

## HIGHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL



### 2017-2018 SCHOOL STATISTICS

Designated in 2018

Community Size - Suburban

School Enrollment - 853

Grade Levels - 6, 7, 8

School Calendar - Bell/Block

Free and Reduced Lunch 5%

English Learners - 1%

Students With Disabilities - %

Highland Middle School

Libertyville School District 70

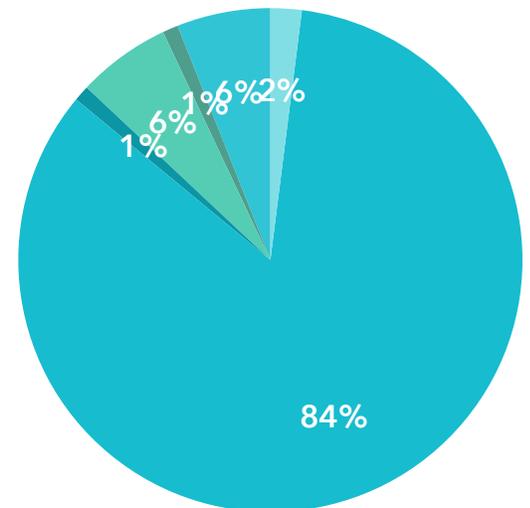
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Principal - Dr. Jonathan R. Hallmark

[www.d70schools.org](http://www.d70schools.org)

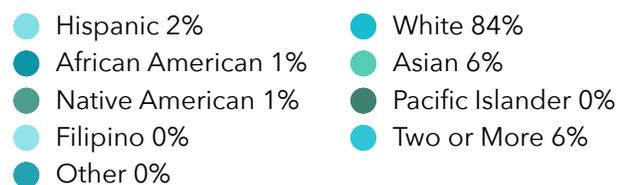
### 2017-2018 School Demographics



### School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

#### Academic Excellence

- True to middle school philosophy, instructors collaborate to create and implement interdisciplinary units at all grade levels. While all Highland curriculum has roots in critical thinking and problem-solving skills, interdisciplinary units, called “Team Days”, allow students to engage in these, and the district’s commitment to the Applications of Learning (Communicating, Working on Teams, Self-Direction, Problem Solving, Using Technology and Making Connections) in a collaborative, literacy-informed manner. The resulting



connections between Team Day activities and the here and now are powerful. Highland “Team Days”, such as an 8th grade Holocaust unit or a 6th grade Brain Games unit have been cited in students’ graduation speeches and other end-of-the-year reflections. As such, we continue to investigate ways to implement more interdisciplinary opportunities.

- Highland recognizes that school-based supports will facilitate academic performance. A continuum of supports, both student-selected and staff-identified, allow students to reinforce academic skills, improve executive functioning, or allow for smaller-group questioning/discussion. Instructors provide small-group or individual support during “drop-in” Student Assistance Friday mornings. The NEST (Needing Extra Support Time) program provides students with a mandated one-week lunchtime program to complete missing work and receive individual support. Likewise, the 11th Hour program provides teacher-identified students with consistent, small-group support, on an after school basis. Invitations for individual support during lunch recess or after school are common at Highland. Instructors are aware that short-term, one-on-one support strengthens rapport with students-- a key factor for reaching more “at-risk” students. Additionally, students can self-select support via supervised study hall during recess time. Our students eligible for Special Education services receive support during their school day which strives to improve greater independence in their general classroom environments in addition to meeting IEP goals.
- Because of Highland’s commitment to student achievement, assessing students in a data-driven, authentic manner is a building practice we continue to evaluate and assess. Using standardized, authentic, and informal assessment tools, Highland’s instructors gauge benchmark objectives and trends towards long-term learning goals for individual students, classes, and within departments. One observes assessment in every department, from the labs and science fair projects, to musical theater performances, art fairs, floor plans that students create in foreign language classes, and a variety of writing produced by students. All of these assessments highlight the Applications of Learning, and challenge students to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways throughout the school day.

## **Developmental Responsiveness**

- Highland’s social work and special education department work closely with staff to foster healthy physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Each grade level has the support of a social worker, who follows students through their three years at Highland. This allows for a sustained, trusted relationship to be built between students, their families, and the social worker. When families or individual students are facing difficulties, it is clear there is a support system in place to help. Each grade level also has a special education resource teacher that oversees the implementation of accommodations and modifications. Special education teachers work closely with staff to ensure all students are fully included in all classes, and a team of paraprofessionals assist students individually during class time.

- Highland’s curriculum is socially significant and relevant to the personal and career interests of young adolescents. Frequent guest author visits offer insight into young adult literature, writer’s purpose and the ultimate relationship between author and reader are reviewed. In addition, during 7th grade applied technology, students choose one of the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) engagements on which to focus for a ten-week period. This allows for students to explore their own interests and set SMART goals related to their exploration. These collaborative projects encourage students to research and problem-solve as they work to achieve their goals. Every Highland student also takes a life skills class and health class which prepares students to make informed, healthy decisions. A study skills class has been incorporated into Highland’s 6th grade curriculum to ensure all students are deliberately taught study and organizational skills, skills essential to the success of each student. Highland tailors its curriculum to meet the needs of adolescent learners.

## **Social Equity**

- Highland students are recognized for good citizenship as well as for academic and athletic excellence during the course of the school year. The Class Act program for character education includes a “Caught You Being Classy” component which recognizes acts of good character by students. The year culminates with an awards assembly that demonstrates the wide range of recognitions given to students that recognize students for their achievements in the classroom, on the playing fields, and in the many other clubs that make up the activities for students available at the school.
- Faculty frequently have discussions about expectations for students both in their academic progress and in issues of behavior. A student handbook that is available to all within the learning community via the school website clearly articulates the expectations at Highland Middle School. Records are kept of student referrals for behavioral reasons and the administrative team uses these records to analyze the data. Problems are minimal, but those that do exist are dealt with proactively, fairly, and consistently.

## **Organizational Support**

- Along with the creation of a mission statement came the District’s Applications of Learning focusing Highland’s students and staff on Communication, Working on Teams, Self-Direction, Solving Problems, Using Technology and Making Connections. Through these Applications of Learning, students demonstrate and deepen their understanding of basic knowledge and skills. These learning skills cross academic disciplines and reinforce their importance. The ability to use these skills should greatly influence our students’ success in school, in the workplace, and in the community. Our Applications of Learning are prominently posted in every classroom.
- As we entered the 21st Century volunteers were requested to serve on the first Strategic Planning Committee. The Board of Education, parents, teachers and administrators met to write a plan for the future. Goals include a commitment to foster a culture of continuous

improvement, to enhance communications, to foster safe and caring learning environments, to implement current teaching and learning standards, to use assessments that improve student outcomes, and to support the students' social and emotional skill development through character education. The Libertyville School District 70 Five- Year Strategic Plan was completed in 2011 and is regularly evaluated. The plan is revisited annually and assesses growth on behalf of the school and district at large.

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