Hixson Middle School

6th Grade Course Descriptions
and
Guide to Student Program Planning

2026 - 2027

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RESPECT | POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS | TEAMWORK

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians:

The mission of Hixson Middle School is to develop confident and responsible citizens who contribute to a rapidly changing world by valuing diversity, education, and the pursuit of their personal passions. Because of this, we proudly offer challenging and interesting courses, programs, and activities that we are excited to share with you in the 2026-2027 school year!

The following *Course Description and Guide to Student Program Planning* is provided to all students to assist in planning course work for next year. Inside you will find the course descriptions offered to Hixson students. In order to take advantage of this valuable tool, it is essential that both guardians and students thoroughly review the contents. **Please read the information thoroughly and make your selections carefully. All course requests are final.** Staffing and scheduling are based on your course selections; therefore, making your choices wisely is very important. Your choices are one of the most important factors that go into our planning for the upcoming school year, so we thank you in advance for thoughtfully selecting courses and taking this process seriously.

Your counselor will be happy to answer any further questions you may have. Please feel free to contact your grade-level counselor directly.

Mrs. Scharma Banks
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314-918-4553

The teachers, counselors, administrators, and staff at Hixson Middle School are looking forward to meeting you next school year!

Sincerely,

Shenita Mayes

Dr. Shenita Mayes
Building Principal

Mr. Ben Flunker
Grade Level Principal

******** We hire staff and build schedules based on course requests. As a result, all course requests are FINAL. ********

Schedule Planning Guidelines

The Webster Groves District secondary schools offer a balanced program of required and elective subjects designed to prepare students to satisfy their personal and social needs as well as to meet the economic, civic, and social demands of our complex world.

Some subjects are required of all students. These are subjects that provide basic understandings, knowledge, skills and attitudes that are the foundation of our social, civic, and economic life. These subjects constitute the base of the broad educational program essential for all students.

The elective subjects provide opportunities for the exploration and development of new fields of interest and for the further development of special interests and abilities already discovered in elementary school. The elective program, like the required program, contributes to the general education of students, enriching the educational experience and strengthening self-confidence and poise through satisfying academic achievement.

Sound guidance in planning your program of study is essential in both the middle and senior high schools. Among the elective subjects, select those that will contribute the most satisfaction to your personal goals.

Hixson Middle School provides special sections of some classes for the purpose of adjusting the program to the ability and interest of students. Students are assigned to these classes on the basis of examination, previous records, and staff recommendations. Teachers and counselors are available to help students plan their programs. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment to discuss any questions about program planning.

In planning a program, it is important to consider your non-academic workload when selecting your subjects. Music lessons, club activities, sports, and home responsibilities are all important factors to consider when planning your schedule.

