

# Pilot School News

January 16, 2026 | Volume #9



## UPCOMING EVENTS >>>

### January 19, 2026

No School – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

### January 22, 2026

Parent Forum – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Como Park Pathway @ Como Park High School  
5:00pm – 7:00pm

### January 28, 2026

Showcase  
5:30pm – 7:30pm

### January 30, 2026

No School – Professional Day

### February 2, 2026

Murray PACT Meeting  
5:00pm – 6:30pm

### February 9, 2026

Murray PTO Meeting  
6:00pm – 7:15pm

### February 16, 2026

No School – Presidents Day

### February 19, 2026

7<sup>th</sup> Grade Vision Screening

*The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members. Coretta Scott King*

The support and outpouring of effort from our community to ensure our students are getting their needs met has been amazing. I say this often and I will say it again, the strength of our community is one of the greatest reasons I feel so honored to serve at Murray Middle School. Thank you to everyone for all gestures and efforts big and small. We know that families are feeling immense pressure at this time. We will always support our students and families in any way that we can and will continue to offer great opportunities for learning and growth despite the challenges we currently face. Please connect with our Murray counseling team if you have questions.

I want to share what a wonderful experience we had with our four feeder elementary schools. Chelsea Heights, Hamline, Como and SAP all sent their 5th grade classes to Murray to spend two hours doing fun activities, meeting students, getting questions answered, doing a funny dance with me and touring Murray. What a great group of Area E students! We can't wait to welcome them through our front doors next August as our new 6th grade Murray Pilots. Thank you to the elementary schools for supporting this effort as we want to continue to strengthen our pathway from elementary school to middle school.

I hope everyone has a safe weekend. We will be ready for our Murray Pilots on Thursday.

### Celebrations:

[#Pilotprops](#) of the week! Ms. Haas would like to celebrate Sapphire Flowers. Sapphire is an outstanding Art student. She engages with all work that is introduced and persists in learning as much as she can take in. She is reflective, observant and helps her classmates at every opportunity.

Your Co-Pilot,

Jamin McKenzie  
Principal, Murray Middle School



## Sixth Grade

### **Earth Science with Ms. Atkinson and Ms. Crowley:**

All 6<sup>th</sup> grade earth science students took a trip to the Como Planetarium in January where we learned about patterns of the sun over the year, Dakota and Ojibwe constellations, and how Indigenous people used the stars to navigate. Then, they worked together to paddle a virtual canoe at Bdote. We also learned about a significant place in southwestern Minnesota called the Jeffers Petroglyphs. We will learn how it is connected to the sun in our new unit in science called "Space: Patterns of the Sun, Moon, and Stars".



## Seventh Grade

### **Life Science with Ms. Dooley and Mr. Altringer:**

The Life Science classes are wrapping up their Cells and Healing unit. We completed a full day of labs where we learned how materials and food move into and out of cells. Next up: Genetics — How things look like they do.

## Eighth Grade

### **Math with Mr. Hayden:**

In Algebra, students are working on solving inequalities. We have observed that this is quite similar to solving equations; something we have already had a lot of practice with. However, there are a few subtle differences. One of which is that the solution to an equation is typically a single value, whereas inequalities include multiple solutions. Due to the differences in how our solutions look, we have learned to represent them on a number line. This involves three parts- establishing the end point (essentially what separates the solutions from the non-solutions), whether that endpoint should be a shaded or unshaded circle and which direction the arrow should go on. We have tried to connect this to real-life scenarios where these skills can be applied.

In Integrated Math 1, students are finishing up their unit on solving systems of equations and inequalities. With systems of equations, we learned three methods for solving them- graphing, substitution, and elimination. We have discussed which methods are best to use for various situations, but a lot of times it comes down to personal preference. Before we studied systems of inequalities, we had to learn how to graph a singular linear inequality, which includes graphing our boundary line (which is basically the inequality replaced with an equal sign) and determining whether that line should be solid or dashed and whether we shade above or below it. Lastly, we were able to extend this skill to systems of linear inequalities, where there is more than one inequality and we can graph the boundary lines to figure out our solution region lies.

### **Science with Ms. Dooley and Ms. Atkinson:**

The students are just starting their studies of Forces at a Distance. We've been looking, so far this year, at how energy transfers from one object to another when they collide. This unit will look at how forces can transfer energy without touching.

### **Sixth, Seventh, Eighth Comparative Anatomy with Ms. Dooley:**

The students are in the final stretch of the class, studying the wide variety of animals on Earth. We are building our dissecting skills (optional) and looking for how the way that things look not only help them to live in their environment, but also show that they are related to other things.



## PTO Corner

Murray families: The Murray PTO is working to host lunch for educators and staff on Tuesday January 20 and Wednesday, January 21.

