



Dear 5th Grade Families,

On behalf of the Middle School staff, we are so excited to welcome your student into the Middle School next year! The Middle School experience is special, and there are a number of ways in which your student's school experience will change with this transition. In order to help families prepare for these changes, we have put together information on some topics that we generally receive inquiries about. Our staff is here to support your family and your child during this time, so please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions that you might have. Again, welcome to the Woodside Middle School family! We are so excited to embark on this journey with you.

Warm regards,

Steve Frank and Jenn Pedersen

Schedules

Incoming 6th Grade students can expect a smooth transition into 6th grade and having a schedule with up to a dozen teachers. Our 5th grade teachers do a fantastic job of preparing their students for Middle School and how to navigate being a student in many different classrooms. Woodside School's 6th grade students take part in project-based learning that is naturally differentiated. In addition, collaboration between Middle School teachers allows for the integration of Design Thinking and Social-Emotional Learning.

Students will transition between classes for each subject area. We operate on a modified block schedule. Traditionally, students have eight 43-minute periods on Mondays and Tuesdays, seven 43-minute periods on the early release Wednesdays, and four 86-minute double periods on Thursdays and Fridays. These longer periods allow for important instruction, such as Science labs, projects, etc.

6th grade students can expect to take the following classes:

- English-Language Arts
- Ability-Grouped Accelerated Mathematics (6th and First Half of 7th Grade Mathematics)
- Science
- Social Studies
- Mandarin or Spanish
- Physical Education
- Music
- Art

Class Placements

All 6th grade students are placed into accelerated ability-groupings for mathematics. All of the sections will complete the first book in the Big Ideas Math series. This means that all 6th grade students will complete 6th/7A grade Common Core math. Small class sizes and the grouping of students who are similar in their mathematical development allow for differentiation. All math groupings are made based upon several assessments, including CAASPP testing, MARS assessments, and grades. Students who achieve beyond or below their ability-group will be moved when appropriate. These groupings are flexible, and allow for movement at the beginning of the year when our Middle School math teachers further assess the students, so parents and students should not worry about the initial placement. For more information, please visit the [Middle School Math Pathways](#) page.

Additionally, students are grouped into cohorts, which will serve as their class groupings for ELA, Science, Social Studies, PE, Art, and Music. Cohorts may differ for World Language, and Math, given the different pathways that these areas of study present.

Community Service

Woodside Middle School embraces service-learning to enrich and deepen students' experiential education. Each 6th, 7th, and 8th grade student should participate in community service each year, and a minimum of 30 hours is required by graduation. This community service can be focused on our school and local community, as well as on neighboring communities and beyond.

Students have opportunities to earn hours by serving their own school in the form of teacher aides, recess and lunch peer leaders, assistant coaches for school sports teams, and various other leadership roles. In these capacities, the students will have the opportunity to cooperatively assist teachers, lead younger students, acquire administrative skills, and

develop leadership skills, while at the same time learning about what it means to serve others. The goal in providing these opportunities is to help students gain confidence and satisfaction in serving others and to explore their interests and passions in leadership and service beyond Woodside School.

Outside of the school-sponsored projects, Middle School students are encouraged to develop their own special interests in community service. Students may earn hours by working individually with their families, youth groups, or any other organization that performs community service.

Progress Monitoring

Middle School teachers use [PowerSchool](#) to regularly update students' grades on assignments and assessments. This platform is a great tool for students and families to monitor progress across subject areas. PowerSchool login information will be sent home at the beginning of the next school year.