

Highland Academy's History

Highland Academy was founded in 2003 as Highland Tech High on the Reinventing Schools Coalition (RISC) philosophy of Shared Leadership, Shared Vision, and Personal Mastery through standards-based instruction with systemic and systematic continuous improvement.



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Educating for Leadership,
Educating for Life

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What is Highland Academy?

Highland Academy is a 6th- 12th grade charter school that promotes competency learning through student centered, individualized learning and varied assessment strategies. Student placement is based on academic ability, rather than chronological age, ensuring students are challenged each day. Students are encouraged to take an active role in their education and master core content and the skills necessary for success in the 21st Century. Technology integration and project-based assessments are critical components of Highland's rigorous model.



What makes Highland Academy unique?

- Competency Learning — Student Centered and Individualized
- Project Based Assessments
- Real World Application
- Advisory Program
- Integration of Technology
- Ability to Revise Assignments for Mastery
- Student Leadership and Involvement

Parent Involvement

Opportunities for Parent Involvement include:

- Academic Policy Committee (APC)
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Parent, Teacher, Student Organization (PTSO)
- Marketing Committee
- Technology Plan Committee
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Community Coffee
- Lock-ins



Parent Involvement

What can you do to support your child and help him/her succeed in Highland Academy's rigorous program?

- Ensure students attend school regularly and are on time. Classroom time is valuable and can prove challenging to make-up.
- Check Empower on a routinely basis—This on-line reporting system is an excellent tool for parents to help track student progress. Highland Tech encourages all parents to attend an Empower workshop to learn the system and use it to drive academic discussions with their child.
- Communicate regularly with your child's advisor. The advisor is your "go-to" person. An open line of communication will help support the success of your child.
- Ask questions and voice concerns. The more parents understand and support the model, the more engaged and active students are both in and out of the classroom.
- Encourage your child to take advantage of the opportunities offered at Highland Tech and pursue their passions through the use of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).
- Get involved! Highland Academy's success, and the success of its students, relies on the involvement of ALL stakeholders. Join the PTSO, come in for community coffee on Friday mornings, volunteer to chaperone school wide events or join one of the various committees.

Focus Areas



Academics

We provide a learning environment that is based on **competency learning** and individual **performance**. At Highland, "one and done" learning isn't acceptable. We work to ensure that students have an understanding of all of the concepts and processes in each academic area. Everyone invested in Highland Academy — administration, teachers, support staff, students, parents, board members, etc.) know what a student needs to know and be able to do for every standard.

Accountability

Accountability is one of the pillars that keeps our shared vision strong. Because of accountability measures, we have a **Culture of Respect for Everyone**. Many processes are in place to support stakeholders while they hold themselves accountable to ensure a **strong culture** and engage in a **collaborative climate**.

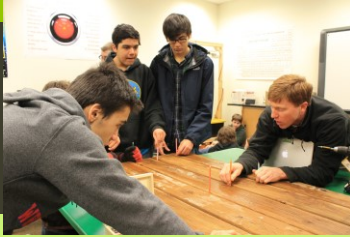
Character development

Character development is the major focus of our **advisory** program. Advisors lead their students and parents through **academic coaching**, character development, **team building**, **problem solving**, and more. All students must earn character development standards in order to meet graduation requirements.

Careers and Service Learning

Service learning and **community outreach** is the fourth pillar of our shared vision. All students work on community service at many levels before graduating from our school. These projects **are student driven** and often lead to close **connections** with community leaders.

Academics



Highland Academy is a rigorous academic program that relies on student motivation and parent support.

Traditional grading is NOT used at Highland (no A through F grades are earned by students). Students are expected to demonstrate competency in each standard (personal mastery) before advancing to the next level. At Highland Tech, students have the unique opportunity to revise work until the content or skill is mastered.

A **standard** is defined as something a student needs to know and/or be able to do. Students are required to master standards in core content areas (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and Social Environments), as well as Personal, Social, Service (PSS), College and Careers Preparedness to meet graduation requirements.

Scoring Guide

- * = **Advanced** (above and beyond minimum requirements)
- + = **Proficient** (mastery! Minimum requirements for standard completion)
- ~ = **Developing** (moving toward mastery)
- = **Emerging** (starting to demonstrate the beginnings of mastery)
- o = **No Basis** (no evidence of work submitted or participation)

Graduation Requirements

Content Areas	E	01	02	03	04	05	06		
Language Arts	Middle School	Middle School	Middle School	Required	Required	Required	Required		
Numeric Literacy	Middle School	Middle School	Middle School	Required	Required	Required			
Social Environments	Middle School	Middle School	Middle School	Required	Required	Required	Required		
Science and Global Environments	Middle School	Middle School	Middle School	Required	Required			Required*	Required*
Career and Content Literacy	N/A	Required	Required	Required					
Personal, Social, Service Skills	N/A	Required	Required	Required					
Technological Literacy	N/A	Required	Required	Required					

+ 2.5 elective credits

Extra levels of PSS, Careers, or Tech
 Extra level of Science
 Extra level of Math
 Extra Reading Genres
 Work Study
 KCC/School Yearbook
 World languages

*Level A (Physics) or Level C (Chemistry) is a requirement for graduation.

