



SCHOOLS TO WATCH – ARKANSAS DIAMOND SCHOOL

HOLT MIDDLE SCHOOL – VISITOR’S GUIDE

Holt Middle School



Named Diamond School To Watch 2017

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2016-2017 School Statistics

(Sources: 2017 Arkansas School Report Card)

Enrollment: 441
 Grade Levels: 5-6
 School Schedule: Modified Block

Student Demographics

- 17.0% Hispanic
- 60.3% White
- 15.8% African American
- 5.2% Asian
- .6% Native American
- 59.0% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 14.7% English Learners

Math Scores

2014: Benchmark 2015: PARCC 2016: ACT Aspire

Grade	5 th Grade			6 th Grade		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Year	83.1%	17.5%	57.4%	79%	41.6%	69.6%
Combined	83.1%	17.5%	57.4%	79%	41.6%	69.6%
IEP	50%	0%	32.1%	48.5%	16.7%	44.7%
SES	66.6%	7.6%	48.5%	73.7%	22.9%	61.2%
Female	85.5%	25%	60%	86.9%	41%	72.3%
Male	84.4%	10.9%	55%	73.8%	46.3%	66%

Literacy Scores

2014: Benchmark 2015: PARCC 2016: ACT Aspire

Grade	5 th Grade			6 th Grade		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Year	91.3%	37%	60.3%	77%	47.6%	65.5%
Combined	91.3%	37%	60.3%	77%	47.6%	65.5%
IEP	50%	8.3%	28.6%	33.4%	13.8%	18.4%
SES	81.3%	18.9%	45.1%	69%	26.9%	53.3%
Female	91.9%	49.2%	75.8%	88.6%	52.9%	73.6%
Male	90.6%	23.2%	45.5%	65%	42.6%	56.3%

Schools to Watch – Arkansas Diamond School *Holt Middle School—Fayetteville, Arkansas*

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Academic Excellence

Throughout all we do at Holt Middle School, the belief that “Huskies Pull Together” rings loudly and clearly! As a faculty, we believe in the motto we developed together: “We are **Partners United in Learning & Life,**” and we practice that core belief each day with every child who enters our doors. We PULL hard to create and build strong relationships while challenging our students to meet high academic standards. Our core beliefs are: Huskies need a safe and caring environment; Huskies excel when we use teamwork; Huskies pursue academic success; Huskies develop healthy and productive futures. These statements signify our commitment as partners to our students, parents, and community. Most of all, we are committed to each other. We are a team. Huskies PULL together.

All students at Holt Middle School are expected to meet high academic standards so they can reach their fullest potential, and these expectations are made clear to both students and parents in a variety of ways. We partner with families to share our expectations by hosting a curriculum night at the beginning of the year so that families can meet core teachers in an intimate setting as they gain an overview of our grade-level curricula. Through our school-wide advisory program, students’ academic success is regularly monitored with daily communication among students and parents via student agendas, frequent grade checks, and student-led parent conferences. Our classroom websites, weekly teacher emails, and monthly pack newsletters provide direct communication with our school families so that they stay informed about what students are learning. Some teachers utilize the phone app Remind 101 to communicate with families about timely matters; others set up Google classrooms so students and parents can share a classroom together. Expectations of learning objectives are communicated every day in all of our classes--students are required to write down in their agendas the student-friendly objectives posted each class period and share with parents each night.

Holt teachers have worked hard to develop curriculum maps and align core content areas with high academic standards while also clearly defining essential learning skills for students. We believe these essential learning skills serve as a foundational piece to higher academic learning. Throughout the year there is an ongoing process to measure and monitor student academic growth during an early intervention RTI (Response to Intervention) process. Faculty RTI committee members monitor individual student performance during monthly meetings throughout the year, recording and reviewing data on Google spreadsheets. Process outcomes might lead to recommended Tier II interventions in math and literacy for students who are falling behind. Two full-time interventionists are on staff at Holt to work with these students using specialized programs such as Lexia, Raz Kids, and Dreambox. RTI outcomes might also involve new GT referrals and new enrichment opportunities for students.

