



Scots Academic Planning Guide

2026-2027

McCulloch Intermediate School
Highland Park Middle School

MISSION and VISION

McCulloch Intermediate School and Highland Park Middle School, with an unyielding commitment to excellence, is a partnership of educators, staff, students, parents, and community that strives to provide a superior educational experience and addresses the needs of the developing middle school student. Our school's success focuses on:

- *enhancing intellectual abilities in all academic areas;*
- *challenging students to be creative, curious, high-level, and independent thinkers who are committed to the process of learning;*
- *developing a student's sense of integrity, responsibility, honesty, leadership, and service to the community;*
- *embracing respect for all people and celebrating diversity in a global community;*
- *creating a safe learning environment that meets the needs of all students;*
- *promoting participation in the fine arts and extra-curricular activities; and*
- *providing a dedicated faculty and staff who will guide and prepare students for future academic challenges.*

Highland Park Middle School	McCulloch Intermediate School
Principal: Stefanie Powell	Principal: Katie Schuttler
8th Grade (Class of 2031) • Asst Principal: Bri Riddell • Counselor: Rae Harvill 7th Grade (Class of 2032) • Asst Principal: Jordan Augustus • Counselor: Samatha Mooty Registrar: Celeste Casas	6th Grade (Class of 2033) • Asst Principal: Julie Stephens • Counselor: Buffy Summers 5th Grade (Class of 2034) • Asst Principal: Tiffany McGuire • Counselor: Charlotte Richter Registrar: Celeste Casas

Important Numbers
Main Office / MIS Attendance: 214-780-3500 Administrator Office / HPMS Attendance: 214-780-3600 Counseling Office / Registrar: 214-780-3640

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PLANNING YOUR INTERMEDIATE AND MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

COURSE SELECTION SPECIFICS

- Students are enrolled in at least one course from each of the four core areas (ELA, Math, Science, & Social Studies) during each year of intermediate school and middle school.
- Staffing needs and teacher schedules are determined by student course requests.
- Students should choose courses without the expectation that a specific teacher will be assigned to teach that class. Teacher resignations, reassignments, and student request numbers will be used to develop the school's master schedule.
- Every effort will be made to to schedule students into the elective courses of their choosing, however students are not guaranteed enrollment in their first elective choice.
- Official schedules will be available for students to view prior to the first day of school in Skyward Student Access.
- It is imperative that students and parents review and approve student course selections once finalized. Emails will be sent via Skyward when the process is complete.

COURSE SELECTION TIMELINE

Rising 8th grade selection window:

- **January 22, 2026** = Parent Presentations at 9:00 a.m. in the Auditorium.
- **January 29, 2026** = Student Presentation during Social Studies classes & Elective Choice Sheets distributed.
- **February 6, 2026** = Students submit elective choices via Skyward & return Elective Choice Sheets to their Advisory teacher.
- **March 6, 2026** = Final Date for Parent Verification of Elective Selection in Skyward.

Rising 7th grade selection window:

- **January 21, 2026** = Parent Presentation at 9:00 a.m. in the Auditorium.
- **January 28, 2026** = Student Presentation during Social Studies classes & Elective Choice Sheets distributed.
- **February 3, 2026** = Students submit elective choices via Skyward & return Elective Choice Sheets to their Advisory teacher.
- **February 13, 2026** = Final Date for Parent Verification of Elective Selection in Skyward.

Rising 6th grade selection window:

- **February 10, 2026**= Parent Presentations at 9:00 a.m. in the 5/6 Assembly Room
- **February 11-12, 2026** = Student Presentation during PE Specials, by 5th House
- **February 20, 2026** = Students submit elective choices via Skyward & return Elective Choice Sheets to their Advisory teacher.
- **March 11, 2026** = Final Date for Parent Verification of Elective Selection in Skyward.

Rising 5th graders do not have a selection window.

TAG COURSES

Talented and Gifted (TAG) classes offer identified students instruction in the disciplines of language arts, science, social studies, and/or math. These classes offer appropriately differentiated learning experiences as well as an advanced, enriched curriculum. For more information about TAG identification and service design, refer to the [district website](#). For more information, please contact our TAG coordinator [Kristie Graves](#).

HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

High school courses taken at Highland Park Middle School will appear on students' high school transcript. The grade earned however, is not calculated into the student's high school grade point average. The grade earned will appear on the student's official high school transcript which will be visible to college admission personnel.

High School Course offerings at HPMS:

- **Math** - Algebra 1 and Geometry
- **Languages other than English** (LOTE) - Spanish and French
- **Technology** - see list of class options under the CTE tab
- **Speech / Health**

High School course attendance policy: *To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes an attendance make up plan approved by the principal that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class.*

CHANGING SCHEDULES

DROPPING OR ADDING CLASSES (first 10 days of the semester)

General guidelines for dropping and adding classes are based on UIL eligibility rules. Course adds or drops must occur by 4:00 p.m. on the **10th day of the semester**. Students must meet state laws and HPISD policy governing class attendance in order to receive credit for each course. Eligibility for extracurricular activities is also based on student attendance requirements in each course. Therefore, no schedule changes will be approved after the 10th day of the semester, in accordance with UIL eligibility rules.

- ★ After the first 10 school days of each semester, all schedule change requests will go through a schedule change committee.

SCHEDULE CHANGE POLICY (first 10 days of the semester)

Students need to make course selections carefully during the course selection process as changes after school starts will be limited. Students meet with grade level counselors in the spring to finalize scheduling requests for the following school year and choice sheets submitted by the students are considered a commitment to the school. The final master schedule is based upon these course requests. Schedule change requests are subject to staff and course availability. Students will receive their final class schedules on or before the first day of school.

Schedule change requests that will be considered (first 10 days of the semester):

- **MISSING OR INCOMPLETE**
 - Schedule is missing a required course. *For example, ELA is not scheduled.*

- Schedule is incomplete/missing a period. *For example, a student is not scheduled into a 2nd period.*
- **REPEATED CLASSES**
 - Schedule reflects 2 of the same classes. For example, 2 PE or 2 math classes.
- **WRONG CLASS**
 - Schedule reflects the wrong class. For example, the schedule reflects the wrong band/choir class or period.
- **DID NOT APPLY /AUDITION**
 - Schedule reflects a class for which the student does not have the prerequisite, did not apply, or did not try out. For example, the student is scheduled into Chamber Orchestra.

Schedule change request that will most likely *not* be accommodated:

- Requests for a teacher / advisory change.
- Requests for a period change.
- Requests for matching schedules (to be with a friend).
- Requests to drop a class after the first 10 days of the semester.

****PLEASE NOTE****

- A schedule change request does not guarantee that a schedule change will occur; however, as long as it meets the guidelines, counselors will do their best to accommodate students' requests.
- While every effort will be made to schedule students into the elective courses of their choosing, students are not guaranteed enrollment in elective courses. Enrollment numbers and master scheduling conflicts can result in a student having to be registered for an alternative elective choice.

Process for *requesting* a schedule change (first 10 days of the semester):

1. Gain parent approval.
2. If requesting to add/drop Performing Arts / Sports / Cheer / CTE class, student/parent communication with director, teacher and/or coach is required.
3. Fill out and submit the **Schedule Change Request Form**. The link is available on the Counselor's webpage.
 - a. Note: Email requests and phone calls do not take the place of submitting the google doc

EXAMS FOR ACCELERATION

Exams for acceleration are available for students seeking to advance to the next grade or course level *without having received prior instruction*. Students in grades 6-12 may take single subject exams and must score at least **90%** to accelerate through the course. Click [here](#) for more information.

