to keep the school from meeting the Annual Measured Objectives, it is an area that the school has chosen to focus on for improvement. Several remedies have been put into place, such as: team teaching, increased focus on SOL Standards by Question, disaggregation of assessment data, tutoring and remediation, and more attention to best teaching practices. The expectation is that the SOL scores in this subject area will return to their previous position of exceeding the division and state averages.

School Safety

Holston High School seeks to ensure that a safe, clean, and healthy environment is provided for all students, faculty, and visitors. This is accomplished through a highly trained administration, faculty, staff, school resource officer, school nurse, and custodial staff. The faculty is trained in

safety, first aid, and CPR/AED. The SRO and assistant principal have attended Crisis Response Training.

The school has made safety a priority by installing more working cameras on the outside perimeter of the building. Two new entrance buzzer systems have been installed outside the main entrance and at the rear entrance that leads to the agriculture and horticulture buildings. These buzzer systems ensure that access to the building must be gained through an employee ID badge or by using a call button to request permission to enter from the office. The school has purchased portable two-way radios for all staff so that faculty may quickly communicate with the office. Faculty and staff are highly visible throughout the building and teachers are assigned to patrol the building and grounds each period with their portable radios. Holston High School has created a Threat Assessment Team to help evaluate the severity of threats made to the school or students and to take action in response to those threats. During the lockdown drills in 2014-15, local law enforcement, fire, and EMS personnel joined the SRO and administration in assessing the safety of the grounds and the effectiveness of the lockdown procedures. Suggestions were noted and put into practice.

Professional Development

To ensure that Holston High School is meeting and exceeding state benchmarks, faculty members have participated in professional development opportunities regarding Interactive Achievement, Chromebook Integration, Crisis Response, First Aid, Google Classroom and various types of technology training. Two faculty members have enrolled in a principal's preparatory program, the guidance counselor was accepted into the division's aspiring administrator's cohort, LEAD (Leadership Experiences for Administrative Development), and both the principal and assistant principal are currently engaged in doctoral programs.

Improved Facilities

Holston High School was opened in 1964. The building is in very good structural condition. In order to enhance the comfort, appearance, and safety of the facility, several additions have been made to the building and grounds. Those improvements have included the construction in recent years of a new band room and the upgrading of the old band room into a facility for the chorus classroom. Modifications and updates have been made to the football stadium including the installation of new bleachers and beautification of the field and grounds. The concession stand has also been expanded in size. In the current financial budget, appropriations have been made to build new bathrooms that are OCR compliant. The baseball field, Backer Park, has been re-turfed and new refrigeration units have been added to the concession area. In the gymnasium, new bleachers were installed to ensure OCR compliance. The gymnasium also has a new sound system. The fish house has been expanded with a new addition that includes a filet room and more tanks to supplement the aquaculture program. The agriculture department received a \$20,000 grant to construct an outdoor classroom, in which livestock will be kept to enhance the agriculture curriculum. The teacher's lounge also received a new facelift. Old cabinetry was removed and a tiled floor was reinstalled. The lounge is now equipped with a seating area, flat screen TV, and a new conference table.

STAKEHOLDER'S PERSPECTIVES

Surveys were distributed to stakeholders in the fall of 2015 to help Holston High School understand the perception of the school. Staff and parents were asked questions in five categories that related to the AdvancEd model. Responses were on a scale of 1 to 5. A rating of five meant the respondent strongly agreed and a rating of one meant that the respondent strongly disagreed. The survey also included a short answer portion that allowed respondents to answer three open-ended questions.

PARENT OPEN-ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES

What do you like best about your child's school?

- It's full of great staff that sincerely cares about my child's best interests.
- The school has mostly small classes which allow the students to receive all the attention they may need in order to be successful.
- If my child or I have any issues or concerns that there are open lines of communication.
- Smaller class sizes benefit our children's needs with any learning difficulties.
- How hard working the teachers are in helping the students succeed.
- The support my child receives. He is recommended for extra-curricular programs that will benefit him in preparing for college. His guidance counselor takes time to help him choose classes and a schedule that will challenge him and keep him interested in learning. My son's teachers communicate with each other and work together to ensure he is given all opportunities to succeed in meeting his educational goals. Teachers and counselors have encouraged my son to express his opinions and his ideas (within guidelines) during class discussion times which is strengthening his critical thinking skills.

What do you like least about your child's school?

- I believe that not pushing the brightest students to achieve more limits the entire student body. Even though my child is an athlete, the importance that this school (and many in this and neighboring counties) place on athletics and not on academic endeavors is discouraging.
- I checked Parent Portal regularly, but grades were not placed in a timely manner. I did not receive an email, phone call, or note informing me of failing grades. I wish I would have known earlier about missing assignments and low grades. I would have worked with him sooner.

What is one suggestion you would like to offer to improve our school?

- Emails sent out from teachers instead of paper correspondence because my child doesn't make them home with them.
- More computer access for students.
- Update Parent Portal in a timely manner and inform parents if needed. Not all parents use Parent Portal and there are other means of communication available.

STAFF OPEN-ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES

What do you like best about our school?

- I like the fact that Holston High School has highly qualified teachers that embrace technology and change and are willing to explore new possibilities.

- Our school personnel care about students and is willing to go to any means necessary to help them achieve success.
- I being a part of the students' lives in the educational process and learning more about them individually. I value the student's individual achievements and their struggles which help me to better guide them.
- The faculty and staff truly care about the well-being and education of the students.
- Holston is unique in the fact that the faculty, students, and community work together as a family.
- The teachers, staff and administrators truly care about our students, and will go beyond their stated duties to help.
- The welcoming environment that allows students to become a part of the school entity. Everyone is important.

What do you like least about our school?

- Like all schools we our evaluation of our students/teachers/administrators and even district is dependent on one thing: Standardized Test Scores. We say we are concerned with higher goals, but funding and accreditation come from test scores and so we cater to them.
- Lack of time/faculty to offer students more choices in the classroom.
- Emphasis is sometimes placed on sports or extra-curricular activities instead of academics.
- The amount of forms, bookwork, record-keeping, data-gathering, data-analysis, etc., etc., that is constantly being required of teachers, and which seems to be increasing all the time. Some is necessary and understandable, but the volume of it all takes away from what we should be doing, which is teaching.
- Maintenance is lacking. Things need to be fixed and cleaned.
- Ideas and policies are often not followed through on.

What is one suggestion you would like to offer to improve our school?

- Allow teachers to play more of a role in decisions that directly affect their classroom environment.
- We are on a good trend with faculty involvement at faculty meetings, modeling best practices, formative assessments, sharing resources, teaching tools, etc. I want to see that continue.
- I would like to see consistency in class offerings between all four High Schools as well as consistency in support to facilities and instructional supplies.
- I feel like teachers are being forced to do exactly the same thing and are supposed to fit this model that leaves little room for creativity and individualism. Students become bored by this model being used by all teachers five periods a day.
- Trying to do Talent Ed. takes away from teacher's time and creates a stressful environment which in turn makes for a less effective teacher. Principals and Administration don't recognize the accomplishments but are quick to see any flaws in the teaching.
- I would like to see a focus on creating life-long learners - students who love to learn. This is hard to do the in the high pressure environment we find ourselves.
- More CTE or special interest classes, as many of our students take all available courses and are left with shortened schedules in their Junior and senior years.
- There are a lot of responsibilities on many teachers at our school and then some teachers have no extra responsibilities. Equaling out the duties would be helpful.