Trained extensively in multiple professional development workshops, Holt teachers have an overflowing teacher toolbox filled with a variety of instructional strategies designed to engage students in rich, meaningful content. Teaching strategies include the gradual release model, differentiation, learning stations, Socratic seminar, partner learning, learning labs, direct instruction, project-based learning, flipped virtual learning, flexible grouping, cooperative learning, science labs including virtual labs; the list goes on and on. To help teach important curriculum content concepts, teachers embed information literacy skills such as researching, note-taking, writing, listening, and speaking skills in carefully planned interdisciplinary study units. Aimed at helping students develop deeper understandings of important concepts, teachers connect and overlap content disciplines such as in art class where students create onomatopoeia pictures connecting art with grammar studies. After seeing her proud student’s art display at a recent family night, one parent remarked, “Wow! I never understood onomatopoeia until now!” Teachers also spend extra time planning and preparing extended learning field trips to business sites such as the County Recycling Center, environmental spaces like Devil’s Den State Park, art centers such as the Walton Arts Center and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. To increase retention of information and emphasize the importance of field trips as learning experiences, teachers often create specialized field guides with focused learning tasks that enhance field learning. Theatre classes borrow scenes from ELA texts and bring them to life on the stage with dialogue and tableaux. Engineering classes bring robots to life with math and science. Enriched learning never stops at Holt!

Holt's master schedule is designed to provide students as much time as possible in the classroom to meet rigorous academic standards. Double blocked classes in math and literacy allow time for Tier II & Tier III interventions and both co-taught and advanced classes. Professional Learning Communities also known as "Prime Time" have common planning time embedded into the master schedule so teachers can work with their content area colleagues during the school day twice a week. The master schedule also allows teachers to meet and work in grade-level teams three times a week. Both of these flexible scheduling options enable teachers to collaborate in vertical and horizontal teaming to create rigorous and relevant curriculum, engaging, effective instruction, and high quality standards-based assessment.

Holt teachers value assessment as a means of monitoring student learning and designing meaningful learning experiences around the academic needs of students. Assessment data is collected by multiple methods--student science data notebooks, Google classroom quizzes with immediate feedback, district common assessments, encore showcases, rubric evaluations, self-critiques, student-created rubrics, quick writes, standardized summative assessments--that list goes on and on, too. We give students at Holt multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know and what they are learning, and we continually search for the magic that happens when instructional methods matched with assessed needs results in student achievement and success.

Developmental Responsiveness

At Holt Middle School we are sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence. All throughout the school year, the Holt staff spends extra effort to create a personalized environment that supports each student's intellectual, ethical, social, and physical development. Teachers have an opportunity to learn about their students before they arrive for the new school year from profile sheets written from students' previous teachers. The student profiles includes Triand Reports with test scores, writing samples from students about themselves, any health alerts from the school nurse, and other reference points for each student's academic, emotional, and social needs. Advisory teachers read these reports, write postcards, and mail them to their new students to welcome students to their Holt advisory classroom. During re-enrollment and school orientation events before the new school year begins, the school counselor introduces students and their families to their "packs" (this term was chosen to highlight our school mascot, the Holt Husky) and advisory teachers. Holt has four grade level teams of teachers to enhance teaching and learning, and every student has a school-based adult (advisor) to provide mentorship in small group classes. During daily advisory periods which begin first thing in the morning, teachers develop and maintain positive relationships with students, serving as an advocate and a guide all year long. Meeting all year long in small group advisory classes, students are engaged several days a week in character building exercises including "Mind-Up" lessons. Advisory students practice setting academic, social, and personal goals and work towards reaching those goals. Advisory lessons also challenge students to confront and strengthen the best parts of themselves, growing with more confidence from team building activities. From the first week of school, routines, procedures, and school culture are taught while using flexible scheduling which makes students feel safe and nurtured within a structured environment.

