

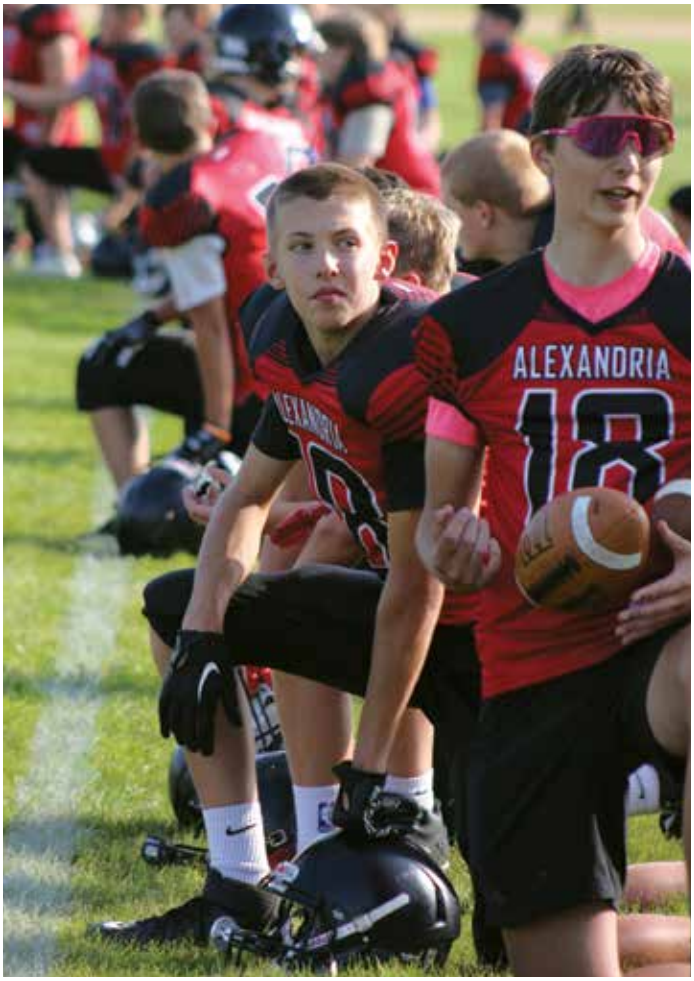


Discovery
Middle School

Every Student…Every Day

2026-2027 REGISTRATION GUIDE

Grades 6 through 8







Welcome to Discovery Middle School

Discovery's mission, as a student centered school of early adolescence, is to prepare all of our students to be successful learners in a technology-based, complex, changing society. This will be accomplished by providing a safe and caring environment where individuality is encouraged, by assisting students in the development of self-worth and responsibility, and by supporting student exploration in academics and recreation.

At Discovery Middle School, we strive to be responsive to the academic and social-emotional learning needs of our students. We recognize adolescence is a time when our students are experiencing rapid growth and change. Each day, we are driven to support our developing students, providing a caring environment where students can gain confidence in themselves, be inquisitive thinkers, and grow as leaders and innovators.

We value and show care for one another as a learning community, modeling positive attributes within the Cardinal Way and Code of Conduct. Aligning to Alexandria Public Schools' Portrait of a Graduate vision, teachers design engaging lessons beyond content mastery, providing relevant learning for students to think critically and creatively; actively communicate; collaborate; and become civically and globally engaged. Discovery Middle School seeks community partnership, providing civic engagement and real-world learning opportunities, empowering students to discover their interests and passions.

Beyond the school day, extracurricular programming offers student experiences in fine arts, athletic, academic and/ or club-based activities. We hope each student takes advantage of the wide variety of activities available. Student involvement presents an opportunity to foster positive, lasting connections with peers.

We invite you to partner in the middle school journey. We hope you will feel the dedication and commitment of our Discovery Middle School Staff. Please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.

We welcome you to Alexandria and Discovery Middle School, home of the Cardinals!

Discovery Middle School Leadership Team 2026–2027



Troy Wunderlich
Principal
(320) 762-7900 - ext. 4301
twunderlich@alexschools.org



Caitlin Hendricks
Asst. Principal & Dean of Students–6th Grade
(320) 762-7900 - ext. 4388
chendricks@alexschools.org



Luke Lagergren
Dean of Students–7th Grade
(320) 762-7900 - ext. 4307
llagergren@alexschools.org



Becky Schlichting
Dean of Students–8th Grade
(320) 762-7900 - ext. 4795
bschlichting@alexschools.org



Todd Johnson
Activities Director
(320) 762-7900 - ext. 4236
tjohnson@alexschools.org



TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Information 4
Communication 5
Health Services 5
Activities 6
Student Support Services 8

PLANNING INFORMATION
Frequently Asked Questions 10

COURSE SELECTION
Grade 6 11
Grade 7 14
Grade 8 16

ALEXANDRIA Public Schools

District: Alexandria Public Schools #206

Discovery Middle School
510 McKay Avenue North
Alexandria, MN 56308
(320) 762-7900

School Motto:
Every Student…Every Day

School Colors:
Red, white and black

Mascot: Cardinal

Student-to-Teacher Ratio: 18:1

Number of Faculty: 67

Open Enrollment:.
The Alexandria School District welcomes non-resident students through Minnesota Open Enrollment Program. To obtain an application, contact the Superintendent's Asst. at (320) 762-2141 ext. 4213.





General Information

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Discovery Middle School offers a wonderful educational experience to approximately 900 students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. We welcome students transitioning from both public and private schools in the Alexandria Area. We work hard at creating a small school feel within a larger building. The climate of Discovery provides a positive and supportive environment in which students can grow academically and socially.

Discovery Middle School is located on a 101-acre site with football, soccer, baseball and tennis outdoor amenities on site and a 5-court gymnasium, weight room, and swimming pool.

WELCOMING NEW STUDENTS

Each entering family will have an opportunity to meet with their grade level Dean of Students. Students enrolling during the summer months will be invited to attend the parent/teacher orientation at the end of August prior to the start of the school year. Students enrolling during the school year will spend their first day as a guest, hosted by a Discovery student. They will begin their regular schedule the following day.

