

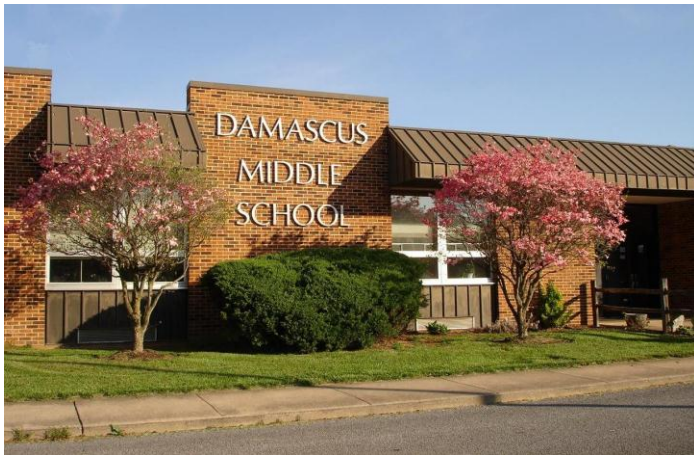


# SCHOOLS TO WATCH

## DAMASCUS MODEL SCHOOL—VISITOR'S GUIDE



### Damascus Middle School



#### Designated in February 2011 Damascus Middle School

- Washington County Public Schools
- Washington County, VA
- Mrs. Dixie T. Hunter, Principal
- 32101 Government Road, Damascus, VA 24236
- Phone (276) 739-4100 – Fax (276) 475-4032
- <http://dms.wcs.k12.va.us/>

### 2010-11 School Statistics

(Source - 2010 – Virginia School Report Card)

Community: Rural  
Enrollment: 221  
Grade Levels: 6-8  
School Schedule: 7-period day/Modified Block

#### Student Demographics

1.4% .....African American  
1.4% .....Hispanic  
97.2% .....White

54.0% .....Free/Reduced Lunch

2008 AYP: Fully Accredited  
2009 AYP: Fully Accredited  
2010 AYP: Fully Accredited

## School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

### Academic Excellence

- Flexible schedule including exploratory opportunities and modified block
- Data driven decision making that ensures academic success for all students
- High expectations for student performance
- Successful implementation of math and language arts inclusion classes
- Real-world applications and preparation for high school challenges through collaborative administrative efforts and optimal learning environments
- Teachers and staff committed to individual student and school success
- Academic interventions that assist students in completing all assignments
- 65% of students participate in band and chorus programs
- Time allotted for instructional planning, team-level collaboration, and inter-disciplinary planning
- Interactive student notebooks used on a school-wide basis to promote student achievement
- Enriched curriculum beyond the Virginia Standards of Learning

## Schools to Watch – Taking Center Stage *Damascus Middle School*

### Academic Excellence *(continued)*

- Professional development that promotes rigor
- Tutoring in-school and after-school available so that all students may succeed

### Developmental Responsiveness

- Faculty and staff recognize the needs of families within the unique geographic setting of the school
- Faculty and staff strive to create a school environment that is sensitive and proactive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescents
- A full-time guidance counselor and school nurse are available to meet students' emotional and physical needs
- Small class sizes allow teachers and students to build strong personal connections
- Faculty and staff create an environment that is cognitively and behaviorally appropriate
- Therapeutic day treatment services are available for identified students
- Curriculum is socially significant and relevant through the use of multiple resources and learning opportunities (i.e. school-wide writing prompts, school-wide reads, and interdisciplinary units)
- Early career exploration and college counseling encourage student personal growth
- Student growth is valued and encouraged through leadership opportunities in SCA, principal's student advisory committee, and community service
- Close contact with parents maintained through emails, newsletters, monthly PTA meetings, and School Messenger phone system

### Social Equity

- Stakeholders at Damascus Middle School believe that all students are valued members of our community
- Vertical relationships with the elementary and high schools help smooth the transition from one level to another
- Clear academic and behavior expectations are stated for all students
- Differentiated instructional strategies are used to enhance learning for all students

### Organizational Support

- Damascus Middle School's philosophy is *every child can learn and be successful*
- Principal meets often with faculty and schedules regular team leader meetings
- Administration conveys feelings of support, value, respect, and appreciation
- Highly visible administration within the building
- Effective communication between administration and academic teams
- Academic teams are empowered to make decisions affecting their grade level
- Continuous involvement in professional development that brings fresh ideas into the classroom to access prior knowledge, student curiosity, and an interest for learning
- A master schedule that meets student needs and reflects the school's overall philosophy
- Continuous counseling through the guidance department that assists students in transitioning between elementary, middle, and high school
- DMS pioneered the middle school modified block schedule in Washington County
- Faculty and staff pledge to nurture students emotionally, advance them academically, and improve them physically