Holt Middle School provides students access to comprehensive services to foster healthy physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Updated yearly, a student services plan through the counselor's office addresses all student services offered at Holt which includes ESOL, Ozark Guidance Counseling, psychological examinations, and social worker services. Holt provides outreach services to students who qualify, and through interim testing, ensure student's academic needs are met through accelerated math, the Gifted and Talented program, Read-180, ESOL, Corrective Reading, Barton, and Alphabetic Phonics. The Special Education Department provides all teachers with specific IEP goals and modifications for all special education students in their classes, and teachers are made aware in a strict confidential manner of 504 plans and accommodations for students they serve. Holt Middle School has a dual response intervention team (RTI-A for academics and RTI-B for behavior). These teams, formed by teachers, administrators, counselor, and the instructional facilitator, monitor data gathered through a variety of instruments and surveys to improve academics and student behavior as needed. Students, teachers, and parents are also invited to give input on the school climate through inventories and surveys.

Recognizing the middle schoolers need for physical activity, all Holt students have time every day before, during, and after school to engage in physical activities. Often students have a small recess period outside in good weather after lunch, and all students have physical education opportunities that include bike trail riding and Frisbee golf. Students may also choose to play basketball through Arkansas Activities Outreach and the Boys and Girls Club, which provides free transportation from Holt to the Club after school. Numerous clubs designed to pique student interest include running, basketball, gardening, crafts, Odyssey of the Mind, Rubik's Cube, Bible, technology, and Student Council and are offered to all interested students. Some meet at lunch, some after school, some in the evenings and some even on the weekends.

In order to address social/emotional needs, Holt provides access to the school counselor any time during the school day. Every student at Holt also has the opportunity to eat lunch in the counselor's office for daily lunch groups to address student social needs. A Holt Middle School crisis intervention team is trained to respond to emergencies, and all HMS teachers are provided professional development training that emphasizes behavior tools to implement positive behavior interventions supportive and protective of the learning environment. Students are exposed to a variety of instructional situations such as Kagan strategies that enable students in different grouping arrangements to practice using respectful language and conflict resolution skills. During all classes, students are provided Brain Breaks to regroup, recharge, and refocus. Parents are involved and supported with family events such as Math and Science Night that enhance core academics and provide an opportunity to spend time at school learning with their children and Holt teachers. Internet Safety Night assists parents in educating and protecting their children online, and the school counselor hosts morning coffee talks with parents on topics affecting students and arising from parent survey feedback.

Teachers aim for deep learning, delivering lessons aimed at reaching William Daggett's "quadrant D" critical thinking and Webb's Depth of Knowledge Level 4 and encouraging creative thinking using a variety of arts integration methods to teach core curriculum. Kagan cooperative learning strategies and RTI-B committee

recommendations are used to develop and support positive social skills in a structured and supported environment. Lunch groups, guidance support personnel, speech pathology services, as well as the counselor, work with individual students during the school day on study and organizational skills. Advisory teachers utilize current technology --Brain Pop, You Tube, Teacher Tube, Ted Talks-- as well as tried and true instructional strategies such as Reader's Theater, Classroom Courtroom, and Public Service Announcements to support students in developing effective life learning skills. Meeting in interdisciplinary teams three days a week to develop and enrich existing curriculum, teachers organize field trips, a charity fair, Greek and Roman Tech Stations, Adventure Destination events, Purple Pinky for Polio fundraisers, and an Encore showcase presentations. Both 5th and 6th grade students participate in a Financial Literacy unit with a culminating activity of a Financial Literacy Day where members of the community come to Holt and interact with interested students about career details and possibilities. Besides field trips to explore local places such as the Ozark Natural Sciences Center, and the City Water Plant, teachers arrange for engaging guest speakers from tenured university professors to business leaders to local politicians to authors to Miss America to give class presentations that enhance the curriculum, provide positive leader role models, and connect the real world to student learning.

