

Holmes Middle School – A River Cities School of Innovation

Covington Independent Public Schools

The future of middle-school learning in Northern Kentucky's River Cities.

Holmes Middle School is undertaking a bold, whole-school redesign to become Kentucky's **first** comprehensive School of Innovation under Senate Bill 207. Over a three-year pilot, Holmes will shift from a traditional model to one where every student engages in hands-on learning, explores meaningful pathways, and experiences a school culture built around agency, relevance, and real-world readiness.

Key Design Features

A Whole-School Redesign (Grades 6–8)

This is not a magnet program or a niche track—every student participates in the innovation model.

Grade 6: Broad Exposure & Early Acceleration

- Rotations across four pathways: **STEM, Humanities, Applied, and Trades**
- Strong emphasis on **RTI** to close gaps early
- Focus on igniting curiosity and building readiness for deeper study

Grades 7–8: Pathway Deepening & Early Credit

- Students select a pathway and build skills through hands-on, project-based learning
- Capstone experiences tied to real-world problems
- Opportunities to earn **high-school credit** (e.g., Algebra I, Biology) in 8th grade

Schedule & Learning Time Innovations

- Schoolwide shift to **A/B block scheduling**
- Exploration of an **extended school day** to support enrichment and deeper engagement

Talent & Compensation Innovation

- **Differentiated pay** to recruit teachers in high-need fields
- **Performance-based compensation** tied to student growth and schoolwide goals

Data & Measurement

- Use of interim assessment growth metrics
- Clear, transparent measures of individual and schoolwide progress

Aligned with the District's Vision: The Holmes "Innovation Hub"

This redesign brings to life the "Innovation Hub" identified in the Covington Independent School District's Facilities Master Plan—a community-driven vision calling for a modern, future-focused learning environment on the Holmes campus. This proposal is the programmatic engine that gives the Innovation Hub its meaning.

Building on Momentum Already Underway

Holmes Middle School has laid important groundwork for this redesign through concrete steps already implemented:

- **Ron Clark Academy (Atlanta)** visits catalyzed culture building and instructional shifts

- Introduction of the **Paxton/Patterson Lab**, providing hands-on career labs (one of only four middle schools in Kentucky)
- Expansion of **Adopt-A-Class**, connecting students with professional mentors
- **TradesNKY Build/Construction rotation**, giving students early exposure to essential-workforce pathways

These initiatives have demonstrated the value of immersive, pathway-oriented learning—and the school is now ready to integrate them into a single, coherent, schoolwide model.

Why This Matters

The River Cities—Covington, Newport, Bellevue, Dayton, and Ludlow—represent the urban core of Northern Kentucky. Their students need a model that is **built for urban realities**, rich in opportunity, and aligned with the needs of families and the region's workforce.

Holmes Middle School is positioned to become the **first School of Innovation in Kentucky** and a catalyst for a new generation of schools that expand student choice, keep families in the public system, and demonstrate what is possible for urban education in the Commonwealth.