

MCMURRAY MIDDLE SCHOOL

25-26 Course Description Catalog

9329 SW Cemetery Road, Vashon Island, WA 98070

206-463-9168 www.vashonsd.org/mcm

Elective requests are due **Monday, April 28**

McMurray Daily Schedule

- McMurray Middle School has a six period, two semester school year.
- On regular days each class is fifty minutes long, with a thirty minute homeroom period each day.
- A .5 credit course is completed in one semester.
- Students earn 6 credits each year.
- Grade reports are posted in Skyward for semester 1 and semester 2.

6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade
Homeroom/Advisory	Homeroom/Advisory	Homeroom/Advisory
Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
Math	Math	Math
Science	Science	Physical Science
Tools for Learning/Healthy Living	Healthy Living/Elective	Healthy Living/Elective
English & Language Arts	English & Language Arts	English & Language Arts
Elective/Elective	Elective/Elective	Elective/Elective

Instructions for online elective course requests:

- Go to the Vashon Island School District website: www.vashonsd.org. Choose the Skyward Family Access icon on the top right and log in with your school ID and password.
- Once you are logged in, choose *Schedule* in the blue menu box on the left. Click on *Student's name: Requests Now Open* on the right side, above this year's schedule. You will see a list of elective courses. Click on *Request Courses*, make your selection and click *Add*. Students will choose **three** electives. Courses added will show an *R* in front of the course name, which means it is a request.
- Click on *Request Alternates* and following the same steps, choose **five**, in rank order of importance. When the course is added, it will show a number in front of the course name, which notes whether it is a first, second, third, fourth or fifth alternate selection. **All students MUST request Alternate classes.**
- Once you have chosen your electives and alternates, click on the little red *X* on the top right.
- To view or edit choices go to *schedule*, then choose *student name: view requests for 2025-2026 school year*.

Course selections must be entered by **Monday, April 28**

SIXTH GRADE CORE CLASS INFORMATION 2025-2026

ENGLISH 6 (full year): In 6th Grade English Language Arts (ELA), students explore the topic of “coming-of-age” through texts that feature protagonists from diverse backgrounds, places, and time periods, all of whom face significant challenges as they struggle to define their identities and claim their place in the world: Oak, Where the Mountain Meets the Moon, The Golden Goblet, Weslandia, and additional supporting texts: articles, poems, and digital media. Throughout the year, students deepen their writing skills using the Evidence Based Writing approach through response to literature, argumentative, and narrative tasks. Students will continue to build their academic vocabularies, speaking and listening competencies. Throughout the year, students address ELA Common Core Standards as they engage with increasingly complex texts, participate in class discussions, and write daily.

SOCIAL STUDIES (full year): Sixth grade Social Studies focuses on ancient world history. The curriculum begins with the study of basic geography, map reading skills and the Five Themes of Geography. Next students develop their understanding of anthropology and archaeology. From there, we study the Agricultural Revolution and the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, Greece, and Rome. Each unit has its own guiding questions that connect the ancient world to our lives today. Students participate in simulations and create projects that encompass reading, writing, research, oral presentations, and the visual arts.

Pre-Algebra I (full year): Pre-Algebra I will focus on four critical areas: (1) Connecting ratio and rates to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratios and rates to solve problems; (2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers, and multiplying and dividing rational numbers, (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking. In addition, the following seventh grade content will be taught in 6 th grade: integers, their meaning, graphs and operations; and prime factorization. Students will also learn certain two and three dimensional geometric concepts.

SCIENCE 6 (full year): This course utilizes OpenSciEd's phenomenon-based, three-dimensional approach to middle school science, focusing on student-led inquiry and investigation to build scientific understanding through real-world problems and questions. Units for the year may include:

- Light & Matter
- Thermal Energy
- Weather, Climate, & Water Cycling
- Plate Tectonics & Rock Cycling
- Natural Hazards
- Cells & Systems

Instruction is rooted in Universal Design for Learning, and centers around inquiry-based projects incorporated into class activities. Learning activities include teacher-led instruction, group work, independent student work, project-based learning, and lab exercises.