ATTENDANCE

It is a fundamental belief of Discovery Middle School that for a student to be successful in school, consistent daily attendance is a goal for which we all must strive. It is extremely important that students miss as few days as possible. Research supports that students should miss no more than 9 days of school per year, regardless of reason. Strong and consistent attendance allows students to stay engaged, on track for graduation, and decreases the chance that students lose interest in school.

TYPICAL SCHOOL DAY

Discovery Middle School's school day begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 3:05 p.m. Included in each student's schedule is a Homebase period and a 30-minute lunch period. Discovery Middle School follows an AB day system. Report cards are on a semester system.

BEFORE SCHOOL DROP-OFF/ AFTER SCHOOL PICK-UP

Students may arrive at school at 7:45 a.m. unless they have a scheduled meeting that begins before school. There is not teacher supervision prior to that time. Students need to be picked up no later than 3:30 p.m. after school unless they are in an after school activity/sport or meeting with a teacher.

ADVISORY/HOMEBASE

Homebase is a shortened period during the school day. The purpose of the advisory program is to connect every student with a teacher on the Discovery School staff. The goal of the program is to develop a relationship between the teacher and student that focuses on the student's life at Discovery School. The teacher monitors each student's academic progress and supports students in their learning goals. Daily announcements and group activities are conducted during this time also. The teacher will meet with the student and parent/guardian to review progress at Parent-Student-Teacher conferences. Parents are encouraged to get to know their child's homebase teacher.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEARNING PLATFORM

Schoology

Schoology is an online learning, classroom management and organization tool used as a collaborative learning place for teachers and students. Schoology allows students to have everything they need in one place for their homework assignments and due dates.

LOCKERS/PADLOCKS

Every student will be assigned a hallway locker to store personal items. All students will purchase a padlock for their lockers from the school to keep and use throughout middle school and high school. It is very important that students not share their combinations with others. Report any problems regarding your locker to the main office.

COMMUNICATION

Parents are an integral part of the formula for student success. In order to work as a team, every effort is made to provide parents with timely, accurate information.

- The **Daily Bulletin** is published every day on the school website and it contains important reminders, including upcoming events and activities.
- **Discovery Updates** – Families may receive emails from administration and other staff along with the school newsletter and important school related information.
- **My AlexSchools Portal** – The portal icon/link can be found under the video/photo gallery on both Discovery's website homepage and the District's website homepage. This single sign-on links all of your accounts together, including ParentVUE, Lunch Accounts, Schoology, Activities Registration, and more.
- **Mobile App** – The district's latest communication tool for parents, students, staff and community members. The free app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store by searching "Alexandria Public Schools."
- **Mass Notifications by Finalsite** is a service that allows for rapid parent notification of emergencies, upcoming events, and other school-related matters. This system allows messages to be delivered within minutes to a family's home, cell and/or work phone as well as via e-mail or text. The system relies on current up-to-date phone numbers and email addresses. Please contact the Main Office at 762-7900 to update your contact information.
- **Parent-Principal Connect** – Parents/guardians are welcomed to join Parent-Principal Connect meetings throughout the school year. Digital invitations will be sent to families in advance of these meeting times. These meetings include a discussion format to promote family engagement and elevate family voice. Principals are able to utilize input from the Parent-Principal Connect meetings to reinforce a welcoming school environment, enhancing student and family experiences at Discovery.
- **Schoology** is a learning management system that makes it easy to assign and distribute online assignments as well as create and share content. The Schoology system gives instructors, students, and parents access to manage classes, grades, assignments and more.
- **ParentVUE** and **StudentVUE** are available for students and parents to view grades, assignments and attendance. All parents and students are issued a password and may access these portals through their MyAlexSchools portal.
- **Discovery Website –** Provides information and links to software used daily in the classroom curriculum, as well as access to lunch account balances and activities.

HEALTH SERVICES

A health assistant staffs the school health office during most of the school day. A licensed school nurse (LSN) oversees the health assistant and trains and delegates health related tasks to the health assistant and other applicable staff. The LSN is on-call during the school day.

Illness or Injury: Students should get a pass from a teacher prior to coming to the Health Office. We discourage children to call home with cell phone's prior to coming to the health office. The health office will contact parent/guardian prior to being sent home. Students should stay home if they have a fever over 100 degrees, or if they are vomiting or have diarrhea. Students should stay home until 24 hours symptom-free WITHOUT use of medications.

Immunizations: Alexandria Public Schools follows the MN State Laws on immunizations. All students must be immunized or file an exemption form for medical or personal beliefs to stay enrolled in school. Booster immunizations or an exemption form are required for 7th grade. A new exemption form is needed even if a previous one was done. Please ensure you have all your child's updated immunization records (or form) to the school before the first day of school or your child may be sent home. Forms and additional information are found on the District website.

Medications: No prescription medications will be given to students without written authorization signed by both the prescriber and parents/guardians. Only Acetaminophen (i.e. Tylenol) or Ibuprofen (i.e. Advil) can be self-carried by the student with appropriate paperwork signed by parent/guardian and student. ALL medications MUST be in the original container with appropriate label. Medication forms can be found on the District website under Health Services.

Screening: Hearing and Vision screenings will be done for 7th graders in the Fall. If you would like your child to be screened for vision and hearing at a grade other than listed, please contact the school. If your child has been screened, you will not receive any information unless they require further evaluation.

Health Concerns: Please contact the licensed school nurse or health assistant prior to the first day of school if your child has a health condition (i.e. food allergy, diabetes, asthma, seizures, etc.) that requires support in school.

ACTIVITIES

Middle school students are encouraged to get involved in activities outside the school day. This is a great time to try out a new sport, club, or hobby. Discovery Middle School offers a variety of extracurricular activities for students with the desire and dedication to expand and develop their talents. More than 75% of Discovery Middle School students participate in extracurricular activities. We believe students who participate in extracurricular activities have a more positive school experience and feel more connected.