All Holt students have several opportunities for posing questions, reflecting on experiences, and participating in leadership activities. Students in both 5th and 6th grade can participate in Student Council activities that plan inclusive school-wide social functions, assist with school-wide fundraisers, initiate Student Council charity projects and take over responsibilities such as raising and lowering the American flag in front of our school. Student Council students also are provided the opportunity to travel to our state capital and learn more about community service and government. By teacher recommendation, Holt students can become student ambassadors at our school who assist new students as they adjust to a new school environment. Because advisory classes are small, students have more discussion options thinking about issues of relevance to themselves and others. Advisory lessons often involve discussions among students over topics that have no particular answer, and students learn about multiple perspectives from multiple life experiences students bring to the discussion. Students bond with teachers and students during advisory time, while learning pack songs and chants, in practicing strong citizenship skills such as helping one another on Green Team school recycling teams, canned food drives, Tween jean collection efforts, retirement center projects, garden club cooking events, and fundraising drives to help local pet shelters or children in orphanages in developing countries. Advisory classes also offer students time to reflect on their work, goals and performance, resulting in student participation in pack reward parties and in focus on student successes and areas needing improvement during student-led parent conferences.

It's not unusual to see parents at Holt Middle School throughout the day. Parents might attend a morning coffee talk with the counselor, lead a PTO meeting, join a parent involvement committee team, attend an ASCIP meeting as a parent representative, share the experience of a Literacy night with their family, or share a school lunch with their child. Movie nights, Math and Science Night, Pack Potlucks, the Health and Wellness Fair--all of these events are grand opportunities for Holt Husky families to pull together and stay strong.

Social Equity

While the expression “all means all” is sometimes used loosely, at Holt Middle School it is the bedrock of our decision making. We see every student as an individual deserving of the best instruction, resources, opportunities, and supports available. As we plan curriculum, design instruction, coordinate class schedules, create clubs, schedule field trips, and discuss student needs, we are driven by the notion that no single method or program is going to be effective for every student. Rather, we strive to provide as many options as possible so that all students can find a path to success.

At Holt, we work hard to ensure that high expectations for academic success and behavior are never compromised. We also understand that some students need more support and scaffolding than others while some students need the option of independent studies or accelerated instruction. Through the use of our full-time interventionists, Accelerated Math classes, Tier 2 interventions, special education aides, and carefully planned and modified instruction, we are able to meet many instructional objectives within the heterogeneous classroom. All Holt students participate in all encore classes which include art, music, theatre, and robotics classes. Additionally, we monitor students’ progress constantly through a robust RTI-A team process that meets monthly. If students demonstrate a need for more (or less) support, we act quickly to adjust instruction accordingly. Further, our Structured Learning Classroom, Gifted and Talented, and ESOL programs are staffed by talented instructors who not only teach students identified as needing their services but also support classroom and encore teachers by offering advice and strategies that can be used for all students.

Because we understand that students learn best when they learn actively, teachers work hard to provide instruction through a wide variety of teaching strategies. On any given day, a visitor to any pack might observe math students in the commons area using iPads to check QR codes after solving a long division problem. Science students working in teams might be measuring the tires on bikes to determine the ratio of tire circumference to distance covered in a given distance. Students in English/Language Arts class might be participating in a Socratic Seminar to discuss relevant themes in a novel study. Social Studies students might be creating a slideshow to highlight a historical character. Or maybe an entire class might be taking a quick Brain Break to play Silent Ball or have a 3 minute dance party! Of course, the use of varied teaching strategies isn’t limited to core classrooms. In Project Lead the Way, students might be using a handmade remote control to sneak a robot down the hall. Music students might be practicing a ukulele and percussion song. Theater students might be found building sets or rehearsing a play based on novels being read in ELA classes while Input Tech students might be learning to manage folders in their own Google accounts. An art student might be painting watercolor insects to reflect science content. A peek out the window might give a glimpse of 26 kids in helmets racing around our dirt bike track. All of these activities reflect our desire to meet diverse learning styles, address middle school developmental needs, and provide real -world, relevant instruction. At Holt, teachers work hard to make school a place where the concept that learning is fun is more than just an idea; it is a reality.

