

SCHOOLS TO WATCH – VIRGINIA

GLENVAR MIDDLE SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE

Glenvar Middle School

Designated in 2016

Glenvar Middle School • Roanoke County Public School •
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2015-2016 School Statistics

(Sources: Student enrollment as of March 14, 2016 compiled from SYNERGY and the current VDOE school report card)

Community: Suburban Salem, VA
Enrollment: 445
Grade Levels: 6-8
School Schedule: Hybrid Block A/B Days

Student Demographics

- 87.9% White
- 2% Hispanic
- 4% African American
- 3% Asian
- 2% Multi-Racial
- <1% Native American
- 26.5% Economically Disadvantaged
- 22.7% Special Education
- <1% English Language Learners

Fully Accredited by VDOE:	2013, 2014, 2015
Math Pass Rate $\geq 86\%$:	2013, 2014, 2015
English Pass Rate $>83\%$:	2013, 2014, 2015
Science Pass Rate $>79\%$:	2013, 2014, 2015
History Pass Rate $\geq 90\%$:	2013, 2014, 2015

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

- “Deeper learning lessons” are implemented across the content areas. Deeper learning is produced through the purposeful use of a variety of instructional strategies: strategies that engage students in authentic problem solving (e.g. inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and design challenges). These strategies are a regular part of the instruction.
- A culture of readers has been created through the implementation of Silent Sustained Reading in all content areas.
- Spiral reviewing and checking for understanding on the individual student basis are implemented across grade levels and content areas.
- Professional Learning Communities have been designed to be REAL (Reflective, Evaluate, Adjust, and Launch). Our PLCs analyze data in order to identify students in need of interventions. As well, they constantly reflect on our instructional practices, evaluate their effectiveness, adjust as necessary, and then launch into action.
- The continued implementation of interdisciplinary grade-level teams connects learning across curricular content areas.
- Teachers are constantly checking the alignment of assessments and instruction with standards and Bloom’s Taxonomy.
- Students are given multiple opportunities to succeed and are provided with extra help and enrichment.
- A full menu of rigorous courses is designed to meet the diverse needs of our student population. Students take 90 minutes of math and English daily.
- Communication with parents via multiple modes is viewed as paramount to student success. GMS uses *ParentVue*, *Blackboard*, GMS webpage, email, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings in order to communicate with parents.
- Technology is incorporated into daily instruction in order to increase student engagement and help students make real-world connections.
- GMS has partnered with TTAC in an effort to optimize co-teaching environments.
- Instructional time is valued and protected from unnecessary interruptions.
- 6th and 7th grade science students put on a science fair for 8th grade students.

Developmental Responsiveness

- Excellent transition services and activities are coordinated with both the high school and the feeder elementary schools.
- 5th Quarter program provides students a place to go after ballgames.
- Students are allowed to stay after school while waiting for high school ballgames. We have a dance/game day before every home high school football game.
- 6th Grade students pick a program of choice offered by BCAT (Burton Center for Arts and Technology) and visit for an entire 90 minute block. This partnership helps kick start the students' desire to be successful middle school students.
- Second Chance Breakfast is offered for students after first block.
- At the end of the year awards assembly, students in all grade levels are recognized for exemplifying any of the six pillars of character education.
- Each marking period, there are planned recognition ceremonies for students who show high performance in academics.
- GMS has created a "Skinny Block." The skinny is a time when all students can receive academic intervention and/or enrichment. As well, students are able to attend a variety of clubs during this time. Clubs are created and geared toward student interests such as the Fishing Club, Video Game Club, Robotics Club, and Book Club.
- Community involvement is stressed for all students. GMS participates in numerous community service projects and fundraisers to support our community. Examples include Pennies-for Patients, maintaining the community nature trail, participating in the Trout in the Classroom program, Toys for Tots, and United Way.
- The Highlander Code is a school-wide discipline plan that is designed to reward positive student behaviors. Students receive tickets when they act inappropriately. Students are given an opportunity to reflect and correct inappropriate behaviors and earn rewards for good behavior. Students start fresh with a clean slate every nine weeks.
- Students have a voice at GMS. Student Representatives (4 boys and 4 girls) from each grade-level make up the "Highlander Council." The Highlander Council meets monthly with the principal to discuss instruction, the school-wide discipline plan, and other student concerns. Special care is taken to choose representatives that truly reflect our school population.
- Intramural sports and clubs, such as Pop Culture, are offered before school. These activities provide students with opportunities to be active rather than sit in a gym wasting time and getting into trouble.
- A wide array of counseling services are offered including classroom guidance, SAP, individual guidance sessions, and groups such as anger management, substance abuse counseling, and social skills.