Mathematics Course Placement

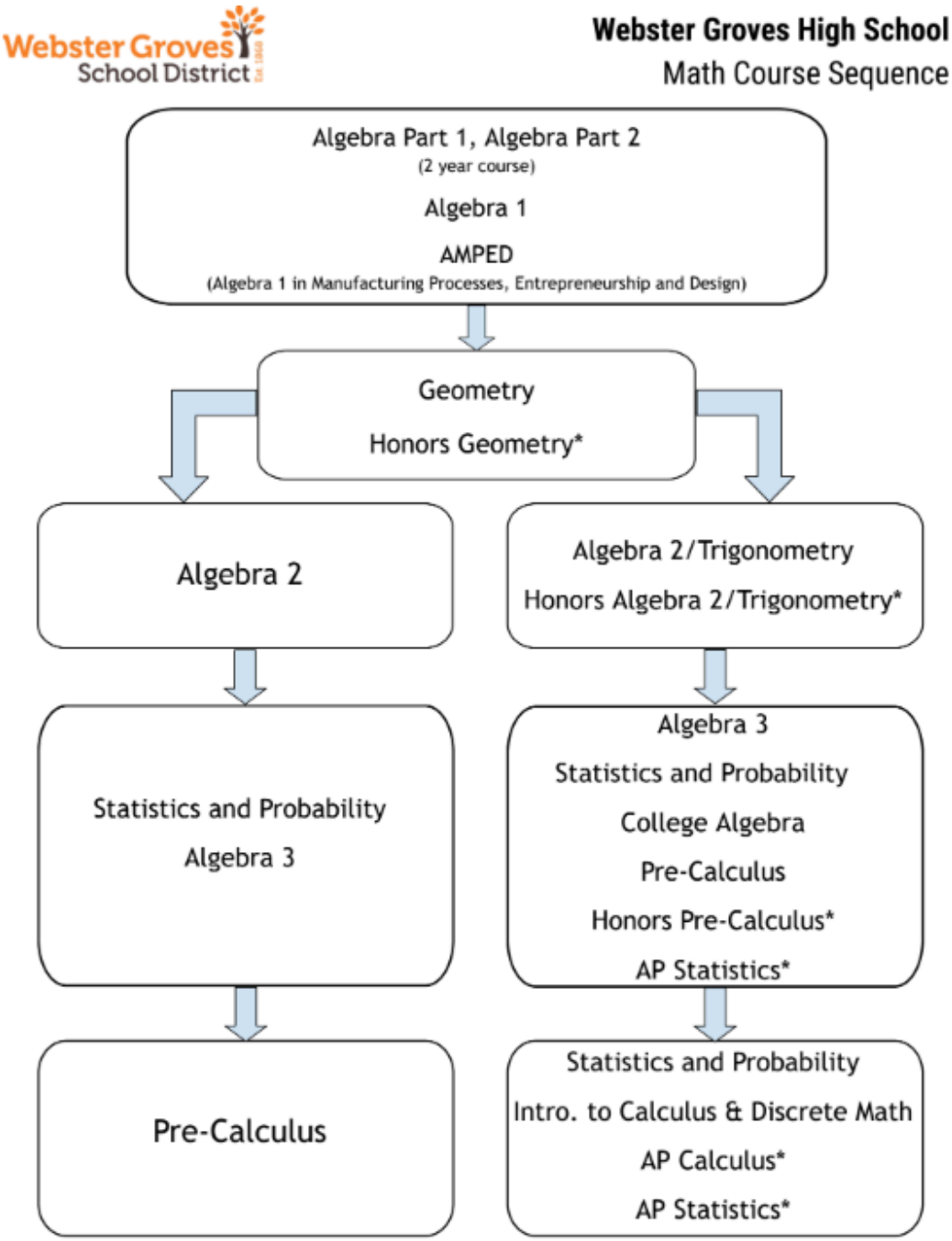
For more information on math placement, please visit: https://www.webster.k12.mo.us/learning/math/course-placement.

In 5th grade, we begin to assess students for 6th grade math course placement. The majority of 6th grade students will take Math 6. A very small number of 6th grade students who show proficiency of the Math 6 curriculum will be placed in Math 7.

All 5th grade students will take a Math 6 End of Course Assessment. Students who show proficiency of the Math 6 curriculum will have the option to be placed in Math 7 as their core math class.

Students who are placed in Math 6 and passionate about math have the option to choose Math 7 as an elective, taken in conjunction with Math 6.

All 6th grade students taking Math 7 must maintain a 75% or higher average in order to remain in the course.



*denotes a weighted grade class

Sixth Grade Course Offerings

REQUIRED COURSES

The following courses are required and each make up one period of a student's seven-period schedule:

- English Language Arts 6
- Math 6 or Math 7 (based on District placement criteria)
- Science 6
- Social Studies 6 or Gifted Social Studies 6 (based on District placement criteria)
- Physical Education/Health 6

ELECTIVE COURSES

Two elective courses will complete a student's seven-period schedule. Students may choose one of the following combination of classes:

- two music classes,
- one music class and one discovery wheel, or
- two discovery wheels.