Along with other Fayetteville schools, Holt received training several years ago in Bill Daggett’s Framework for Instruction. This work was based upon 3 focusing words: rigor, relevance, and relationships. At Holt, we know that relationships are the driving force in students’ acceptance of rigorous and relevant work. Our diverse student population includes many students from differing socioeconomic levels, cultural and ethnic groups, and family dynamics. To help us better understand the family backgrounds and values of our students, our entire school faculty participated in two book studies based on the work of Eric Jensen, *Teaching with Poverty in Mind* and *Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind*. These book studies gave us a framework for understanding why students in poverty learn differently. We begin developing trust and friendship with our students and their families before the school year begins each year by sending postcards, making home visits, and visiting the neighborhoods of our students. During the school year, we host Pack Potlucks to give parents a chance to meet each other and give us time to visit informally. We utilize our school counselor and social worker to make sure our students are getting enough food to eat at home. We provide vouchers to the Potter’s House for clothing and allow students who need help to shower here at school. We wash and dry clothes at school when needed. When planning trips to the Walton Arts Center, we choose presentations that expand our students’ experiences beyond Fayetteville to other cultures around the world. Our 5th graders are all able to attend an overnight trip to the Ozark Natural Science Center at no cost, due to generous support from our active PTO fundraising efforts, and a supportive district administration. We also partner with the Potter’s House, the Fayetteville Public Library, and the Boys and Girls Club to provide free tutoring services for students with academic and financial needs.

At Holt, we work to make sure parents are welcome in our school. Besides the Family Potlucks each of our four packs host throughout the year, our Encore teams hold tri-annual Encore Showcase Nights which are

well attended. At these events, parents enjoy music, art, and theater with their children. We hold Family Night events that encourage the whole family to come for food and fun. For example, this fall we hosted an event that included food and games, a planetarium, star-gazing with big telescopes, a hayride and a campfire. This culminated in a family movie follow by a campout, both indoors and out, for several brave souls! We utilize tools such as Remind101, parent newsletters, free PTO memberships, transportation to and from parent/teacher conferences, and frequent text, phone, email, and face to face meetings with parents to keep them informed and involved about their child's progress in school. It is common to see teachers at their students' ballgames, recitals, and theater performances after school and on weekends. Parents at Holt know that when they drop their child off in the morning or put them on the school bus, the people that greet them when they arrive here care deeply for their child.

Holt teachers and staff know our students well. While the middle school concept of teams is commonly used to create smaller school "families," at Holt we go a step further in creating micro families through our Advisory program. Each "pack" of students is divided among their core and encore teachers to create very small (12-18) groups. Each day begins in the Advisory group. This non-academic start to the day allows each student to have a consistent personal adult interaction each day. Advisory teachers check agendas and handle some homeroom administrative tasks, but the main focus is creating a welcoming atmosphere. Advisory teachers are the first to hear about home situations. They are the ones that know who is absent often and why. They know who just lost their dog or who made the winning basket for their basketball team. They help their students set academic and behavior goals. They talk about character and leadership. They have fun together. This year our Advisory teams are all spending two days a week on the Mind Up curriculum which is an innovative program that teaches brain-focused strategies to improve learning. This crucial part of the day also provides essential information to other teachers in helping each child. During daily team meetings with fellow pack teachers, conversations are centered on students. We spend considerable time sharing information about students for the purpose of providing any support or intervention needed. One pack uses the term "adaption" to designate certain students with significant needs. After creating an individualized plan, teachers volunteer time before or after school or during their lunch hour to meet with the student. It might just be an informal shared lunch; it might mean becoming that child's "school mama" for the purpose of overseeing student agendas; it might mean helping a child learn a new skill that may or may not be academic but would add value and meaning to the child's life.

