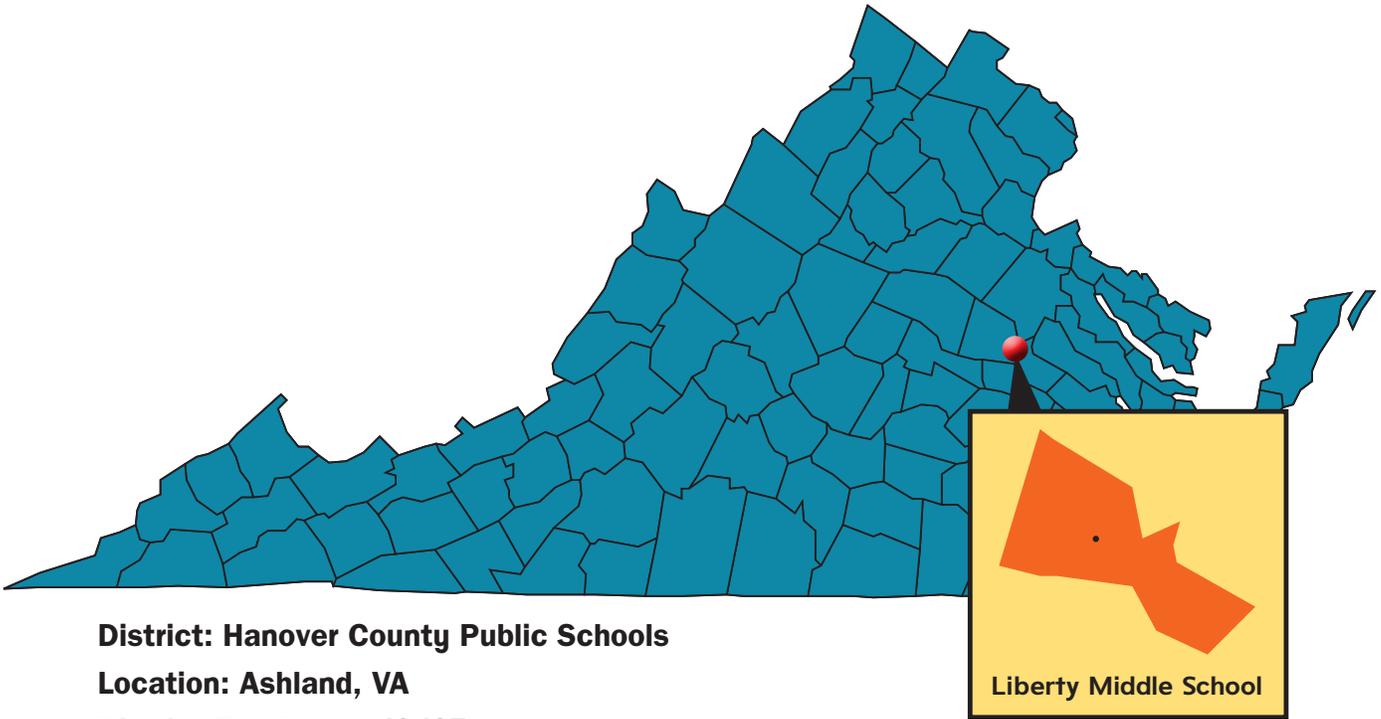


# Liberty Middle School



**District: Hanover County Public Schools**

**Location: Ashland, VA**

**District Enrollment: 19,195**

## OVERVIEW

Liberty Middle School is located in Ashland, VA, and part of Hanover County Public Schools. The school district's on-time graduation rate is the second highest (93.9%) among Virginia's school districts which serve 15,000 or more students. Approximately 19,000 students attend the 25 schools including 15 elementary, four middle, four high, one alternative, and one technical school.

Donald Latham, the principal at Liberty Middle School in Ashland, VA was actively searching for a solution for struggling readers that would raise both average grade reading levels and assessment scores.

This was no small task.

"We tried several different reading programs for grades 6 to 9, but we were looking for something that would work for our students who needed help in both Special Ed and Regular Ed classrooms," says Latham.

*"Students tell us they've learned more vocabulary in Fusion Reading than anywhere else. And, with the help of the Thinking Reading portion of Fusion, they not only read the story now--but they truly 'get' the story too."*

Donald Latham, Principal

## IMPLEMENTATION

Once it was determined that the reading programs implemented at Liberty Middle School needed to be supplemented so as to help every struggling student succeed, the principal contacted The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning

It was here that Latham learned more about Fusion Reading, the reading intervention program that was developed through an IES grant, and agreed to participate in the pilot program.

“The Fusion 1 program began with just 14 students. Since then, we’ve seen our numbers grow with the success of the program,” Latham explains.

That success took many forms, from teachers curious and excited to teach the program, to students more actively engaged in their reading, to the far more tangible: data-driven results.

“The results are very good on paper. Assessment scores are up and we feel Fusion Reading is working for us,” offers Latham.

The ultimate goal of Fusion Reading is to provide a way for struggling readers to take generalized reading skills back into the regular classroom. As Principal Latham is quick to point out though, strict program adherence is key to students being able to move on.

“We have implemented Fusion Reading to fidelity. Fusion is a ‘Bell-to-Bell’ program and through staying on track with the pacing and ensuring explicit instruction between teacher and student, we’ve experienced this level of success in the classroom.” Latham concludes.

Now, in their third year with the program, Liberty Middle School uses a pre-screening approach to identify 6th grade readers in need, so they can apply Fusion Reading to give them an earlier chance at attaining a higher level of success.

“We will continue to use Fusion Reading. We’re excited to see how our numbers will improve with Fusion and where the future of the program will take us.”

## RESULTS

Indeed, Fusion Reading has worked for Liberty Middle School in a big way. The school has experienced an astounding 4.5 to 8.0 average reading grade level growth, and students have made jumps as high as 200 to 600 points on the SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory) assessment.

Additionally, student fluency increased with an average gain of 92 correct words per minute.

Though the hard numbers are quite impressive, there is much that can be said for the everyday results and the classroom response.

“Fusion Reading enables students to see where their efforts will get them. Students tell us they’ve learned more vocabulary in Fusion Reading than anywhere else. And, with the help of the Thinking portion of Fusion, they can not only read the story now—but they truly ‘get’ the story too. Our teachers hear this and paired with the increases in achievement we’ve seen, that’s helped with buy-in,” says Latham.

## ABOUT



- Grade Levels 6 - 12
- **Engages** students with reading materials relevant to their lives
- **Invigorates** students with skills and strategies they need to become successful readers
- **Empowers** students to move to the academic classroom with confidence
- Closes the achievement gap for struggling readers
- Drives statistically significant gains in reading scores
- Provides explicit instruction using age-appropriate text
- Supports 1 ½ year to 2 years of growth in one year of instruction
- Flexibility allows adaptation to various instructional settings
- Research-based and field-tested