Empower

Empower is Highland Academy's web-based tool used for recording and reporting student progress. Parents and students both have access to Empower, and we encourage using it with your child to track his/her progress.

- Parents and students have access 24/7 to progress reports, lesson plans, assignments, schedules and more!
- Parents can view all student progress in a variety of ways – standard by standard, overall progress, by class, and by assignment
- All activities are directly linked to standards
- In lieu of progress reports or report cards, Empower provides ongoing update on student progress and achievement.

To access Empower go to:

www.hth.empowerlearning.net

Username: firstnamelastname

Default password is "password"

Career and Service Learning

To help prepare students for future employment endeavors, they are required to master three levels of **College and Career Preparedness**. After completing requirements students will attain skills relating to:

- Professional Etiquette
- Personal Finance
- Project Management
- Career Exploration
- Problem Solving



"My favorite job shadow was the performing art center because instead of just watching how things run, you got to experience first hand how to get the production in action"

—Former Student

Additionally, students will create and maintain a digital portfolio with work samples, professional resume and job shadow/internship reflections.

ALL students are required to complete meaningful career exploration through interviews, job shadows and/or internships. Students experience on the job skills and explore their passions in preparation for future careers.

Highland also requires students to complete volunteer work and participate in service learning. Service projects are driven and executed by students, with the mentorship and support of staff. Previous projects have included:

- Pennies for Patients
- Adopt-a-Family
- Blood Drives
- Canned Food Drives
- Raising funds for school projects
- Crocheting and knitting for Providence NICU
- Operation Gratitude

Academics

Academic Review— In today's society it is critical students understand the importance of meeting timely expectations and goals. Being a non-time bound school does NOT mean students are not held to due dates and deadlines. Knowing that students learn and master material at different paces, it is still expected that work is completed in a timely manner.

STEP 1: Deadlines missed for major assignments will require students to schedule a conference with their teacher to develop a new process and plan that may include an alternative deadline and/or project.

STEP 2: If students do not meet the new plan, administration will call parents to discuss academic status and to clarify the steps should major assignments continue to be missed.

STEP 3: Parent-Admin-Advisor-Student participate in a conference to create a contract for assignment completion.

Advisory

- The advisory program at Highland Academy is critical to social-emotional learning, character development, accountability, parent-teacher-student connections, leadership and academic progress.
- Advisors work closely with students as they monitor progress, support goal setting, advocate for students and support the acquisition of 21st Century skills.
- Advisors serve as a parent's "go-to" person; setting up meetings, answering questions and providing a direct line of communication between home and school.



Accountability

Policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that help hold ALL stakeholders accountable:

Attendance Philosophy—Attendance impacts learning. What occurs during class is *much* greater than a textbook, syllabus or supplemental materials. Students who are absent for class discussion, group activities, lectures and presentations have missed critical learning opportunities.

Attendance Policy

- Reporting Excused Absences—Parents are responsible for calling to report their child's absence by 9 a.m. that day. An absence without parent notification or confirmation will be mandated as unexcused (truancy).
- Excessive Absences—students with 10 absences will be placed on Attendance Probation and assigned a contract to prevent further absences.
- Tardies—Habitually late students (greater than 5 tardies) will receive the following consequences: lunch detention, work detail/CORE Court and parent, advisor and administration plan of improvement.

Off-campus lunch is a privilege students must earn at Highland. It requires a student complete Level 1 PSS, watch a safety video, pass a safety quiz, and finally obtain approval from parents, advisor, and administration using the Off Campus Lunch Privileges form.

Student Led Conferences are held once a semester with the goal of celebrating student work, reflecting on current progress, and identifying new goals. Parent/Teacher meetings can be scheduled outside conferences through the advisor.

Character Development

Personal, Social, Service standards (PSS) play a significant role in building both the culture at Highland Academy and developing skills necessary for success in the 21st Century. ALL students are expected to complete 3 levels of PSS to meet graduation requirements. Standards vary from physical and emotional health to art appreciation, group work, culture building, goal setting and service learning.

Culture of Respect for Everyone (CORE) is an integral part of Highland Tech's philosophy. All stakeholders work together to ensure a productive and safe environment for learners and guests. It is expected that all stakeholders actively participate in the CORE process.

Student leadership is embedded in many of our processes including policy revisions, student led tours, ownership of learning, event planning and execution and peer advocacy.

Students are highly encouraged to participate in **extracurricular activities**. Highland offers a variety of afterschool and lunchtime activities (most student driven!):

- First Lego League
- Archery
- Yearbook
- Math Club
- Book Club
- Real World Design Challenge



"I have the courage to actually grab what I want in life as opposed to waiting for something to come to me."

-Former Student