ATHLETICS/IN-HOUSE/DRAMA

Student athletes in grades 6, 7 and 8 are considered participants in the middle school athletic program. The philosophy guiding this program stresses the value of participation as compared to the more competitive
play-to-win philosophy at the high school level. Athletes in 7th thru 12th grade programs (Adapted Bowling, Alpine Ski, Clay Target, Dance, Girls Hockey, Nordic Ski) will be considered high school level participants, although they are still subject to the DMS eligibility policy based on academic performance.

ONLINE ACTIVITY REGISTRATION

Our new program will allow you to access all registration requirements in one spot. If you have not used the district's online payment module in the past for activities, chromebook insurance, or meal payments, you will need to CREATE AN ACCOUNT prior to registering. Registration needs to be complete prior to students being able to participate. Your student will need to have a current physical, within the last three years, on file with the school in order to register. The School Board establishes student fees for athletics and activities. The 2026-27 fee schedule will be adopted and published in July. Fees for athletics and activities will continue to be reduced for students who apply and receive educational benefits.

ACTIVITY SCHEDULES - FALL / WINTER / SPRING

Fall Activity	Grades	Season Length	Start Dates	Approx End Dates
Boys/Girls Cross Country	6-8	9 weeks	8/17/26	10/13/26
Drama/Fall Play	6-8	6 weeks	9/21/26	11/13/26
Football	7-8	7 weeks	8/24/26	10/9/26
Boys/Girls Soccer	6-8	7 weeks	8/24/26	10/9/26
Girls Swimming & Diving	6-8	7 weeks	8/24/26	10/9/26
Girls Tennis	6-8	7 weeks	8/24/26	10/9/26
Volleyball (Intramural)	6	5 weeks	9/1/26	10/9/26
Volleyball	7-8	7 weeks	8/24/26	10/9/26

Winter Activity	Grades	Season Length	Start Dates	Approx End Dates
Boys/Girls Alpine Skiing (Ind. Provider)	7-12	14 weeks	11/16/26	2/19/27
Boys/Girls Archery (Ind. Provider)	6-8	16 weeks	11/30/26	3/19/27
Girls Basketball	7-8	9 weeks	10/19/26	12/18/26
Girls Basketball (Intramural)	6	5 weeks	10/26/26	12/04/26
Boys Basketball	7-8	9 weeks	1/04/27	3/05/27
Boys Basketball (Intramural)	6	5 weeks	1/11/27	2/12/27
Dance	7-12	14 weeks	10/26/26	1/29/27
Drama/ Winter Play	6-8	6 weeks	1/26/26	3/20/26
Girls Hockey	8-12	17 weeks	11/2/26	2/26/27
Nordic Ski	6-12	14 weeks	11/9/26	2/12/27
Boys Swimming & Diving	6-8	7 weeks	11/23/26	1/15/26
Wrestling	6-8	18 weeks	11/16/26	2/06/27

Spring Activity	Grades	Season Length	Start Dates	Approx End Dates
Boys/Girls Adapted Bowling	7-12	11 weeks	3/01/27	5/14/27
Baseball	7-8	7 weeks	3/29/27	5/14/27
Boys/Girls Clay Target (Indep. Provider)	7-12	13 weeks	3/15/27	6/20/27
Boys/Girls Golf	7-8	7 weeks	3/29/27	5/14/27
Fast Pitch Softball	7-8	7 weeks	3/29/27	5/14/27
Fast Pitch Softball (Intramural)	6	5 weeks	4/7/27	5/8/27
Boys Tennis	6-8	7 weeks	3/29/27	5/14/27
Boys/Girls Track & Field	6-8	8 weeks	3/22/27	5/14/27





OTHER ACTIVITIES

Activity	Grades	Season Length
6-8 Robotics	6-8	Oct-Jan
Jazz Band - rehearsals 2/week - mornings	6-8	Nov - May
Jr. A Club	6-8	Sept - May
Knowledge Bowl	6-8	Mid Oct - Dec
6-8 Stormy Strings	6-8	Nov - May
Marching Band/Color guard	8-12	Mid May
Math Team	6-12	Oct - Jan
Speech	7-12	Dec - April
Strength Training	6-8	Use DMS weight room after school

Note: Start and end dates are subject to change.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

There are academic eligibility requirements to participate in activities. Please refer to the Online Student Handbook for further information. Visit the Discovery Middle School website www.alexschools.org/discovery for further information on activities.

OPTIONS

"Options" hour is a 30-minute relearn/reassess support time built into students' schedules. Students have the opportunity during "Options" hour to complete missing assignments, tests, or labs. This time also supports academic enrichment for students.

YOUTH ENRICHMENT

Alexandria Public Schools Community Education offers youth enrichment experiences for grades PreK-12. Our mission is to provide an array of opportunities that enrich, engage and support social connectivity. Community Education catalogs promoting these programs are published three times a year (fall, winter, and spring). Catalogs are mailed to Alexandria Area residents and extra copies of the catalog are available in the school office. For more information, visit https://alexschools.arux.app/ or call (320) 762-3310, press 1.

YOUTH SERVICE

Students can participate in local, regional and global service projects at Discovery Middle School. The 8th grade class participates in The Day of Caring, a day in which the eighth graders go out into the community in groups of approximately 10 students with an adult chaperone and provide help to those in need in our area. The help is mostly with outdoor tasks that they could use assistance with. Anyone can apply to have a group come to their home/neighborhood.



STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

GUIDANCE OFFICE

Grade level deans serve as the primary source of support for students and are the first point of contact when assistance is needed. Deans are assigned at the beginning of the year.

