Merced City School District
May 2026

One Team, One Community, One Purpose: The 6–8 Grade Evolution

Building Foundations for the Future & Guiding Students on Pathways to Success

A Progress Report to the School Board & Community
2026–2027 Transition Plan





MCSD Superintendent

Superintendent Julianna Stocking is proud to serve the Merced City School District community. She began her career in education more than 25 years ago as a classroom teacher and understands the importance of providing all students a positive and engaging learning experience. Superintendent Stocking's educational leadership has resulted in highly effective collaborative teams that serve the needs of students.

Having served diverse communities in Merced and San Joaquin counties, Superintendent Stocking has extensive experience in school and district leadership, fostering positive climate and culture. Her instructional leadership and expertise in effective teaching and learning, create opportunities for continuous improvement to deliver the education that students deserve.

A Message of Purpose

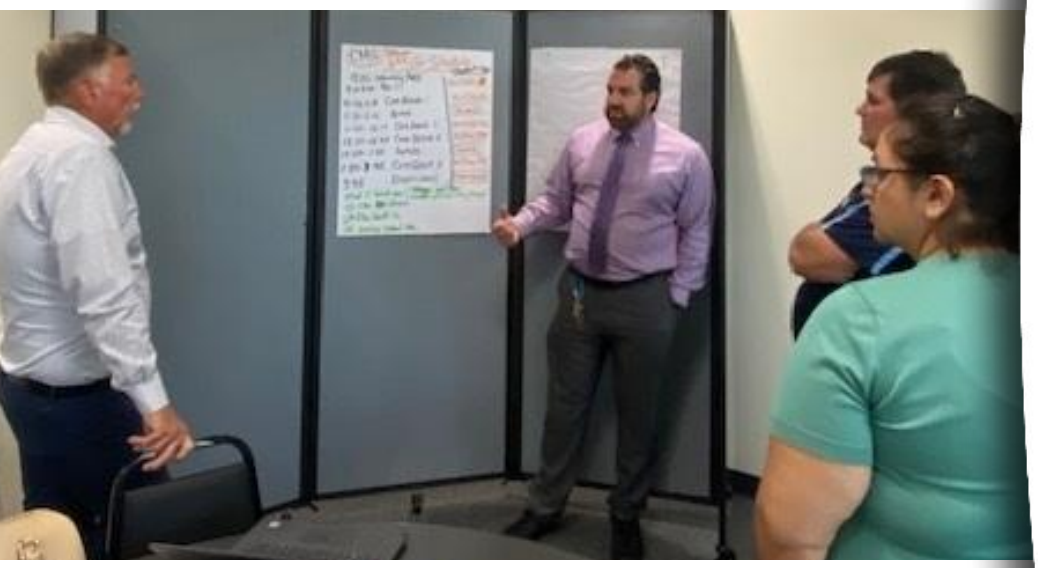
Why the 6–8 Transition Matters

Our goal for 2030 is clear: we want every student prepared for high school, college, and a career. By moving 6th grade into our middle schools, we are doing more than just changing a classroom—we are changing the middle school experience.

We are creating an environment where 6th graders can explore their interests and discover their strengths before they reach the big decisions of high school. This transition gives our students a three-year head start on finding their passion and building the character, work ethic, and skills they need to lead in a changing world. It's about giving them the time and the space to find out who they are and who they want to become.









The Story of Progress (2025–2026)

Built Together: A Year of Planning & Action

The progress in this plan is the result of a synchronized effort between our district leadership and school sites. This work is led by two dedicated teams that have spent the last year laying the foundation for our 2030 vision. While you can already see significant work happening on our campuses, this is an ongoing process that will monitored and continue to evolve over the next several years.

- **The Programmatic Team:** Focused on the student experience, this team is developing our new **"Core Learning" model.** This is a multi-year effort to bridge the gap between elementary and middle school, making the transition feel natural and academically exciting for every student.
- **The Operational Team:** Focused on our school environments, this team is executing a **multi-year modernization plan.** This work is already visible through safety fencing, technology audits, and facility repairs. This year, the team specifically walked every future 6th-grade space and audited current classrooms to coordinate a seamless move of furniture and resources.

Our Ongoing Commitment

We are currently in the middle of this transformation. While our schools are starting to see improvements, projects will continue throughout the summer. Our teams will continue this work through 2030 to ensure our facilities and our teaching stay focused on what is best for our students.



The Student Journey: Academics & Careers

A Launchpad for Discovery

Middle school will no longer be just the "middle." Our new focus turns curiosity into a clear path for the future. While we are in **Year 1** of this historic alignment, we are already taking intentional steps toward our 2030 vision.