HEALTHY LIVING (1 semester): This course is the combination of Physical Education and Health. Students rotate throughout the week between PE activity in the gym and Health activity in the classroom. The Healthy Living program consists of two main components: Health and Skill related fitness. In the 6 th grade the focus of the program is physical activity and heart health. Study within Health - related Fitness consists of how to develop and maintain an active lifestyle supported by fitness activity. Within Skill - related fitness skill development in sports, dance and recreational activity is the emphasis. Opportunities for cooperative learning and group work are created through play and competition in PE as well in the

classroom working on projects. Social and emotional skill building is an emphasis in the Healthy Living program especially with the use of various well-being and stress management activities and the sexuality curriculum Get Real.

TOOLS FOR LEARNING (1 Semester): What are the tools that you need for your journey through middle and high school in order to create the future that you want for yourself? In this course, the focus will be on these essential tools: (1) knowing and understanding yourself, (2) connecting with others for support and connection, (3) analog resources, and technology.

In an effort to better know and understand yourself and connect your education and what you do *now* to your future goals, this course includes a Career Exploration Unit. As we learn more about how to use technology as a useful, effective, and efficient tool for success, we will build our skills in Google Workspace for Education (formerly known as Google Suite) and in navigating Skyward. Additionally, we will develop greater keyboard automaticity, technology safety, and digital citizenship. This class is project-based. Students will learn a variety of skills related to file management, research skills, digital portfolios, technology ethics, keyboarding, Google Drive, graphics, robotics, technology safety, word processing, spreadsheets, multimedia presentations, website validity and programming.

SEVENTH GRADE CORE CLASS INFORMATION 2025-2026

ENGLISH (full year): In 7th grade Language Arts, we gain greater proficiency in reading, writing, researching, speaking, and listening. A special emphasis will be placed on independent choice reading and students will read more than they have ever read before! Students will delve into a wide variety of writing: literary analysis, poetry, plays, fiction, and non-fiction. We will write often in order to build our writing fluency. Conventions of writing, with a focus on accurate spelling, punctuation, and capitalization will be taught and applied to our written work. In this course, we will also develop vocabulary through reading, writing, and word study. Students will leave this course with a greater command over the English language while also having a deeper appreciation and fondness for the art of language.

SOCIAL STUDIES (full year): In 7th grade Social Studies, the first semester focuses on the World from 600-1450 CE and the second semester is Washington State History. We will be “traveling” along the Silk Road and other trade routes to see how this was a world connected by trade, but also facilitated the dissemination of ideas and disease. Stops along our route will be Medieval Africa and Dar al Islam, the vast empire of the Mongols and then Medieval Europe/Japan. We will conclude with Mesoamerica. In Washington State History, students study the history of Washington as it applies to geographic, political, economic, and cultural perspectives. The overarching theme for the year is looking at the ways people have told their stories (music, art, dance, written word, oral history, poetry, etc) and working to develop strong analytical and communication skills so students can connect with others and share their stories.

Pre-Algebra II (full year): In Pre-Algebra II, instructional time will focus on four critical areas: (1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers (fractions and decimals) and working with expressions and linear equations; (3) solving problems involving scale drawing and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three- dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples.

SCIENCE (full year): This course utilizes OpenSciEd's phenomenon-based, three-dimensional approach to middle school science, focusing on student-led inquiry and investigation to build scientific understanding through real-world problems and questions. Units for the year may include:

- Chemical Reactions & Matter
- Chemical Reactions & Energy
- Metabolic Reactions
- Matter Cycling & Photosynthesis
- Ecosystem Dynamics & Biodiversity
- Earth's Resources & Human Impact

Instruction is rooted in Universal Design for Learning, and centers around inquiry-based projects incorporated into class activities. Learning activities include teacher-led instruction, group work, independent student work, project-based learning, and lab exercises.

HEALTHY LIVING (1 semester): Students continue to develop competence in modified versions of various games and recreational activities. Students will develop responsible personal and social behaviors by demonstrating decision-making skills, conflict resolution skills, and respect for others. Students achieve and maintain personal fitness standards and set reasonable goals for improvement or maintenance of health-related fitness. Students learn to refine their critical-thinking skills, analyze health information and products, define their values, set boundaries, and maintain healthy relationships.