Music

- Beginning Band
- Choir 6 or Advanced Choir (based on District placement criteria)*
- Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced Orchestra (based on District placement criteria)*

**Auditions for Advanced Choir and Intermediate or Advanced Orchestra may be required; choose the course you would like to take and the Choir or Orchestra teacher will contact you regarding auditions, if necessary.*

Humanities Discovery Wheel (students take all four classes)

- Art Exploration
- World Languages
- Drama Discovery
- Family and Consumer Sciences Discovery

STEAM Discovery Wheel (students take all four classes)

- Elements of Engineering
- Intro to Sustainability
- Intro to Computer Science
- Makerspace

Gifted Fine Arts

Students who met district criteria for GFA will take this class as a semester or full-year elective. If electing to take GFA for a semester, students will select two classes from one of the wheels to fill the other semester.

Math 7 - Full Year Course

(Students who did not meet the placement criteria to enroll in Math 7 may take it as an elective course.)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special School District staff provide Special Education services for any student who currently has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Academic and/or behavioral services may be implemented in a variety of settings based upon the student's individual needs. Settings may include consultative monitoring, class-within-a-class or special education classes. Students who receive Special Education services may follow a modified schedule in order to maintain their individualized program. Scheduling is based upon each student's IEP.

Course Descriptions

REQUIRED COURSES

M1000 English Language Arts 6

The sixth grade English Language Arts class continues to develop the reading, writing, listening and speaking skills of students through the workshop model. Over the course of the year, students engage in the writing process to produce narrative, informational, and argumentative writing pieces. In addition, students cultivate a reading identity and share their thinking with peers in a variety of ways. Targeted mini lessons aim to lift the level of students' reading and writing skills. Students use class time to independently apply skills and strategies in their reading and writing. Teachers actively confer with students about their individualized goals, which furthers students' growth as lifelong readers and writers.

M1010 Math 6

Instructional time will focus on four critical areas: (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate 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; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking.

M1200 Math 7
Prerequisite: District Placement Criteria

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

M1020 Science 6

Sixth grade science students will explore concepts related to ecology and earth science. Throughout the school year, students will study matter and energy in organisms and ecosystems, interdependent relationships in ecosystems, natural selection and adaptations, the history of the Earth, Earth's systems, and the human impacts on Earth systems.

M1030 Social Studies 6

Students will continue their journey through the history of the United States that they started in 4th and 5th grade. 6th graders will begin by reviewing the causes and consequences of the Civil War and continue with Reconstruction through 1946. This course delves into the history of the United States through multiple cultural lenses. Students will engage in a curriculum that integrates all the stories of the people who contributed to the diverse landscape of our country after the Civil War. The curriculum is divided into 6 Units that focus on major themes: Politics and Citizenship (Reconstruction), Transformation and Change (Industrialization, Westward Expansion and Immigration), Reform (Progressive Era), Globalization (WWI), Changes in culture and economy

(1920's and 1930's), and Defending Democracy (WWII). Learning materials for each thematic unit acknowledge the different learning modalities among students and include primary source documents, maps, charts, graphs, the United States Constitution, and digital resources.

M1035 Gifted Social Studies 6
Prerequisite: District Placement Criteria

This course is for students who participate in the district's gifted program. Learning goals and targets for the class have been developed by incorporating the WGSD Social Studies and Gifted curricula, creating a unique class with content and teaching methods for this special population of students. Much of our Gifted curricular goals will be met through our social studies work, but we will also incorporate projects and activities during the year which will specifically address Gifted needs.

M1060 Physical Education/Health 6

Physical Education is designed to help students develop a love for physical activity and to instill in them the importance of a sound mind and body. Through Physical Education, students will obtain skills, abilities, and attitudes to participate successfully in lifetime activities. Physical Fitness and Health topics will be integrated throughout the program and will build upon the skills and topics learned in 5th grade.

ELECTIVE COURSES

Two elective courses will complete a student's seven-period schedule. Students may choose one of the following combination of classes:

- two music classes,
- one music class and one discovery wheel, or
- two discovery wheels.

Music

M6002 Beginning Band - Woodwind Instruments

This course is for sixth/seventh grade students interested in playing a woodwind instrument (flute and clarinet). Students start with the basics of becoming familiar with their musical instruments (assembly, proper finger placement, tone production and breathing). Students progress in their knowledge of reading music, beginning with basic note/pitch identification and ending with more complex compositions of music. Daily practice is required. Clarinet students have the opportunity to audition for saxophone after the Winter Concert in December.