Caitlin Hendricks, ext. 4388

Luke Lagergren, ext. 4307

Becky Schlichting, ext. 4795

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

The school psychologist, is available to consult with parents and teachers, administer psychological evaluations and special education assessments, and assist in crisis situations. Contact Brant Buysse, Psychologist at **(320) 762-7900 ext. 4318.**

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

The school social worker facilitates groups and individual counseling for students with ongoing concerns in the areas of peer conflicts, family issues, school adjustments, and personal concerns. They also consult with parents and families to help coordinate the resolution of difficulties that may arise between family, school, and social situations. Students who may need or wish to utilize social work services are generally referred by the dean or may directly contact the school social worker. Contact Jessica Kriel, at **(320) 762-7900 ext. 4813** or Kayla Mady, at **(320) 762-7900 ext. 4744**.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education services are available to any student in grades 6-8 who has an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Registration questions should be directed to the student's case manager.

Students who move to Alexandria with an active IEP from another school district will be placed in Special Education programs in accordance with the law. A case manager will be assigned, and s/he will contact the parent/guardian. It is most helpful if parents of students moving to Alexandria with an IEP bring a copy of that IEP with them when they register the student.

In order to initially place a student into a special education program, a referral process must be followed. A parent, classroom teacher, counselor or administrator may initiate this process. Parents who have concerns about their child may contact the school assistant principal, deans, or the district director of student support services for further information. Classroom teachers may refer a student through periodic team meetings when classroom teachers meet to discuss individual students.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Academic support for students is offered after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:15 - 4:00 p.m. in the Media Center. A teacher or paraprofessional is available to assist students with homework. Above and Beyond is FREE and open to all students. Parent permission is required.

Contact your child's Dean if you have questions about any of these academic support programs.



SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a proactive systems approach to teaching desired behaviors for creating and maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment. We expect all Discovery Middle School students to: Be Ready, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible. We call these expectations The Cardinal Way. DMS students are expected to follow The Cardinal Way at all times within the school. The expectations are explained in The Cardinal Way Matrix. Throughout the year, these expectations are taught and reinforced.

THE CARDINAL WAY

***Be* Ready**

***Be* Respectful**

***Be* Responsible**

MEDIA CENTER (THE EDGE)

The media center is the heart of the middle school, serving as an inviting student gathering space. The flexible furniture creates options for collaboration and comfort. The Edge is a perfect place to work on homework or connect with peers.

MAKERSPACE

Discovery's Makerspace is an area to foster student innovation through active, hands-on experimentation. Teachers flexibly reserve this space for a variety of instructional purposes. This learning space offers opportunity for student creativity, exploration, idea development and collaboration.















Planning Information

General Questions

What is the transition process to middle school?

In early spring, the 6th grade dean will visit 5th grade classrooms, provide registration information, and discuss student life at Discovery. Following these visits, an informational registration session will be provided to parents/guardians. In mid-August, schedules are provided and a half-day "Discovery Day" will be held for 6th graders to participate in team building activities, learn about the Cardinal Way and begin making connections with classmates. In late August, orientation for incoming 6th graders and parents/guardians is held, providing the opportunity to meet teachers, practice opening lockers, tour the building and "walk through" the student's schedule/classroom location.

Why do we register so early?

Teachers are hired and schedules are built for next year based on registration selections students make now.

What classes will I have?

All students take core academic classes in the areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Students also take elective courses, which include FACS (Family and Consumer Science), Physical Education, Health, Technology Education, Band, Choir and Art.

Why do we have to make selections beyond our top requests?

Students rank their requests in case there are conflicts with their individual schedules. In most cases, students do receive their top choices. Sometimes we may need to use alternate choices when specific demands on a student's schedule are made.

What is the Dean Model?

A Dean of Students works with students in every aspect of their career at Discovery, including academic concerns, behavioral issues, emotional matters and anything else that comes up throughout the year. Working in conjunction with teams of teachers, the Student Support Team, administration, and parents, the Dean strives to provide the best possible support for students. Parents who may need to communicate any information with the school, ranging from peer issues to academic challenges to changes in the home, may start by sharing that information with their child's Dean.

How are students placed in advanced math classes?

Students are placed into advanced math classes using STAR assessment results, MCA test scores, and other data points students have exhibited.

What technology resources are available to support student learning?

All middle school students are issued a Chromebook device for educational use as part of our district's 1-to-1 digital learning initiative.

Grade 6

Course Selection

CORE CURRICULUM

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

In 6th grade English Language Arts, students engage in deep learning through a variety of texts and genres including fiction, nonfiction, memoirs, poetry, science fiction, and fables. Units are centered around meaningful topics that reinforce grade 6 English Language Arts standards, sparking curiosity and critical thinking. Reading, writing, and discussions will connect student experiences and background knowledge to the world around them. Student listening and speaking skills will grow through collaborative activities and discussions. Writing forms include personal narrative, informational essay, argumentative essay, short story, and a research essay.

MATHEMATICS

Math 6 - Sixth grade curriculum focuses on the following topics: Data Displays and Number Systems, Fraction Operations and Ratios, Decimal Operations and Percents, Algebraic Expressions and Equations, Area and Volume Explorations, Equivalent Expressions and Solving Equations, Variables and Algebraic Relationships, and Probability. Emphasis will be placed on communicating mathematically using graphs, tables, formulas, calculations, and written explanations.

Honors Math 6 - Honors Math 6 is an accelerated math course that includes 6th and 7th grade math standards. Enrollment in this course is determined by set criteria including standardized assessment and classroom performance.

SCIENCE

Are you ready to dive into topics like the solar system, rock layers, seafloor structures, and nature's catastrophic events? In Earth Science, students will be asking questions, defining problems, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, developing and using models, and constructing explanations about the planet Earth and space. Topics 6th graders will be exploring include:

The universe, earth's systems, weather and climate, and human impacts and sustainability in the earth's systems.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Northern Lights e-book and textbook is the curriculum used for 6th grade social studies. Sixth grade focuses on Minnesota History from early times when glaciers formed our land through the 1900s. Units covered include early civilization in Minnesota with the Native Americans, the Fur Trade, and Minnesota's impact on the Civil War, The Common Good, WWI, The Depression, WWII, The Cold War, and the Civil Rights Movement.