With the understanding that middle schoolers need to feel that their interests are shared and that they are part of something bigger than themselves, Holt has developed a number of clubs based upon students' needs and interests. They vary in number and content from year to year, and they are all designed and sponsored by Holt teachers and staff. This year we have 13 clubs: Technology, Running, Rubik's Cube, Soccer, Girls on the Run, Yearbook, Garden Club, Basketball, Student Council, American Sign Language, Sew Crafty, Ukulele, and Chrome Dawgs. While some clubs are available almost every year, others are formed based upon specific needs. For example, the Ukulele Club was formed this year because one student has a great skill in the ukulele and can teach others. Last year, the Train and Lego club was created for the sole purpose of providing a special needs student with a club based upon his extreme fascination with trains. This club allowed him to interact with others in a way that he was unable to do in the classroom environment. At Holt we also recognize that citizenship, service, and personal integrity must be modeled, scaffolded, and recognized for all students. Our school rules are simple and based upon the notion of treating others with respect and holding oneself to a high standard. These rules are posted in each classroom and highlighted in the agenda and are taught explicitly at the beginning of each year. Adults in the building follow the same expectations for behavior in the common areas, and we use common attention getting signals such as the Husky Hush and a patterned clap. We all use the "W" (warning) system in the student agenda for communicating student infraction of the rules. All teachers have received training using behavioral tools strategies to assist with off task and "junk" behaviors. For students, this consistency of expectations promotes fairness and makes it easier for them to understand what is acceptable and what is not. As teachers, we follow a well-designed behavior matrix that helps us determine when an administrator should intervene or become part of the team for the purpose of shaping appropriate behavior. This year our vice-principal has created a RTI-B (behavior) team. This team is developing a referral process for teachers to use for students with significant behavioral challenges. Additionally, they will serve as consultants in planning and implementing individual behavior contracts and plans for students who need that level of support. Our hope is that the supportive team approach will reduce anxiety for the teachers and increase the likelihood that students referred can improve their behavior. Further, we look for every possible opportunity to recognize and celebrate student successes. Individual teachers do a variety of things: notes/stamps in the agenda, birthday pencils, phone calls/texts/pictures of students doing something great, and other classroom recognition. Packs use weekly Pack Meetings to recognize individuals for improvement or a job well done. Fifth grade students

receive Husky Bucks which can be redeemed for a variety of items. Students with particular skills are invited to tryout and participate in the Spelling Bee, Quiz Bowl, and Fire Marshall program. Our principals recognize all students' hard work with yearly trips to the Naturals Baseball Game or the Boys and Girls Club. Finally, at Holt students give back to their community. Our Recycling Team manages recycle bins in each classroom and in the teacher workrooms. The Student Council organizes a yearly food drive. Advisory Groups contribute jeans to a local organization in the Jeans for Teens drive. Sixth grades sponsor Purple Pinky Day to raise money for polio eradication in undeveloped countries. One advisory group visits a senior citizen home to sing for them. Each year other opportunities based upon student interest or curriculum topics are translated into a service project of some type.