- **6th Grade | Exploration:** Students engage in **"Career Exploration"** using a new Career Awareness Curriculum—a direct result of our committee's work to prioritize early exposure to future careers.
- **7th Grade | Future Pathways:** Next year, we will partner with elective teachers to explore how middle school courses can align with **MUHSD Career Pathways**. We are in the "discovery phase" of this partnership.
- **8th Grade | Capstone:** Students graduate with a clear understanding of their options, setting the stage for high school certifications and college credits.



The 6th Grade Experience: The Best of Both Worlds

We have designed the 6th-grade schedule to bridge the gap between elementary and middle school, maintaining a supportive environment while offering full campus access.

- **Core Learning Blocks:** Students have "blocked" schedules (Math/Science and ELA/Social Studies) to limit transitions and keep them connected to a core team of teachers.
- **Full Campus Life:** From their very first day, 6th graders are treated as full members of the middle school community. They enjoy immediate access to **clubs and band, along with every opportunity to try out for sports and student leadership.**

> **The 2030 Vision: We are taking small, sustainable steps now—listening to our teachers and building the foundation—to ensure every student is prepared for what comes next.**

CRUICKSHANK MIDDLE SCHOOL

2026-2027

DRAWING NOT TO SCALE

DRAFT

HOOVER Huskies

PREPARED • ACCOUNTABLE • COMPASSIONATE • KNOWLEDGEABLE

2026-2027 Room Assignments

DRAFT

GYM/LOCKER ROOMS
7th-8th PE

QUAD

Portable
31
6th Math/Sci

Portable
32
6th ELA/SS

Portable
33
6th ELA/SS

Portable
34
MCOE

19
7th/8th Science

20
Counseling
Kindness Closet

21
7th Core

22
7th Core/GATE

23
7th Core

24
6th ELA/SS

25
6th ELA/SS

26
6th Math/Sci

Staff Restroom

27
6th Math/Sci

28
Technology

ASSETS
30
Spanish

Portable
37
Improve Your Tomorrow

Portable
SDS
38

18
8th SDC

17
Intervention

16
7th RSP

15
7th Math

14
8th RSP

13
6th Math/Sci

8th Art/AVID

11
6th RSP

STEAM Room
10
Staff Development Room

10S
8th Science

5A
Counselor

5
7th/8th Math

7th SDC
6
7th SDC

Intervention Center
6A

7B
Nurse

7A
B
Psychologist

Staff Restroom

7
7th Science

LIBRARY

Supplies

CAFETERIA

KITCHEN

9
Band

Staff Lounge

4
8th Math

3
8th Core

2
8th Core

1
8th Core

Main Office

Health Asst.