COURSE SELECTION

ALPHABETIZED SUBJECTS	PAGE
Arts (Arts & Music), Grade 6	12
Arts (Arts & Music), Grade 7	15
Arts (Arts & Music), Grade 8	19
English/Language Arts, Grade 6	11
English/Language Arts, Grade 7	14
English/Language Arts, Grade 8	16
Exploratory Classes, Grade 6	12
Exploratory Classes, Grade 7	15
Elective Courses, Grade 8	17
Mathematics, Grade 6	11
Mathematics, Grade 7	14
Mathematics, Grade 8	16
Physical Education, Grade 6	14
Physical Education, Grade 7	15
Physical Education, Grade 8	17
Project Lead the Way (PLTW), Grade 6	12
Project Lead the Way (PLTW), Grade 7	15
Science, Grade 6	11
Science, Grade 7	14
Science, Grade 8	17
Social Studies, Grade 6	11
Social Studies, Grade 7	14
Social Studies, Grade 8	17





EXPLORATORY CLASSES

During exploratory rotation, students will experience the following curriculum:

ARTS IN ACTION

Students will explore Arts in Action through drama and art with performances and visual creation. Theatre Design, script writing, and puppet making will be included in this hands-on class for 6th graders.

EXPLORE AND BE THE CHANGE

Students will explore careers that they may be interested in based on career interest inventories. They will evaluate their strengths and areas of growth needed in order to reach their career goals. Students will also work to understand skills that are important to career success and how they can implement them starting as early as 6th grade. Community resources will be used to offer authentic learning situations and community service opportunities.

6TH GRADE HEALTH

Students will develop a well-rounded understanding of wellness by exploring the vital connections between their physical, mental, and social-emotional health. The curriculum also incorporates the DARE program, which equips students with essential decision-making skills to navigate peer pressure and make safe, responsible choices.

SCIENCE OF TECHNOLOGY (PLTW)

Middle school is a time of exploration, a time when students are figuring out what they're passionate about today and how that relates to who they'll become tomorrow. During this transitional time, PLTW empowers students to lead their own discovery. This hands-on program boosts classroom engagement and excitement, drives collaboration, and inspires "aha! moments." As students engage in PLTW's activities, they see a range of paths and possibilities they can look forward to in high school and beyond. Examples of fun activities include: ice cream and glue making, testing nano products, and building Rube Goldberg machines utilizing simple machines.

ARTS (ARTS & MUSIC)

6TH GRADE BEGINNING BAND

Sixth Grade Band gives students the opportunity to experience the performance of music on traditional band instruments and is designed for students new to playing an instrument. Students will learn how to play their instrument, read and write music, and work together to put on various performances throughout the year. Small group lessons are provided to strengthen student abilities on their instrument. Emphasis will be placed on how we as instrumentalists make personal connections with others through music.

CHOIR

Sixth Grade Choir is open to students interested in using their singing voice to make music. Students will sing in class everyday to develop healthy singing techniques. Students will learn how to use their singing voice, read and write choral music, and work together to tell a story through music. Emphasis will be placed on how we as singers make personal connections with others through singing. A variety of songs and team building activities will reinforce these skills.

Project Lead The Way (PLTW) is an innovative project-based learning program that incorporates science, technology, engineering, and math. PLTW empowers students to develop and apply in-demand, transportable skills by exploring real-world challenges in an exciting and engaging way.





EARLY BIRD CHOIR

Early Bird Choir is an opportunity for students who are taking another fine arts elective (band, orchestra, theatre, art) to sing in an ensemble. The choir meets for approximately 20 minutes twice a week during Homebase. Students will develop their singing and ensemble skills through performing a variety of music.

MADE FOR THE STAGE

The goal of Made for the Stage is to introduce students to theatrical experiences and prepare students for an informed connection with theatre as an art. Students will strengthen their confidence, concentration, imagination, and peer communication with games and projects that introduce basic acting skills. Through individual and group activities, students will develop creative ideas through performance including pantomime, improvisation, stage movement, and readers theatre.

ORCHESTRA

Sixth grade students have the opportunity to experience the performance of music on traditional orchestral instruments. Traditional orchestral instruments include violin, viola, cello, and string bass. The main objectives of this class are to learn how to play a traditional orchestral instrument alone as well as with an ensemble and to develop an appreciation for music through regular performance and study.

SOUNDS OF MUSIC

In Sounds of Music, students will explore a variety of music styles and traditions by creating and performing their own music. Students will learn what busking is and create their own bucket drumming routine. Students will explore the music traditions of Africa and use African percussion instruments to perform their own song based on these traditions. Finally, students will learn how to play the ukulele and guitar.





PHYSICAL EDUCATION

6TH GRADE P.E.

Sixth Grade physical education students will begin learning skills and concepts related to sports and other recreational activities. A variety of activities will be covered with an emphasis on participation, skill building, and learning strategies. Fitness concepts will also be woven into everything we do in class. Teaching students how to care for their bodies and enjoy physical activity is foundational to the learning in this class.

Invasion Games: Ultimate Frisbee and Ultimate Football

Net Wall Games: Badminton, Pickleball, and Volleyball

Fielding and Striking Activities: Kickball, Wiffle Ball, and Softball

Individual Performance Activities: Swimming and Roller-Skating

Target Games: Bean Bags, KanJam

Fitness: Strength and Endurance training and cardio based games and activities.



Grade 7
Course Selection

CORE CURRICULUM

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

In 7th grade English Language Arts, students engage in deep learning through a variety of texts and genres including fiction, nonfiction, argumentative texts, poetry, plays, and drama. Units are centered around meaningful topics that reinforce grade 7 English Language Arts standards, sparking student curiosity and critical thinking. Rich discussions and structured debates will allow students to apply their skills in communication, collaboration and listening. Writing forms include personal narrative, argumentative essay, short story, and a research essay.