EIGHTH GRADE CORE CLASS INFORMATION 2025-2026

ENGLISH 8 (full year): Students analyze and respond to a variety of texts: short stories, novels, and poetry, connecting these texts to their lives, their studies, and current events. Students determine the theme, supporting their opinions with evidence, examples, and experiences. In addition to reading and responding to shared texts, students will read and respond to self-chosen books. The writing process in this class is both collaborative and independent. Students write concise essays and hone their grammar skills asynchronously using "Quill". Students also refine speaking and listening via speeches and presentations.

SOCIAL STUDIES 8 (full year): In 8th grade, social studies focuses on United States history from the Revolution through Reconstruction, with themes illustrating the cyclical nature of history and an emphasis on the Constitution and current events. Projects will incorporate reading, writing, research, oral presentations, national and political issues, and the visual arts. Students will complete shorter and longer research papers, with an emphasis on process as much as product. Vocabulary, geography, logic, and thinking skills are included in social studies. Students will use specific skills and strategies to read information texts for a variety of purposes

PRE-ALGEBRA III (full year): This course is designed to strengthen the math skills of students in need of more preparation before taking on the higher level demands and challenges of Algebra I. The topics and much of the content are the same in this course as in Algebra I, but the pacing, activities and assignments, in and out of class demands, are structured to serve the student in need of one more year of foundational work before moving on. Students successfully completing this course advance to high school Algebra I next course in the math sequence.

ALGEBRA I (full year): Algebra I, a full year math course required for high school graduation, is a powerful tool with far-reaching applications that will extend throughout a student's life. This course, which is

equivalent to first year high school algebra, is an integral part in developing mathematical skills and problem solving strategies needed to form a solid foundation for subsequent high school math and science courses. This course content, pacing, in and out of class activities and assignments, are at a high school level. Placement in this course is based on numerous data points, current achievement in math and math assessment scores. Parents will be notified of Algebra placement via email by mid-May. Students completing this course successfully who wish to advance to high school geometry as a freshman must have their Algebra I grade posted to their high school transcript.

HEALTHY LIVING (1 semester): This course is the combination of Physical Education and Health. Students rotate throughout the week between PE activity and Health activity in the classroom. The Healthy Living program consists of two main components: Health and Skill related fitness. In the 8th grade the focus of the program is movement and nutritional health. Study within Health - related fitness consists of how to eat well to be well. This is complemented with exercise in PE; the goal being to learn how to feed an active body with a balanced diet. Within Skill - related fitness the emphasis is on play and competition through tournaments. Building on Healthy Living, 8th grade spends a great deal of time working with social and emotional learning using various stress-management and well-being activities and the sexuality curriculum Get Real. Group work, role playing and refusal skills are integrated into the prevention and sexuality units.

Science (Full Year): This course utilizes OpenSciEd's phenomenon-based, three-dimensional approach to middle school science, focusing on student-led inquiry and investigation to build scientific understanding through real-world problems and questions. Units for the year may include:

- Light & Matter
- Thermal Energy
- Weather, Climate, & Water Cycling
- Plate Tectonics & Rock Cycling
- Natural Hazards
- Cells & Systems

Instruction is rooted in Universal Design for Learning, and centers around inquiry-based projects incorporated into class activities. Learning activities include teacher-led instruction, group work, independent student work, project-based learning, and lab exercises.

ELECTIVES

All elective classes are one semester except Band and Spanish I (full year)

WORLD LANGUAGES ELECTIVES

Spanish I (8th grade only, FULL YEAR - High School Credited) This two-semester course is designed for the novice speaker to gain fluency through active participation. Students will be able to ask and answer basic questions on familiar topics and will generate simple stories and descriptive writing using high-frequency words and phrases as they progress toward the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages "Novice Mid" proficiency level. Students will be able to produce a modest number of written words and phrases with a high degree of accuracy on familiar topics. Daily participation and engagement are essential. The goal is to advance students toward the "Novice Mid" proficiency level as defined by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

PERFORMING ARTS ELECTIVES

Drama: (6-8) Students will develop the basics of acting and performance production through projects including games, partner and small-group scenes. Students will develop skills in several areas, including physicality, voice, imagination, characterization, focus, teamwork, and memorization. Emphasis will be on developing confidence in performing for an audience.