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Curriculum Subject Areas Or Equivalent Programs	7th Grade Required Courses	8th Grade Required Courses
English/Language Arts	ELA 7	ELA 8
Mathematics	Math 7 *	Math 8 *
Science	Science 7	Science 8
Social Studies	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 8
PE Requirement and Electives	1 year of either Athletics <u>or</u> PE is required at HPMS 3 elective courses per year: - NOTE: Some 8th grade electives award high school credit	

- Students are enrolled in at least one course from each of the four core areas (ELA, Math, Science, & Social Studies) during each year of intermediate school and middle school.
- All students are required to complete PE in both 5th and 6th grade. Students in grades 7 and 8 are required to complete 2 semesters of Physical Education (or an approved Off-Campus PE substitute) prior to the end of the 8th grade. It is our practice that students enroll in Athletics or PE during 7th grade.
- Students may be enrolled in no more than seven classes per semester.

STAAR TESTING

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is the state assessment program that began in spring 2012. STAAR includes 5 end-of-course (EOC) assessments.

Students in the following grades will take assessments under STAAR				
Grade 5	ELA, Math, and Science			
Grade 6	ELA and Math			
Grade 7	ELA and Math			
Grade 8	ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science			
High School	Algebra I*	English I	Biology	U.S. History
		English II		

***Students taking Algebra I at HPMS will take the Algebra I EOC. The score appears on the student's High School transcript which will be visible to college admission personnel.**

ADDITIONAL TESTING

Grade 5-7	Math, Reading, Science, Language Usage (BOY, MOY, EOY)	Grade 8	Pre ACT
Grade 5-8	WrAP Test (BOY) The Writing Assessment Program (WrAP) measures student writing achievement to help educators pinpoint their students' writing strengths and weaknesses.		

SCOTS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

★ All students participate in summer reading in order to continue supporting literacy skills. Summer reading information, when available, can be found on the MIS/HPMS website by clicking [Student Resources](#).

5TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS

Required: Summer reading

English Language Arts and Reading 5 is grounded in the TEKS and HPISD Standards. In 5th-grade language arts, students strengthen their reading, writing, and communication skills through a variety of genres and text types. They read more complex fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama, focusing on analyzing characters, themes, text structures, and author's craft. Students expand their vocabulary and practice using context clues, prefixes, suffixes, and roots to understand new words. In writing, they compose multi-paragraph essays, including personal narratives, informational pieces, and persuasive texts, while developing clear organization, strong sentences, and correct grammar and conventions. They also engage in research projects, use evidence to support ideas, and participate in discussions that build listening and speaking skills. Overall, 5th-grade language arts prepares students for the deeper analysis and more advanced writing expected in middle school.

6TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS

Required: Summer reading

English Language Arts and Reading 6 is grounded in the TEKS and HPISD Standards. In 6th-grade English Language Arts, students deepen their reading and writing skills by analyzing more complex literary and informational texts, focusing on elements such as theme, plot development, central ideas, text structure, and author's purpose. They expand vocabulary using context clues, Greek and Latin roots, and figurative language. In writing, students craft well-organized essays—including personal narratives, literary responses, and argumentative or informational pieces—using strong introductions, transitions, and evidence from texts. They also refine grammar, sentence structure, and conventions. Research skills grow as students gather information from multiple sources, take notes, and present findings clearly. Throughout the year, they participate in collaborative discussions and practice effective speaking and listening skills, preparing them for the analytical reading and more rigorous writing expected in upper middle school.

7TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS

Required: Summer reading

English Language Arts and Reading 7 is grounded in the TEKS and HPISD Standards. In this course, students continue their focus on literary analysis and writing skills. Reading units develop students' skills and strategies for the reading process through mini-lessons, independent practice, and frequent opportunity for written response. Students develop their skills in analyzing the author's craft and purpose through a deep analysis of character, historical fiction book clubs, and the study of dystopian literature. Writing units elaborate on students' ability to compose literary, informational, and argumentative texts with increased focus to the revision and editing process.

8TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS

Required: Summer reading

The English Language Arts and Reading 8 course focuses on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (the state curriculum) and HPISD Standards. Students study literature, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and research, and students will write for various purposes and in many genres, using critical and analytical thinking in their writing about and discussions of short stories, drama, poetry, nonfiction works, and novels through class discussions, individual work, self-selected texts, book clubs, and essays. The students will read selections from various classroom resources but will also be expected to purchase several required books during the year.