MATHEMATICS

Math 7

This yearlong course aligned to 7th grade MN Math Standards emphasizes algebraic representation and promotes abstract thinking. Students will read, write, represent, and compare rational numbers and perform real number operations to solve problems. Students will generate equivalent expressions, solve problems using linear equations and inequalities, analyze proportional relationships, and develop an emerging understanding of linear relationships.

Honors Math 7

Honors Math 7 is an accelerated math course that includes 7th and 8th grade math standards. Enrollment in this course is determined by set criteria including standardized assessment and classroom performance.

SCIENCE

Seventh Grade Life Science is all about investigating and understanding the living parts of the world around us. Students will collaborate to make observations, design experiments, analyze data, develop and use models, from conclusions and design solutions related to life on planet Earth. Students will study the DMS pond ecosystem and school forest, cycles of matter, anatomy through dissections and explorations, cells and genetics, plants and animals.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Seventh Grade Social Studies is an engaging and dynamic class designed to provide students with a comprehensive overview of the rich tapestry of United States history, from its independence to the present day. Through a variety of learning activities, students will explore key events, significant figures, and pivotal moments that have shaped the nation we know today. Throughout the course, students

will develop critical thinking skills, engage in historical analysis, and cultivate an appreciation for the complex and diverse history of the United States. Interactive projects, discussions, and primary and secondary resources will enhance the learning experience to encourage a deeper understanding of the forces that have shaped our nation.

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

During exploratory rotation, students will experience the following curriculum:

DESIGN & MODELING (PLTW)

In Design & Modeling, students will go through the design process and work on creating new products. Students will learn how to make multiview sketches on paper as well as create 3D models using Computer Aided Design (CAD) software. During this course, students will develop multiple projects from concept to prototype!

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Foods and Nutrition will introduce students to basic nutrition principles and food preparation skills. The focus in seventh grade is healthy breakfast and snack choices. The Sewing section includes lessons on using a sewing machine and practicing basic hand stitches. Students will be able to express creativity in designing and completing a project using computerized sewing machines. Building healthy working relationships and developing interpersonal skills are incorporated throughout the session.

HEALTH

Seventh grade health will help students build the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to make healthy choices now and throughout their lives. Through engaging, real-world learning, students explore topics such as nutrition, mental and emotional health, relationships, substance use prevention, and injury prevention. The course emphasizes practical life skills including goal-setting, decision-making, stress management, first aid and CPR awareness, and evaluating health information from reliable sources. Lessons are interactive and student-centered, encouraging reflection, discussion, and personal responsibility while connecting health concepts to everyday situations.

OUR COMMUNITY: VOICE IN CHANGE

Our Community: Voice in Change empowers students to become informed, active participants in their communities, both online and offline. Through inquiry-based, project-driven learning, students will explore community responsibility and engagement while developing skills in digital citizenship and media literacy.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

7TH GRADE P.E.

Seventh grade physical education students will be learning important skills, concepts and strategies in a variety of settings. Each unit emphasizes teamwork or individual play along with an emphasis on the five components of Physical Fitness; cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility and body composition. Students are encouraged to be active in and outside the school setting, practice their skills, and have fun with a variety of activities. Below is a snapshot of units students will engage in.

Invasion Games: Ultimate frisbee, soccer and speedball

Net Wall Games: Volleyball, pickleball and badminton

Fielding and Striking Activities: Softball, wiffle ball

Individual Performance Activities: Dance, swimming, gymnastics, and rollerskating

Target Games: Bean Bags, KanJam

Fitness: Strength and Endurance training, yoga, cardio based games and activities

ARTS (ARTS & MUSIC)

BAND

Seventh Grade Band is designed for students in their second year of studying a traditional band instrument. Students build on the skills learned in 6th grade band to further develop their instrumental and music reading skills. Students will learn how to work together to put on various performances throughout the year. Emphasis will be placed on how we as instrumentalists can show meaning through expressive musical elements. Small group lessons are provided to strengthen student abilities on their instrument.

CHOIR

Seventh Grade Choir builds on the skills learned in Sixth Grade Choir to further develop our singing voice and music skills. Students will continue to sing in class everyday to develop healthy singing techniques, improve music reading and writing skills, and work together to perform music. Emphasis will be placed on how we as singers can show a song's meaning through expressive musical elements. A variety of songs and team building activities will reinforce these skills.

DIGITAL ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Students will learn the elements and principles of art and design and create works of art digitally. Students will explore graphic design area and learn about how to communicate visually through pictures in the digital form. Students will also learn the fundamentals of photography and how to take good pictures, how to plan composition, and how to edit them using various digital programs.



DRAW, PAINT & PRINT IT!

This course will introduce students to a variety of mediums and techniques through 2 dimensional art mediums involving drawing, painting, printmaking, and collage. Some projects will include: Abstract Drawing, Perspective Drawing, Portrait Drawing, Collage, Charcoal, Optical Art, Pastel Drawing, Scratchboard, and Painting Art. The emphasis of this course is to expose students to 2D art mediums and to build their creative skills through the elements and principles of design.

EARLY BIRD CHOIR

Early Bird Choir is an opportunity for students who are taking another fine arts elective (band, orchestra, theatre, art) to sing in an ensemble. The choir meets for approximately 20 minutes twice a week during Homebase. Students will develop their singing and ensemble skills through performing a variety of music.

MADE FOR THE STAGE

Students will learn the many components of what it takes to create a theater production. Through the eyes of a producer, students will explore and perform with costumes, lighting, sound, stage management and acting.The class will finish with a production on the stage where students can be on stage or behind the scenes.

MUSIC & MEDIA

This class is geared toward project-based learning and content creation in music. Students will explore areas of music in various media, technology, and occupations within the music field. Discussion and projects will focus on the influence of music on our current lifestyle.

ORCHESTRA

Seventh Grade Orchestra is designed for students in their second or third year of studying a traditional orchestral instrument (violin, viola, cello, string bass). The main objectives of this class are to continue to develop individual musicianship with a greater focus on ensemble technique to develop an appreciation for music through regular performance and study. Students will participate in regularly scheduled small group lessons to strengthen student abilities on their instrument and reinforce the skills learned in the ensemble setting.