Mustang Band: For students in 6th grade or in their first year of band. Taking band will not be eligible for an additional elective this year as band is a year-long class. Emphasis will be on music reading skills and the proper care and maintenance of a musical instrument. Students will perform in Winter, Spring, and Pops concerts. Scholarships are available for instrument rental.

Symphonic Band: For students in 7th & 8th grade. Symphonic Band is a year-long class for continuing band students. Emphasis is on skill building, solo playing, and working as a group. Students improve music reading ability and will perform in Winter, Spring, and Pops concerts. Scholarships are available for instrument rental.

Choir: (6-8) Choir class will cover the topics of singing as an ensemble, reading music, ear-training, music theory and history, and audience/performance etiquette. Students will learn and practice proper breathing techniques, posture, tone production, diction, and vocal warm-ups. The class will cover basic music theory concepts such as rhythm, melody, harmony, and sight-reading. Choral Music: Students will study and perform a variety of choral music, including songs in different styles, languages, and historical periods. Performance: The choir will participate in concerts and other performance opportunities throughout the year.

VISUAL ARTS ELECTIVES

Basic Art: (6-8) Want to create art?! Get an introduction into drawing, printmaking, paper cutting, ink painting, clay, and much more.

Ceramics: (6-8) This class is all about clay! You will learn a variety of hand building, wheel throwing, and decorative techniques while creating functional and sculptural objects out of clay. Projects include: creative pinch pots, coil pots, tile making, relief carving, ancient and modern pottery styles, as well as many projects of choice! This class may be taken multiple times.

Digital Photograph: (6-8) This class takes an advanced look into traditional and non-traditional digital photography. By the end of this class, you will be able to take high quality photos and be able to edit at an advanced level. Projects will include landscapes, portraits, still lifes, and the use of different lighting techniques.

Graphic Design (6-8) This is a project-based class that will introduce you to various graphic arts and design concepts including logo design, origami, comic art, map design, collage, block printing, digital design and much more. Painting, drawing, marker, oil-pastel, and other techniques are learned in class. Students may use the elements and principles of art to create different types of art. Typography portraiture, screen printing, calligraphy, digital illustration, and web design may be learned in this course.

LEGO Design Elective: Build, Create, Connect! (6-8) Ready to boost your mood, reduce stress, and let your creativity run wild? In this fun and hands-on elective, you'll have the chance to design and build your very own LEGO creations! You'll express your personality through your unique designs, be in charge of your projects, and even create your own LEGO kit for younger students at Chautauqua Elementary. Along the way, you'll meet new people and have a blast working together in a team. Whether you're a seasoned builder or just getting started, this class is all about building your ideas and having fun!

Intro to Woodworking Technology: (6-8) Learn the basics of hand and bench top power tool use and safety in regards to wood. Design, then use your skills to build items such as: a sign, a trivet, a step stool, or a simple box. (CTE/STEM)

Makerspace: (6-8) This class is an engineering and building challenge. Students will work together as a class to build a quarter-sized basketball key, backboard and hoop. Then, in teams, they will design and build machines that are able to throw a mini-basketball and score a basket from the freethrow line. Of course, the culmination of the entire class will be a shoot-off to see whose machines best satisfy the challenge. Have fun tinkering, creating and being inspired by your classmates and teacher!

PHYSICAL EDUCATION ELECTIVES

Basic Mountain Biking: (6-8) You will learn riding techniques, trail safety and courtesy, basic trailside bike repair and trail maintenance. This class is designed for the beginning mountain bike rider. We will ride daily. Students are required to have a functioning mountain bike. Helmets are MANDATORY. (CTE/STEM)

Tournament Sports and Conditioning: (6-8) This is a PE class where we will play sports and learn and practice fitness and conditioning skills and habits. For example, we will do weight lifting for beginners, running (longer and shorter distances), circuits, fitness games and more. Sports will vary, depending on weather and facility availability. The course will be approximately half conditioning and half sports. The conditioning skills will improve the level of sport, as well as help young athletes prepare for their future.