Conf. Room

RUDOLPH RIVERA MIDDLE SCHOOL MAP 2026 -2027

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G

Band: 6/7/8
Band Room/26

25 6th

24 6th

23 MCOE

22 6th

21 7/8th

20 7/8th

19 IYT

N

Rivera Elementary Classrooms

4 MCOE

Staff Restroom

S

5 7th Science

8 Technology

6 7th Art

7 8th Science

Psych

27

IYT

Custodial Offices 31A

R

13 7th

18 7th

12 7th

17 7th

11 8th

16 8th

10 8th

15 8th

9 7/8th

14 7/8th

Student Restrooms

Teacher Work Room

Counselor

Counselor

T

M

Rivera Elementary Classrooms

3 6th

2 6th

Student Restrooms

1 6th

QUAD

STAGE

K

LIBRARY

Teacher Librarian

Library Assistant

Learning Director

CPO Clerk

Assistant Principal

Nurse

Health Assistant

SRO SL

DRAFT

CAFETERIA

C

RIVERA MIDDLE SCHOOL OFFFICE

Office Manager

Principal

B

Community Liaison

Office Clerk

Office Gate

Gym Gate

HAVEL GYM

A

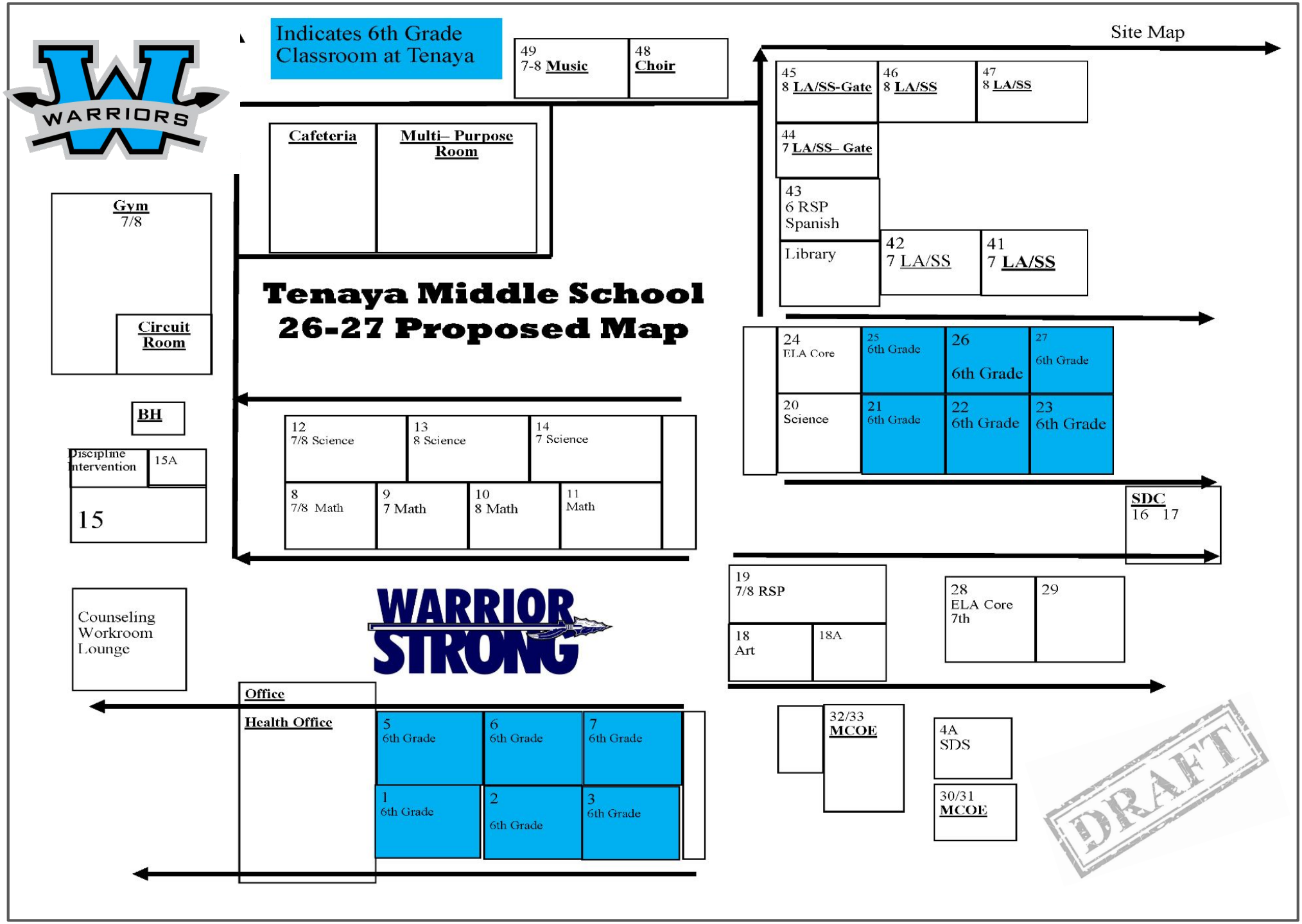
Girls Locker Room

Boys Locker Room

Locker Room Gate

Achievement…***R***espect…***M***otivation…***O***rganization…***R***esponsibility

"ARMOR Up!"


Indicates 6th Grade Classroom at Tenaya
Site Map
49 7-8 Music
48 Choir
45 8 LA/SS-Gate
46 8 LA/SS
47 8 LA/SS
44 7 LA/SS– Gate
43 6 RSP Spanish
Library
42 7 LA/SS
41 7 LA/SS
Cafeteria
Multi– Purpose Room
Gym 7/8
Circuit Room
Tenaya Middle School
26-27 Proposed Map
24 ELA Core
25 6th Grade
26 6th Grade
27 6th Grade
20 Science
21 6th Grade
22 6th Grade
23 6th Grade
BH
Discipline Intervention
15A
15
12 7/8 Science
13 8 Science
14 7 Science
8 7/8 Math
9 7 Math
10 8 Math
11 Math
SDC 16 17
19 7/8 RSP
18 Art
18A
28 ELA Core 7th
29
Counseling Workroom Lounge
WARRIOR STRONG
Office
Health Office
5 6th Grade
6 6th Grade
7 6th Grade
1 6th Grade
2 6th Grade
3 6th Grade
32/33 MCOE
4A SDS
30/31 MCOE
DRAFT

Right-Sizing Staffing for Success

People-Powered Readiness

We are committed to making sure our staff is positioned where they can have the greatest impact on student success.