Social Equity

- Highlander Pride - Students are aware of the differences among themselves, but do not allow differences to divide them – they feel and express a sense of "family." All faculty and staff adhere to the philosophy that all students cannot only learn but also can accomplish great things and, thereby, we do our best every day to Leave No Doubt for every child.
- GMS partners with a local church in order to provide students with school supplies.
- Provisions are made for students who cannot afford tickets to dances, field trips, and various other extracurricular activities.
- Building appropriate positive relationships is at the foundation of the GMS core values. Students are encouraged to develop relationships with staff and vice versa. Parent partnerships are seen as imperative to student success by all staff members and are emphasized by the administration.
- Second Chance Breakfast allows students to purchase breakfast food after their first block class. Students are able to use their lunch accounts. Students on free or reduced lunch are able to get breakfast for free or at a reduced cost.
- There are numerous enrichment activities beyond the school day that are limited only by student interest. Some clubs include robotics club, pop culture club, reading club, maker-space, fishing club, and drama. Students are given the opportunity to participate in intramural sports before school rather than sit in the gym waiting for school to start.
- Grade level field trips and celebrations are planned and implemented in partnership with the school's PTO.
- Department meetings, grade-level meetings, data meetings, and leadership team meetings are all focused on the goal of improving student success both inside and outside the classroom. During data meetings, teams analyze data with the administration and the instructional coach to individualize student instruction. The instructional coach develops a remediation plan for students who are in need of extra supports. A retired teacher and a remediation specialist work with teachers and individual students during the school day. Teachers routinely offer extra help based on student needs before and after school.
- Student Ambassadors comprised of individuals from all three grade-levels work with guidance in order to develop tours and services that are designed to help students transition to GMS.
- Each year the students and staff select the Highlander of Honor. This student exemplifies all the academic, leadership and citizenship characteristics that represent what it means to be a Highlander.
- GMS has worked extensively with TTAC over the last several years to solidify and maximize instruction in our co-taught classes. It is impossible to distinguish between the content specialist and the special education teacher in our classrooms.

- Daily 90 minute blocks of English and math allow our teachers to make connections between content and the real-world. As well, teachers are able to provide in-class remediation and enrichment activities for students.
- Students are given an array of opportunities to demonstrate student success. These opportunities are not limited to formal assessments but include projects, creative media, performance tasks, and group work.
- Guidance and our student assistant coordinator offer numerous services to students who are in need of supports. These include groups such as anger management, life skills, substance abuse counseling, conflict resolution, and social skills.
- GMS has implemented a school-wide discipline plan known as the Highlander Code. This plan rewards students who exemplify positive behaviors. Students who receive no discipline tickets are able to participate in both small and big reward days each nine weeks. As well, all students are able to earn Highlander bucks by demonstrating good citizenship and helping others. Students can spend this money in the school store on various items ranging from Xbox One games, food vouchers from local restaurants such as McDonalds and Chick-Fil-A to candy and drinks. The majority of items in the school store are donated by local businesses.

Organizational Support

- PLCs within our school are designed to ensure student success both inside and outside the classroom.
- The administration provides strong leadership and works in a collaborative manner with all stakeholders in an effort to meet the needs of all students. The administration is willing to listen and respond to teacher and student suggestions for improvement.
- Emphasis based on positive appropriate relationships among all stakeholders is the foundation of GMS success.
- When the master schedule is built, the creation and protection of grade-level teams and team-time are of the utmost importance. Grade-level teams are comprised of teachers (both special education teachers and content area teachers) from all four content areas. Co-teachers are given common planning time and the entire grade level team meets twice weekly to discuss student concerns, activities and instruction.
- The GMS Leadership Team includes team leaders, all PLC leaders, lead teachers, and all administrative staff who take a shared responsibility for overall school improvement and to create and implement the school's strategic plan.
- Central office staff is viewed as part of the GMS family. The superintendent, director of secondary instruction, and instructional coordinators from all areas are very supportive and routinely meet with teachers and administration to discuss instruction and student concerns.
- Weekly distribution of Mondays Minutes provides an overview of what's going on at GMS as well as professional development and instructional support.
- The "skinny" is implemented on a weekly basis. The "skinny" is a 45 minute block of time when all students can receive additional support and/or enrichment from their teachers. As well, students are able to utilize this time to participate in clubs.
- During monthly data meetings, English and math teachers and co-teachers meet with the administration and the instructional coach/data analyst in order to use data in an effort to individualize student instruction and enhance lessons. Central office staff is invited to the meetings to provide additional support for teachers. There are separate meetings held for math and English.
- Central office staff are viewed and utilized as support systems.
- Monthly faculty meetings are implemented in order to enhance communication and collaboration among staff. The meetings are used for professional development.
- Monthly department meetings are held for all academic areas. These meetings are designed to facilitate communication and enhance instruction and articulation within the departments.
- GMS has worked in collaboration with HVMS (another STW) in an effort to utilize the strength of both groups of staff to design and implement professional development opportunities.
- "Innovation Bubbles" are used for professional development. During innovation bubbles, teachers open their classrooms for other teachers to visit and observe research-proven instructional techniques. Time for reflection is given to both the visiting teacher and the presenting teacher. Teachers from HVMS are invited to GMS Innovation Bubbles and vice versa. These peer observations help foster a sense of family as well as provide an opportunity for teachers to add tools to their instructional toolbox.
- The Highlander Council is comprised of a diverse group of students from each grade level and meets monthly with the Student Advisory Council and the administration to discuss student academic and non-academic concerns.