SCULPT IT!

This class is for the student who likes to build three dimensional sculptures with their hands through a variety of processes and mediums such as: clay, plaster, wire, paper mache', wood, and found objects. Students will explore 3 dimensional sculptural art throughout the ages and their process of creation. Sculptures will be created through modeling, carving, and building.

Grade 8
Course Selection

CORE CURRICULUM

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

In 8th grade English Language Arts, students engage in deep learning through a variety of texts and genres including fiction, nonfiction, argumentative texts, poetry, drama, fables, and mythology. Units are centered around meaningful topics that reinforce grade 8 English Language Arts standards, sparking student curiosity and critical thinking. Students will demonstrate their insights and connection to text evidence through writing forms including nonfiction narrative, informational essay, argumentative essay, and research essay. The course also focuses on cultivating strong listening and speaking skills. Through meaningful group discussions and presentations, students will continue to build their communication, collaboration and listening skills.

MATHEMATICS

Math 8

Building on a foundation of linear algebra, this course bridges the gap between concrete arithmetic and abstract mathematical reasoning. Students will engage in problem-based learning to master rational and irrational numbers, solve complex systems of linear equations, and apply geometric principles like the Pythagorean Theorem to real-world scenarios.

Honors Intermediate Algebra I

This rigorous course deepens students' algebraic fluency, facilitating a smooth transition from concrete arithmetic to high-level abstract reasoning. Students will explore linear, quadratic, and exponential functions through real-world modeling and

interactive digital tools, mastering the skills necessary for advanced mathematical study.

Note: This course fulfills the high school graduation credit for **Intermediate Algebra** and will factor into the high school GPA. Enrollment is determined by specific district criteria, including performance on standardized assessments and demonstrated success in previous mathematics coursework.

SCIENCE

Physical Science introduces foundational Chemistry and Physics concepts in order to understand the world around us. The Chemistry concepts introduced provide experiences with matter, the structure of atoms and molecules, and chemical reactions. The Physics concepts introduced include forces and motion, electricity, energy, light and sound and their applications. Students will continue to develop their scientific and engineering skills through lab investigations, modeling, reading, data collection and interpretation, and communicating their conclusions.

SOCIAL STUDIES

In 8th grade Social Studies our focus is World Geography. In our World Geography class, students delve into the multifaceted tapestry of our planet. They explore the intricate relationships between physical landscapes and human societies, unraveling diverse cultures, customs, and the geopolitical dynamics shaping our world. From this exploration, students gain a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness that defines our planet.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

8TH GRADE P.E.

Eighth grade physical education students will be expanding their skills, concepts, and strategies in a variety of settings. Each unit emphasizes strategies and concepts for game play through a variety of team and individual activities and practice tasks. Another emphasis throughout the school year are the five Health-Related Fitness Components; Cardiorespiratory Endurance, Flexibility, Body Composition, Muscular Strength and Muscular Endurance. These components are examined at a deeper level for students to translate into their own lives. As always, students are encouraged to be active in and outside of the school setting in all ways that are available to students. Below is a small snapshot of the units eighth grade students will engage in:

Invasion Games with Throwing:
Ultimate Frissbee, Handball, and Speedball

Invasion Games with a Long Handled Implement:
Lacrosse, Floor Hockey, and Broomball

Invasion Games with Dribbling: Basketball or Handball

Net Wall Games with Short or Long Handled Implement:
Pickleball, Badminton, Spikeball, and Tennis

Net Wall Games with Two-Handed Volley:
Volleyball and Nitro-Ball

Target Games: Bean Bags, KanJam

Fielding and Striking: Softball, Baseball

Individual Performance: Roller Skating, Archery, Swimming, and Gymnastics

Fitness: Strength and Endurance training, outdoor activities, cardio based games and activities.

HEALTH

Health 8

Health 8 is a required course designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy decisions that promote lifelong health and wellness. Students will learn that good health is not a one-time choice but a series of decisions made throughout life.

This course helps students develop a deeper understanding of the many factors that contribute to overall health and wellness, including personal wellness, mental health, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, nutrition, and relationships and reproductive health. Health education is essential for empowering students to make informed choices that enhance their own well-being and positively impact the health of their communities.

ELECTIVE COURSES

Elective courses in 8th grade are designed to help students experience different subjects so they can identify interests for further study through the Academies of Alexandria program model in high school.

Adventures in Advertising

Dive into the world of advertising and learn how promotion and propaganda have shaped the world we live in today. Learn what strategies businesses use to entice you to buy their products. Find the secret meanings and messages behind the logos, print ads and commercials that we see every day. Explore your own powers of persuasion while creating hands-on projects and advertising campaigns.

Destination Adventure

Do you like going on vacations? Do you enjoy getting out into nature, biking, rock climbing, skiing or just exploring in general? If the answer is yes, this is a great class for you! Students begin focusing on physical fitness and nutritional needs required for unique adventures. We will dive into the mental toughness required to achieve personal goals, and practice basic survival skills for wilderness exploration. Students will then showcase their learning, by planning a personalized adventure. Hands-on experiences will include outdoor adventures and community opportunities.

Great Outdoors
Through learning in the classroom and outdoor learning spaces, students will interact with the great outdoors to better understand how geography and environment affect our outdoor recreation and enjoyment spaces. Engaging in our school-site spaces and other community areas, we will bolster student exploration and inquiry, allowing them to make connections to the natural world while also serving and improving our community. Community partnerships will add opportunities to gain real world experiences where students can make a life long connection to the great outdoors.

Innovation Lab
During this hands-on course, students will explore projects that involve many STEM related topics. This course is a great opportunity for those with a curious and creative mindset! Activities/projects will include Computer Aided Design (CAD) and 3D printing, digital game building, and using the wood shop to design, build, and race a CO_2 dragster!