All means all. Again, this is our driving force in decision making. It is a challenging expectation in the busy school environment. Our school implements several tools to help us facilitate fluid and flexible placement for students. First, our daily team meetings are the front line for identifying student needs academically, behaviorally, socially, and personally. School personnel such as our counselor, school nurse, school-based counselor, special education designee or psychological examiner, and administrators are invited to attend as needed to address specific student issues. This means having a master schedule that allows the 4 core teachers to have the same planning time. Second, we also meet twice weekly during the school day with our subject area or fellow core teachers in Professional Learning Communities (PLC). During "Prime Time," we discuss subject area issues, look at trends in learning based upon data from formative assessments, create curriculum maps, revise and adapt instruction, and plan for upcoming units of study. Next, our Instructional Facilitator coordinates monthly RTI meetings when student academic needs are identified based upon review of test and classroom data. We develop a course of action and assign specific persons responsible for key areas. At each meeting, we review the progress of students previously referred and make decisions based upon their need for continued support. Sometimes that means a student has progressed to an indirect status, with monitoring only. Sometimes it means more supports are provided. Sometimes it means the student has progressed to a point at which no further extra support is needed. These records are kept on a Google document that can be reviewed as needed for future grades. Finally, as noted previously, we are in the process of building a Response to Intervention - B (behavior) team. This team will be responsible for managing teachers' referrals based upon behavioral needs. All of these groups allow us to have a very clear picture of each of our students.

Organizational Support

In our efforts to achieve excellence, Holt Middle School drives improvement through the lens of shared core beliefs. These core beliefs were developed at our annual retreat by leadership and staff through reflective analysis of the previous year's progress. These core beliefs, milled to precision over the course of a year, are the filter through which decision-making takes place. They are posted in highly-visible places within the building, in every student agenda, and on our website. Advisory lessons have been developed around the shared core beliefs to reinforce their value, absorb student nuance, and create school-wide action initiatives. Our common vision, "We are **Partners United in Learning and Life**," is recited each morning by students and staff before the Pledge of Allegiance as a promise to our students and a reminder to each of us. Recognizing the value of shared leadership, decision-making teams are made up of members of all sections of our school, including core and encore teachers. Through the process of modifying our Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP), smaller committees determine courses of action to improve performance and close achievement gaps within the building. Evidences of shared leadership include representation from all teams in the building on the Holt Leadership team, a body responsible for communication to and from administration and toward teams regarding building-wide initiatives that do not fall under other specific headings. This collaborative body not only supports, but also fosters interdependent collaboration where the idea that "no one succeeds alone" applies: Huskies **PULL** together with each other. The entire Holt faculty participates on ACSIP teams that include small committees built around areas of identified need, and a central leadership team that targets specific needs and monitors growth within these areas. This central team also makes final decisions in determining the direction of funding to best meet the targeted areas of need. The RTI-A committee teams attend to the state mandate requiring the documentation of student progress and teacher interventions in the ongoing effort to scaffold excellence. Each team within the building meets monthly to update and evaluate students' data and needs. Our new RTI-B committee, developed specifically for students whose behavior was determined to be a major obstacle to their academic success, is made up of administrators and teachers who were designated and trained to lead fellow staff in a building-wide initiative to establish norms among staff in reinforcing positive behaviors and responding to negative behaviors. With the implementation of content PLCs, came the development of SMART goals for each content area. Teachers set a quota for common assessments, and achievement to raise expectations of high-quality collaborative assessment, and accountability for student achievement.

Besides shared leadership, Holt believes in clear communication among all stakeholders. Communication of general information, including testing schedules and tiered behavior resources are available through our principal's webpage, "Morningstar Informs." Communication of time-sensitive or day-to-day information is distributed regularly through the principal's Daily Memo. Other more immediate tools, such as Remind 101, Blackboard Connect, and the principal's calendar are shared electronically with all staff. Communication and collaboration at the district level is facilitated by our district interactive website and frequent bulletins and newsletters. Our new superintendent demonstrated his desire to understand the vision and needs of our school by coming to meet with us personally. We were also invited to respond to the question, "What do you need, that you don't have, to do your job?." This survey served as a needs assessment to accompany State and district achievement data, to better serve each member of the Fayetteville Schools community. Holt works with faculty and staff of our "feeder" elementary schools as well as the junior highs to which we send our 6th graders in order to ensure a seamless transition. Students from feeder elementary schools make multiple visits to Holt each year to inform and assuage incoming students. Holt 6th graders visit their anticipated Jr. High school in the spring for tours and informational assemblies presented by administrators and students.