If you would like to help with these meals, please refer to this planning document:

Tuesday Soup & Chili Link:  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E084CA5AC2AAAF94-61716089-tuesday#/>

Wednesday Soup & Hot Dish Link:  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E084CA5AC2AAAF94-61717229-wednesday>

If you have any questions, please reach out to Nia Anderson at [yeseniag@gmail.com](mailto:yeseniag@gmail.com).

Thank you!

### Murray Highlights Form

Please share some positive messages to be posted on the PTO Website and shared with the Murray staff.

**Please click [here](#).**

## Athletics

Winter Sports: Boys' Basketball

Please register on Arbiter:  
<https://students.arbitersports.com/st-paul-murray-middle-school>

### Extended Day Learning

Families,

I want to thank you and your students for a successful first session to our Extended Day Learning (EDL) program! This year's EDL saw record numbers of students signed up for classes. As we are coming to a close of the first session, we have some exciting news for our second session of EDL.

I am excited to announce that we will have a cooking class available during the second session. Murray was lucky enough to have a cooking class in the past, but it was lost when our after-school program was moved from four days a week to two days a week. I was lucky enough to get a Donor's Choose submission fully funded over our winter break. Another exciting opportunity we have is for [Girlsontherun.org](http://Girlsontherun.org) to offer a leadership group at Murray.

If your child is interested in changing classes for the second session or wants to join EDL, please complete this Google form. [EDL session 2](#)

I am looking forward to a great second session of EDL

Lise Ciancio  
Murray EDL Site Lead

## Picture Day

School Pictures are Ready!

View and order at  
<https://shop.jostenspix.com/login>

- MURRAY MIDDLE SCHOOL
- Event Code: FE33325

## Spirit Wear

<https://www.threadartmn.com/s/howrooms.htm>

## Tours

Tuesdays, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>,  
February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>  
3:15p.m.  
Check in at office – registration not required

## *Staff Spotlight*



Hello! I grew up in nearby Lauderdale and spent most of my childhood between there and the Chelsea Heights neighborhood. I had a big bike crash coming down the Eustis Street hill from Larpenteur and think of this often on my new drive to work.

I live on the east side of Saint Paul and have three children in SPPS. I have two children in the French Immersion program who will not speak French with me because they don't like my accent. One of my favorite family activities is our continuing Dungeons & Dragon's campaign that began in 2020.

In my free time, I also enjoy bikepacking, mountain biking, camping, traveling, curling, caring for five chickens and working outside on my garden focused on native MN plants. I play the banjo and guitar, mostly in the summer when I can sit outside. I would ride to work every day if it weren't for all the false flats of Como Avenue and Wheelock Parkway...and the snow...

I am great about starting new projects and not so good when it comes to finishing them. I have about 5 odd things going on in the garage at any given time. I also enjoy doodling and wishes I spent more time learning to draw than resenting my social media algorithms for wasting my time.



## Counselors Corner

Here are a few announcements from our counseling team. As a reminder, here is our contact information:

- Ms. Justine Revermann - [justine.revermann@spps.org](mailto:justine.revermann@spps.org) - 651-243-4663 ext. 744052: Student last names A-L
- Ms. Lisa Engelstad – [lisa.engelstad@spps.org](mailto:lisa.engelstad@spps.org) - 651-243-4663 ext. 745675: Student last names M-Z

### **Coats, Hats, Mittens Donation:**

We are always in need of new or gently used/clean jackets, coats, mittens, and hats for our students. If you would like to donate any, please contact one of our social workers or counselors. We greatly appreciate it!

### **Every Meal:**

We have a partnership with EveryMeal and students can pick up free food bags to take home. More information and sign up on the link here or QR Code: <https://forms.gle/JYus6pV3yRTN7ByQ6>.



### **Internet Hot Spots:**

Here's a resource for internet hot spots to check if you're eligible: <https://www.tmobile.com/brand/project-10-million>

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade families:**

Please note that 8<sup>th</sup> graders have information that was posted in Schoology regarding the High School Transition process. It will be in the MMS Class of 2030 folder. This includes information about tours at various high schools (most students go to Como and some may go to Central or Roseville).

Tours and Shadowing (attending high school for a day with a 9<sup>th</sup> grader): Tours are after school starting between 2:45-3:15. Tours last about 40 minutes. Families can contact [jamie.Hoffman@spps.org](mailto:jamie.Hoffman@spps.org) or 651-744-5529 to set up a tour or for you to shadow a 9<sup>th</sup> grader for a half day or day of school! Como Showcase/Open House: January 22 from 5-7 PM at Como HS.





*Como Park  
Senior High School  
Showcase*



*January 22nd 5:00-7:00*

*740 Rose Ave. West*

*Come tour our school and meet  
our staff!*



# RAISE SOME DOUGH

## MURRAY MIDDLE SCHOOL PTO FUNDRAISER

Tuesday, February 10  
4 - 8:30pm

Punch Roseville  
1767 County Rd B2 W

Join us for dine-in or takeout and 20%  
of the proceeds will go back to our organization

**Use Code: MURRAY** when placing your order

Invite Family and Friends!