Lifetime Fitness & Wellness
Lifetime Fitness & Wellness will provide students with a mixture of lifetime physical fitness activities, as well as engaging in personal wellness exercises to develop and maintain a healthy well-being. Strength training, functional fitness, and flexibility are at the core of this course. Students will also learn and develop goals pertaining to the 8 Dimensions of Wellness.

Medical Careers
Are you considering a career in the medical field? This course offers students an opportunity to dive into fundamental aspects of healthcare, covering topics such as basic first aid and CPR, the various body systems, and a focused study of specific medical career paths. A final project focused on using all knowledge and skills from the class will allow students to dive deeper into a medical career.

POP - Power of Positive
The Power of Positive is all about finding the good in people, situations, and our everyday lives. Together we will take a journey that will investigate and develop ways we can grow in seeking out the positivity all around us. POP is designed for you to take a journey of self-discovery and personal growth through motivational and inspiring activities and discussions. In this course, you will learn and develop the skills needed to become a better and more positive YOU. The power of positivity is powerful, real, and practical.

Robotics
Students will be introduced to automation and robotics through hands-on, minds-on problem solving challenges by building and programming robots. We will also look at the impact that automation and robotics has on current careers. This course uses several different robots and coding platforms and is perfect for both beginners and those with some robotics experience!

Teen Chef
Do you enjoy watching hit TV shows like Chopped or Top Chef? Have you always wanted to be able to plan and prepare meals like a pro? If the answer is yes, then ´Teen Chef´ is the class for you! We will be planning, preparing, and creating foundational recipes consistent with nutritional goals. This class is also a great way to explore the exciting world of culinary arts and proceed toward skill advancement in cooking for yourself and others.

The Game of Life
In the Game of Life the road is filled with many twists and turns. This class will use activities, simulations and projects to lead students down the road to financial literacy. Learn the importance of financial responsibility, money management, the basics of banking, saving and budgeting as you plan your financial future. Gain the skills and knowledge you need to help make informed and effective financial decisions to ensure your financial well-being.

Unified Advisors
Students will develop skills to support peers with diverse abilities. They will gain valuable experience in teamwork, collaboration, and communication. Students will assist students with special needs in various activities within elective courses.

This class is designed to foster a community of acceptance and inclusion, emphasizing the physical, intellectual, and social growth of all participants.

Prerequisites: Unified Club Application; Interview and Placement with DMS Unified required.

Unlocking Science: From Earth to Industry
Students will explore a variety of topics across physical, life, and earth sciences through structured, inquiry-based investigations. These investigations will help students understand how scientific concepts are applied in different industries within the Alexandria community. Students will examine the natural, physical, and chemical aspects of science, while developing essential skills in data collection, analysis, and scientific communication.

You're the Boss
Do you have what it takes to be the boss? This class will explore the world of business and the choices that entrepreneurs are faced with every day. Be creative, inventive and take ownership of your own business through hands-on-projects and advertising campaigns.

ARTS (ARTS & MUSIC)

BAND

Eighth Grade Band is designed for students in their third year of studying a traditional band instrument. The main objectives of this class are to expand on individual musicianship and ensemble techniques to develop an appreciation for music through regular performance and study. This course prepares students for future band opportunities at the high school level. Small group lessons are offered to strengthen student abilities on their instrument. Three concerts are scheduled throughout the school year.

CHOIR

Eighth Grade Choir builds on the skills learned in Seventh Grade Choir to further develop our singing voice and music skills. Students will continue to sing in class everyday to develop healthy singing techniques, improve music reading and writing skills, and work together to perform music. Emphasis will be placed on how we as singers can show a composer's intent through stylistic choices. A variety of songs and team building activities will reinforce these skills.

DIGITAL ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Students will learn the elements and principles of art and design and create works of art digitally. Students will explore graphic design area and learn about how to communicate visually through pictures in the digital form. Students will also learn the fundamentals of photography and how to take good pictures, how to plan composition, and how to edit them using various digital programs.

DRAW, PAINT & PRINT IT!

This course will introduce students to a variety of mediums and techniques through 2 dimensional art mediums involving drawing, painting, printmaking, and collage. Some projects will include: Abstract Drawing, Perspective Drawing, Portrait Drawing, Collage, Charcoal, Optical Art, Pastel Drawing, Scratchboard, and Painting Art. The emphasis of this course is to expose students to 2D art mediums and to build their creative skills through the elements and principles of design.

EARLY BIRD CHOIR

Early Bird Choir is an opportunity for students who are taking another fine arts elective (band, orchestra, theatre, art) but want an opportunity to sing in an ensemble. The choir meets for approximately 20 minutes twice a week during Homebase. Students will develop their singing and ensemble skills through performing a variety of music.



MADE FOR THE STAGE

Students will learn the many components of what it takes to create a theater production. Through the eyes of a producer, students will explore and perform with costumes, lighting, sound, stage management and acting. The class will finish with a production on the stage where students can be on stage or behind the scenes.

MUSIC & MEDIA

This class is geared toward project-based learning and content creation in music. Students will explore areas of music in various media, technology, and occupations within the music field. Discussion and projects will focus on the influence of music on our current lifestyle.

ORCHESTRA

Eighth Grade Orchestra is designed for students in their third or fourth year of studying a traditional orchestral instrument (violin, viola, cello, string bass). The main objectives of this class are to expand on individual musicianship and ensemble techniques to develop an appreciation for music through regular performance and study. Students will participate in regularly scheduled small group lessons to strengthen student abilities on their instrument and reinforce the skills learned in the ensemble setting.

SCULPT IT!

This class is for the student who likes to build three dimensional sculptures with their hands through a variety of processes and mediums such as; clay, plaster, wire, paper mache', wood, and found objects. Students will explore 3 dimensional sculptural art throughout the ages and their process of creation. Sculptures will be created through modeling, carving, and building.









Discovery Middle School

Discovery Middle School
510 McKay Avenue North
Alexandria, MN 56308

(320) 762-7900
discovery.alexschools.org