MATHEMATICS

★ Student placement in mathematics courses depends on a variety of factors including, STAAR scores, MAP Scores, grades, and teacher input. Enrollment in TAG Math is dependent upon official HPISD TAG testing and placement results.

MATH 5

Prerequisite: None

STAAR Assessment Given: Math 5

In 5th-grade math, students build on their foundational skills by working extensively with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions, including adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing them in real-world contexts. They deepen their understanding of place value and use it to solve multi-step problems. Students explore volume and measurement conversions, analyze patterns and relationships, and classify two-dimensional shapes based on their attributes. They also interpret and create graphs, calculate mean, median, and mode, and begin applying financial-literacy concepts such as budgeting, income, and savings. Overall, 5th-grade math prepares students for middle-school mathematics by strengthening problem-solving, reasoning, and computational fluency.

MATH 5 TAG

Prerequisite: Official TAG Placement

STAAR Assessment Given: Math 6

In HPISD, 5th Math TAG is an accelerated course covering 6th Grade standards and skills. Students expand numerical understanding by working with fractions, decimals, and integers while mastering the ability to compare, order, and operate with all rational numbers.

The curriculum utilizes ratios, rates, and percents to solve real-world problems and fosters algebraic thinking through the writing and evaluation of expressions, equations, and inequalities. Exploration of geometry includes area, surface area, and volume, alongside graphing on the coordinate plane. Additionally, students analyze data using statistical representations and basic probability. Overall, this course strengthens problem-solving skills and prepares learners for the more advanced concepts introduced in 7th grade.

MATH 6

Prerequisite: Math 5

STAAR Assessment Given: Math 6

In 6th-grade math in Texas, students expand numerical understanding by working with fractions, decimals, and integers while mastering the ability to compare, order, and operate with all rational numbers. The curriculum incorporates ratios, rates, and percents to solve real-world problems and fosters algebraic thinking through the writing and evaluation of expressions, equations, and inequalities.

Exploration of geometry includes calculating area, surface area, and volume, alongside graphing points on the coordinate plane. Additionally, learners analyze data using statistical representations and basic probability. Overall, 6th-grade math strengthens problem-solving skills and prepares students for the more advanced concepts introduced in 7th grade.

MATH 6/7

Prerequisite: Math 5 and additional criteria that includes performance on 5th Grade STAAR

STAAR Assessment Given: Math 6

Math 6/7 is an accelerated course blending 6th- and 7th-grade TEKS to build strong number sense, proportional reasoning, and early algebra skills. Instruction focuses on deepening the understanding of rational numbers, mastery of integers, and the application of ratios, rates, and percents to real-world problems.

Learning objectives include writing and solving algebraic expressions, equations, and inequalities; exploring geometry through area, volume, and surface area; and analyzing data, statistics, and basic probability. This curriculum strengthens problem-solving skills and introduces abstract mathematical thinking to prepare students for success.

**HPISD utilizes STAAR scores, MAP data, and course grades to determine readiness for accelerated mathematics. While meeting these high standards ensures a strong foundation for future advanced coursework, Texas law now requires the automatic enrollment of any student who meets state-established STAAR benchmarks.*

Families are encouraged to compare HPISD's rigorous readiness criteria with the state's minimum standards to determine the most appropriate placement. Parents retain the right to opt out of this accelerated track if they feel a different pace better serves the student's needs.

HPISD Criteria includes:

- *Class average of at least 90%*
- *STAAR performance at or above Masters Level*
- *NWEA MAP RIT Score of 235 or above*

MATH 6 TAG

Prerequisite: Official TAG Placement

STAAR Assessment: Math 7

This is an accelerated course that covers 7th Grade standards and skills. The primary focal areas in Grade 7 are number and operations; proportionality; expressions, equations and relationships; and measurement and data. Students use concepts, algorithms and properties of rational numbers to explore mathematical relationships and to describe increasingly complex situations. Students use concepts of proportionality to explore, develop and communicate mathematical relationships, including number, geometry and measurement and statistics/probability. Students use algebraic thinking to describe how a change in one quantity in a relationship results in a change in the other. Students connect verbal, numeric, graphic and symbolic representations of relationships, including equations and inequalities. Students use geometric properties and relationships, as well as spatial reasoning, to model and analyze situations and solve problems. Students communicate information about geometric figures or situations by quantifying attributes, generalize procedures from measurement experiences and use the procedures to solve problems. Students use appropriate statistics, representations of data and reasoning to draw conclusions, evaluate arguments and make recommendations.