M6004 Beginning Band - Brass Instruments

This course is for sixth/seventh grade students interested in playing a brass instrument (Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Baritone). Students start with the basics of becoming familiar with their musical instruments (assembly, proper finger placement, tone production and breathing). Students progress in their knowledge of

reading music, beginning with basic note/pitch identification and ending with more complex compositions of music. Daily practice is required.

M6006 Beginning Band - Percussion Instruments
Prerequisite: Recommendation from Elementary Music teacher

This course is for sixth grade students interested in playing a percussion instrument. Students start with the basics of becoming familiar with their musical instruments. Students progress in their knowledge of reading music, beginning with basic note identification and ending with more complex compositions of music. Daily practice is required. Percussion Class will be capped at 12 students. Please have a second choice instrument in mind.

M6010 Choir 6

Choir 6 is open to all sixth-grade students. Students in this course will study different styles of choral singing and languages, develop vocal independence, sing in unison and two-part harmony, learn how to sight-read level-one music, and learn how to perform as an ensemble. There are also mandatory performances in the Fall and Spring semesters.

M8106 Advanced Choir
Prerequisite: District Placement Criteria

Advanced Choir is offered to students who exhibit advanced skill levels in music literacy and vocal technique. Students who have taken 6th or 7th grade Choir or have worked with a licensed voice teacher may audition for Advanced Choir. The content of the course is designed to develop the student's technical, musical, and performance skills. The music studied by this choir is challenging and requires a desire for excellence on the part of its members. Students are required to perform in the winter and spring concerts, local and district choral festivals, and other performance opportunities. Music performed covers a wide range of historical periods and musical styles. In addition to the regular class period, Advanced Choir students often practice one day per week after school.

M6900 Beginning Orchestra
Prerequisite: None

Beginning Orchestra is a first year orchestra class offered to students who have little to no experience playing a stringed instrument. Students who are interested in playing violin, viola, cello, or stand-up bass will learn to read and play music on their instrument of choice at a beginner level. Students will be required to rent or purchase their own instrument and music book for the class. Students who choose violin or viola will bring their own instrument to class to use every day and take home for home practice. Students who choose cello or stand-up bass will use a school instrument for class and keep their personal instrument at home for home practice. Regular practice outside of class is required as homework. Orchestra students will work as a team to successfully perform three concerts a year. Students will learn how their performance literature relates to music theory, music history, and current global cultures.

M6901 Intermediate Orchestra
Prerequisite: District Placement Criteria

Intermediate Orchestra is a second level orchestra. It is open to all students who have successfully completed at least one year of experience on their instrument in an orchestra class or private lessons with a certified orchestra teacher. Students are required to audition for this class with approval from the Hixson orchestra director to register. New techniques and concepts will be introduced that build on the foundational skills and knowledge previously learned in the beginning stages. Students will be required to rent or purchase their own instrument and music book for the class. Students who play violin or viola will bring their own instrument to class to use every day and take home for home practice. Students who play cello or stand-up bass will use a school instrument for class and keep their personal instrument at home for home practice. Regular practice outside of class is required as homework. Orchestra students will work as a team to successfully perform three concerts a year. Students will learn how their performance literature relates to music theory, music history, and current global cultures. Orchestra members are also invited to audition for the Hixson Honors Orchestra, an after school group that collaborates with Wind Ensemble and Choir for two Sounds of Hixson concerts per year.

M6902 Advanced Orchestra
Prerequisite: District Placement Criteria

Advanced Orchestra is an upper level orchestra. It is open to all students who have successfully completed at least one year of experience on their instrument in an orchestra class or private lessons with a certified orchestra teacher. Students are required to audition for this class with approval from the Hixson orchestra director to register. New techniques and concepts will be introduced that continue to build on skills and knowledge previously learned at an intermediate playing level. Students will be required to rent or purchase their own instrument and music book for the class. Students who play violin or viola will bring their own instrument to class to use every day and take home for home practice. Students who play cello or stand-up bass will use a school instrument for class and keep their personal instrument at home for home practice. Regular practice outside of class is required as homework. Orchestra students will work as a team to successfully perform three concerts a year, in addition to an orchestra tour around the district. Students will learn how their performance literature relates to music theory, music history, and current global cultures. Orchestra members are also invited to audition for the Hixson Honors Orchestra, an after school group that collaborates with Wind Ensemble and Choir for two Sounds of Hixson concerts per year.