MISCELLANEOUS ELECTIVES

Food 101: Intro to Cooking (6-8) This class is an introduction to the basics of cooking where students will learn the practical aspects of cooking, including ingredient choice and selection, cooking hygiene, measurement in the kitchen, and working with a culinary team. Students will learn and demonstrate kitchen safety by earning their Food Handlers Card. Dishes prepared include batters, breads, savory dishes, and desserts. (CTE/STEM)

Food 102: Global Foods (7-8) This course builds on the skills learned in Food 101 while learning about food, tradition, and culture through a global lens. Students will learn and demonstrate kitchen safety by earning their Food Handlers Card. Restaurant and hospitality skills such as knife skills, recipe development, and restaurant kitchen management and etiquette will be emphasized. Appreciation for and curiosity of the origins of cultural food traditions from around the world is a must. Students will learn to recognize and appreciate, indigenous plants, foods, and people around the world at our communal table. (CTE/STEM)

Office/Teacher Assistant: (8th grade only) Students assist the office staff with attendance, telephones, messages, and greeting visitors. Confidentiality and good attendance are a must. Counselors will work with office/teachers to best match students to the TA position that is the best fit for the student and staff.

Outdoor Living and Environmental Studies: (6-8) This course takes students outside to explore aspects of the environment, and in a hands-on manner learn what sustainability means to them. Students will learn basic engineering principles of framing and construction, as well as sustainable living practices through gardening. Students can expect to spend lots of time outside regardless of the weather, and are encouraged to keep an extra change of clothing and a pair of boots at school for the duration of this class. (CTE/STEM)

READ. WRITE. DRAW (6-8)

Are you in need of a quiet space during your school day where you can read, write, draw, or engage in another creative, independent pursuit (crochet, knit, collage, putting a puzzle together...)? If so, this elective may be a good fit for you. Of course, you may also choose to use this class period to complete schoolwork. It will be your choice how to use this time in a way that benefits you. However, computer use

will only be permitted for specific school work assignments or creative writing pursuits, and only with teacher permission.

SOAR/ Sudy. Organize. Achieve. Reflect. (6-8)

Get ready to SOAR to new academic heights! Are you feeling overwhelmed by your busy schedule and drowning in homework? Wish you could find more time to tackle school work and banish disorganization for good? Look no further! The SOAR elective offers the ultimate support system for conquering even the toughest classes. Seeking efficient study methods and organization? The SOAR elective provides vital support, tackling tough classes with proven strategies. Dive into critical thinking and collaboration with our expert squad. Access personalized tutoring and enriching activities for post-middle school success. Join SOAR to build leadership and excel academically!

Sociology 101: (6-8) In this semester-long course we will analyze how social forces shape human behavior and how individuals shape society. Topics will include culture, social interactions, and inequities in society through an exploration of advertising, social media, music, film and literature. Topics of study depend on students' interest, but often include various Rights Movements, Pop Culture, Sports Culture, Socialization, Social Status and more. Students develop their own views based on input from a number of sources and activities such as art, graphic journaling, discussion and guest speakers from our community.

Speech and Debate: (6-8) Do you enjoy academic debates and the art of persuasion? Do you want to be more comfortable and skilled at speaking in public? Do you enjoy rich dialogue about important topics? If any of these are true, this is the course for you. In this Speech and Debate elective, we will learn techniques for effective research and approaches for organizing our ideas. We will practice our speaking skills and deepen our ability to look at all sides of an issue. You will have an opportunity to develop your persuasive speaking skills and delve into important, current issues, to spend class time researching, debating, persuading, and giving speeches. In this course we will explore many speaking styles but definitely will focus on Lincoln Douglas, Model UN and Mock Trial.

McMurray Middle School 2025-2026 Electives Request Form

Elective Course Selection Form should be used **ONLY** if you are not able to register via Skyward Family Access **AND** unable to complete the [Google Form](#).

Student Name _____ Grade in 25-26 school year: _____

These elective choices are for the 25-26 school year.

Choose **three** electives as your first choices, then choose and rank order **five** alternative classes.

My first choices are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My alternative choices are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Parent Name _____ Date _____

Please return this page to McMurray via email to tvickers@vashonsd.org