Each spring, Holt counselors facilitate staff preparation of student profile sheets to send to teachers at the next grade level. Needs, interests, academic performance, and social behaviors are reported in an effort to better inform new teachers. Staff volunteers time after school to examine student profiles to determine best grouping for Teams, Advisory, and class schedules to maximize potential learning and achievement, and minimize situational distress to students.

The structure of Holt faculty professional development opportunities includes training tied directly to educational goals. Workshops focused on better teaming, stronger behavioral response and intervention strategies, and more defined professional learning communities are scheduled so that all Holt faculty can attend and work together. Professional development days for teachers of similar content areas are also arranged each semester by district staff to bring staff together both in horizontal and vertical teams to articulate a collaborative curriculum and to determine common methods for assessment and data collection. These are led by district-level directors for each content area, or grade-level instructional facilitators. District-level support to content disciplines is further provided through support from Instructional Facilitators, who are assigned and

housed in school buildings and who assist school staff in modeling new and evaluating current instructional practices, gathering and evaluating data, and facilitating cooperative instruction and assessment. Holt definitely has the very best instructional facilitator in the district! In response to continued examination of State testing data in staff meetings, District content meetings, and Primetime PLCs, Holt develops and implements Academic Improvement Plans for each student not yet proficient in content achievement, according to the each year's EOY benchmark. Parents receive notice, and classes are modified to provide every opportunity for best teaching and reinforced learning within the school day. In response to 2015-16 scores in Math, the master schedule was amended to create a double block of Math, similar to Literacy, in order to provide more time to all students. Accelerated Math classes were created at each grade level, and in each team, to exhort and engage those students who already demonstrated grade-level capabilities. As a result of concentrating professional development on Holt needs, Holt Middle School has implemented and improved a school-wide positive reinforcement system which has been in place for several years. A reward day schedule was created to provide an additional period to each third Friday. Students earn "reward " status if they have received fewer than 5 "W"s (warnings) in their agenda over a three week period for misbehavior. Students are invited to participate in fun and engaging activities, many proposed by students, during this time hosted by each advisory team. Students who have attended a requisite number of reward times during the second semester are invited to a larger, out of school, celebration, such as a baseball game during the school day. Implementing this structure has focused teachers and students on achieving student successes, both by setting the expectation for success and also by celebrating success regularly. Our school Parent Teacher Organization also supports these efforts by raising funds to provide resources and learning opportunities for our students.

Holt teachers take seriously the maxim that the most important factor in the education of a child is the quality of his or her teacher. The teacher evaluation process uses the Danielson model (The Framework for Teaching), in coordination with each teacher's growth plans, allowing for general, as well as individual growth, reflection, and evaluation. The TESS process (evaluative) is under the guidance of building administrators, who, along with their assigned teachers, develop plans for ongoing improvement. This intensive self-reflection pushes us to find and use innovative practices and creative approaches. Additionally, we seek to learn from nationally recognized educators. In the past three years, teachers in our building have attended several conferences: Model Schools, Professional Learning Communities, Plain Talk About Reading, Corrective Reading, the National Science Conference, Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems, and the National Conference for Teachers of Mathematics.

Finally, Holt Middle School recognizes our obligation to extend the tradition of excellence we inherited from those before us to the next generation of educators. Accordingly, Holt is host and mentor to intern teachers from regional universities, including the University of Arkansas (Fayetteville), and Harding University (Rogers). Holt partners with colleagues in Higher Education to mentor experienced undergraduates for long-term placements, and for novice students through programs like UA's Introduction to Education course. This fall, 50 UA students came to Holt to observe middle school classes and students, and have meaningful dialogue with our teachers. By invitation, Holt administrators have addressed students about the roles and responsibilities of educators and the organization and structure of middle schools.