Humanities Discovery Wheel

An elective discovery wheel is a group of introductory or exploratory courses that are one quarter (9 weeks) in length. The courses provide 6th graders an opportunity to explore existing electives, pursue their own interests, and discover new passions. By exploring a variety of elective courses, 6th graders are able to make informed decisions about what courses they want to take in 7th and 8th grade. Students will take all four courses in a discovery wheel.

M0060 Art Exploration

This is a 9 week art class where students will work in printmaking, drawing, painting, digital art, and pottery. It's a very fast paced class. Through our art making, we will develop skills, practice critical thinking, and explore

human experiences, culture, and creative expression. This is a class that embraces mistakes...we consider them part of our learning. Students can expect to make a mess, make art, and make meaningful connections.

M8440 Drama Discovery

This introductory class teaches students basic elements of the theater. Students are led through activities to foster their skills in stage presence, character development, the art of emotion in acting, plot, setting and conflict. Students work together to foster their confidence and find their voices all through the art of drama.

M8505 Family and Consumer Science (FACS) Discovery

FACS Discovery introduces students to basic sewing and food preparation techniques and lab procedures.

M8190 World Languages

In this course, students will get an introduction of each of the three languages taught at Hixson (Spanish, French, and German). Students also get a sampling of world geography, families around the world, and cultural differences among countries.

STEM Discovery Wheel

An elective discovery wheel is a group of introductory or exploratory courses that are one quarter (9 weeks) in length. The courses provide 6th graders an opportunity to explore existing electives, pursue their own interests, and discover new passions. By exploring a variety of elective courses, 6th graders are able to make informed decisions about what courses they want to take in 7th and 8th grade. ***Students will take all four courses in a discovery wheel.***

M0040 Elements of Engineering

In this experiential learning class, students will be introduced to multiple Engineering disciplines, including Mechanical, Electrical, Architectural and Structural. Topics covered include tool safety, 3D modeling, dimension drawings, robotics, binary, soldering, design & measure scale models.

M0070 Intro to Computer Science

Technology drives invention and innovation. It is a thinking and doing process. Students with little to no circuitry or programming experience necessary will explore the foundations of technology in this experiential learning course. Through a hands-on approach, they will learn the basics of coding, computer hardware, software and networking, user interface design, physical computing, and programming. Students will create websites, create electronic projects, and build apps throughout this class. They will also learn the basics of HTML & CSS, Python, and JavaScript coding languages.

M0079 Intro to Sustainability

In this course, students will study and have the opportunity to learn about the environment and the impact that humans are having on it. Students will identify issues and work to create and implement plans to address these problems. In addition, students will continue to develop and maintain the sustainable outdoor courtyard which includes the fish pond, assorted garden beds, and care of the chickens.

M0050 Makerspace

Design Thinking is a user-centered (understanding the context and culture of the people involved) approach to solving real-world problems through empathy, creativity, collaboration, ideating, prototyping and testing. In this experiential learning class, students will deepen their understanding of complex, real world problems through designing, experimenting, building and inventing. Their ultimate goal will be to make the world a better place. Students create their own knowledge through hands-on learning experiences and connecting with the real world.

Gifted Fine Arts

M8477 Gifted Fine Arts

Prerequisite: District Placement Criteria

This course offers eligible students the opportunity to explore fine arts in three areas: visual art, music and drama. Students develop skills in communication and perception, cultural and historical awareness, response and evaluation, creative expression and performance, and leadership. Students may elect to take GFA a semester or full-year course. If electing to take GFA for a semester, sixth grade students will select two classes from one of the wheels to fill the other semester.

Math Elective

M1200 Math 7

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