



Westonka

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This is an exciting time of the year for your child's K-12 school experience. It is time to begin planning for 8th grade and their arrival at the high school. We look forward to having your student join us at WHS, and our goal is to make the transition to high school smooth for every student academically and socially.

Westonka High School Principal, Jolene Herfel, and 8th Grade School Counselor, Maggie Carlson, will be hosting an 8th Grade Registration Night on Monday, January 26th at 6:30 PM in the Performing Art Center. We invite all incoming 8th grade students and families to attend to learn more about high school course selection.

Attached is the registration form for 8th grade. Required courses are located at the top of the form.

- **English/Social:** Advanced English 8 and Advanced Social Studies 8 are interdisciplinary courses. Therefore, students will be enrolled in both Advanced English 8 and Advanced Social Studies 8 or English 8/English 8 Foundations and Social Studies 8.
 - If your student is being recommended for Adv. English 8, you will see an '**X**' in front of that title. Students in Adv. English 8 should also register for Adv. Social Studies 8. Placement recommendations are based on current performance in similar content area classes, FAST scores and class performance.
 - If your student is being recommended for English 8 Foundations, you will see an '**X**' in front of that title. Students in English 8 Foundations should also register for Social Studies 8. Placement recommendations are based on current performance in similar content area classes, FAST scores and class performance.
 - If your student is being recommended for English 8, you will see an '**X**' in front of English 8. Students in English 8 should also register for Social Studies 8.
- **Math:** Teachers have indicated the appropriate placement for your child. You will see an '**X**' in front of the recommended course title. Placement recommendations are based on current performance in similar content area classes, FAST scores and class performance. Students in self paced math should work with their school counselor to identify the appropriate placement for next year.
- All students will also take **Physical Science, Physical Education, Health 8 and High School Experience.**

These required courses account for 10 of 14 semesters in 8th grade. It leaves 4 semester openings to participate in electives and/or Student Prep Period.

If Student Prep has been indicated on your child's form (with an '**X**' in front of the course title), this recommendation is **strongly** encouraged. Student Prep Period (SPP) can be taken for one or two semesters. It is available and encouraged for all students as they transition to the high school schedule. However, it will be most beneficial to students who are enrolled in numerous rigorous courses, who participate in multiple extracurricular activities, or who have struggled in regards to work completion and



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organization. By taking the SPP, students are given more time to transition and develop organizational skills early in high school, which better prepares them for more rigorous courses the following years.

The middle section of the registration form lists elective options for your child to choose from. Full Year (two semesters) elective options include: Concert Band, Cantabile Chorus, Bel Canto Chorus, Spanish I, American Sign Language I and PLTW Intro to Engineering. When considering a world language, it is highly recommended that students who choose a world language in 8th grade have strong reading and English skills, as well as good work habits.

Single semester elective options include: Intro to Theater 8, Intro to Business, STEM Tech & Engineering, 8th Grade Studio Art Foundations, 2nd semester Drawing & Painting I or Ceramics I (must take 8th Grade Art Foundations S1). For more detail on any of the courses, please refer to the course catalog located on the WHS School Counseling website under [ACADEMICS > CURRICULUM](#).

Special Education case managers have indicated specific course selections for students on their caseload.

WMS school counselors will be visiting your child's classroom to go over the registration form, process, and course selection the week of Jan 20. Your child will receive their registration materials to bring home on Friday, Jan 23rd. Students will register online during the Morning Meeting on Thursday, January 29th. Do not register online at home.

If you have any questions about the registration process, feel free to connect with your child's WMS School Counselors or 8th Grade Counselor, Maggie Carlson.

- Jessica Larson (952.491.8358 or larsonj2@westonka.k12.mn.us)
- Katie LoScalzo (952.491.8302 or loscalzok@westonka.k12.mn.us)
- Maggie Carlson (952.491.8118 or carlsonm1@westonka.k12.mn.us)

We look forward to your student attending WHS next year and having you partner in your student's education. We will do everything we can to make his/her 8th grade year, the best one yet!

Sincerely,

Jolene Herfel, Principal
Westonka High School