- **Right-Sizing:** As enrollment shifts, we are realigning our personnel at each site. This ensures that resources follow the students, providing support across every campus in the district.
    - Administrative Support: We are moving one Learning Director from Rivera Elementary to Tenaya Middle School. Because Tenaya now has the largest student enrollment of our four middle schools, this change puts necessary leadership right where student numbers are highest.
    - Ongoing Monitoring: We will continue to monitor enrollment trends at Cruickshank, Hoover, and Rivera Middle Schools to adjust staffing as needed based on their campus size.
    - We are shifting approximately 30 hours of Noon Duty coverage to our four middle schools to provide additional safety support.
    - Adding one hour to each middle school Office Clerk position to provide additional support for attendance.
    - School Resource Officers (SROs) will be stationed at our two largest middle schools.
- **Data-Informed IT Support:** We've redistributed our technical team based on campus demand. Our 6-8 campuses currently see the highest number of support requests, so we have realigned current staff to those sites to keep their technology running smoothly.
- **Supporting Student Nutrition:** To meet the higher demand at our middle schools, we've shifted staff into our middle school cafeterias. We will also provide a dedicated **"support team"** to be on-site during the first few weeks of school, ensuring that meal service stays smooth and efficient while students adjust to their new schedules.




HOOVER





Maintenance & Operations- Ready for Day One

Keeping Our Schools Strong

As we transition to our new middle school model, our Maintenance and Operations (M&O) team has updated our approach to keep every campus ready for students. We've redesigned schedules and prioritized resources to ensure schools are clean, safe, and well-maintained from the very first day.

- **Scaling Support for Our Sites:** We are increasing staff to match the needs of the middle school campuses. This will happen in phases to support the new projects in the district, including **the new Tenaya athletic fields,** that will be completed next academic year.
- **More Time for Cleaning:** Adjusting night custodian start times will free up 15-20 hours a week, resulting in extra cleaning hours.
- **The "Day One" Walk-Through:** We've audited classrooms for furniture, tech, and safety. Our goal is simple: to have everything ready for teaching and learning by the first day of school.

The Social-Emotional Bridge

Supporting the Whole Child

A successful transition is about more than a new schedule; it's about making sure students feel seen and supported. We are building a support system that begins the moment a student enters our district and follows them all the way through 8th grade.

- **Immediate Action (2025-26):** To meet the needs of our current students, we have already **doubled the counseling staff** at all four middle schools. Each site has moved from one full-time counselor to two, ensuring more direct support is available right now.





- **A Unified Support Team (Coming 2026-27):** Based on our committee's work, next year our social workers will transition to a **"Quadrant" model.** This teams up elementary and middle school staff so the people who know our families best can stay with them as they move into 6th, 7th, and 8th grade.
- **Expanded Middle School Support (Coming 2026-27):** With 6th grade moving back to middle school, we are shifting existing resources to support student growth. A third counselor will transition into a "rover" role, rotating between campuses to provide an extra layer of support as our middle school enrollment increases.
- **Health, Wellness & Milestones (Coming 2026-27):** Next year, we will add nursing support for ELOP programs and increase on-site time for Behavior Analysts (BCBAs). We are also ready to welcome 6th graders to a **5-day outdoor camp** and middle school sports seasons.



The Road Ahead

Looking Forward

Moving 6th grade and opening new fields is just the first step. Our goal is to make sure every student in Merced City School District has a supported path from their first day of elementary school all the way through 8th grade.

Summer 2026: Orientation "Round-Up" We'll be hosting "Round-Up" events at all our middle schools this summer. This is the best time for your student to walk the halls and get comfortable with their new campus before the first bell rings.

> **Our plan doesn't end when the school doors open in 2026. This transition is about a long-term commitment to Merced families, and our team will stay focused on this vision through 2030 and beyond. We are "One Team, One Community," and we are ready to welcome your student to their future.**

With Gratitude

Special thanks to the following individuals who dedicated their time, expertise and perspective to this heart-filled work!

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MCTA Representatives
CSEA Representatives
Staff Meeting Attendees
Grade Level Meeting Attendees
Family Engagement Attendees
Webinar Attendees

Scan the QR code for access to our Middle School Transition Resource Guide!