MATH 7

Prerequisite: Math 6 or Math 6/7

STAAR Assessment Given: Math 7

The primary focal areas in Grade 7 are number and operations; proportionality; expressions, equations and relationships; and measurement and data. Students use concepts, algorithms and properties of rational numbers to explore mathematical relationships and to describe increasingly complex situations. Students use concepts of proportionality to explore, develop and communicate mathematical relationships, including number, geometry and measurement and statistics/probability. Students use algebraic thinking to describe how a change in one quantity in a relationship results in a

change in the other. Students connect verbal, numeric, graphic and symbolic representations of relationships, including equations and inequalities. Students use geometric properties and relationships, as well as spatial reasoning, to model and analyze situations and solve problems. Students communicate information about geometric figures or situations by quantifying attributes, generalize procedures from measurement experiences and use the procedures to solve problems. Students use appropriate statistics, representations of data and reasoning to draw conclusions, evaluate arguments and make recommendations.

MATH 7/8

Grade Placement: 7th grade

Prerequisite: Accelerated Math 6/7 and additional criteria that includes STAAR and MAP

STAAR Assessment Given: Math 8

Seventh grade TEKS incorporated into the 7/8 math course include: rational numbers, two-step equations and inequalities, proportional relationships, compound probability, similar shapes and scale drawings, describing and using “Pi” (π), surface area and volume of prisms and pyramids, analyzing data from box plots, random sampling, assets and liabilities, budgeting, simple and compound interest.

All eighth grade math TEKS are taught, practiced, learned, and mastered in the 7/8 math course. Eighth grade math TEKS include: real numbers, scientific notation; modeling, writing, and solving multi-step equations and inequalities with variables on both sides using rational number coefficients and constants; interpreting, representing, solving, and graphing proportional and non-proportional linear equations; identifying slope using similar right triangles, tables, graphs, or equations; using multiple representations to solve simultaneous linear equations; ratios, similar shapes, and scale drawings; transversals, Pythagorean theorem, transformations (dilations, rotations, reflections, translations); volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres; scatterplots, absolute deviation, cost of credit, cost of college, and benefits of financial responsibility.

**To ensure success in advanced mathematics, students must meet the following criteria to remain enrolled in the accelerated mathematics pathway.*

- *Class average of at least 90%*
- *STAAR performance at Masters Level*
- *NWEA MAP RIT Score of 240 or above*

7th TAG Math

Grade Placement: 7th grade

Prerequisite: Official TAG Placement

STAAR Assessment Given: Math 8

Eighth grade math TEKS include: real numbers, scientific notation; modeling, writing, and solving multi-step equations and inequalities with variables on both sides using rational number coefficients and constants; interpreting, representing, solving, and graphing proportional and non-proportional linear equations; identifying slope using similar right triangles, tables, graphs, or equations; using multiple representations to solve simultaneous linear equations; ratios, similar shapes, and scale drawings; transversals, Pythagorean theorem, transformations (dilations, rotations, reflections, translations); volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres; scatterplots, absolute deviation, cost of credit, cost of college, and benefits of financial responsibility.

MATH 8

Prerequisite: Math 7

STAAR Assessment Given: Math 8

The primary focal points in Math 8 are using the basic principles of algebra to analyze and represent proportional and nonproportional relationships. Students will continue to build a foundation of basic

understandings in number operations and quantitative reasoning; patterns and relationships in regards to functions, proportions, and linear equations; algebraic writing of both equations and inequalities as well as solving one-, two- and multi-step equations that include variables on both sides of the equation; geometry and spatial reasoning; measurement; personal finance; and data and statistics.

ALGEBRA I

High School Credit = 1.0

Prerequisite: 7/8 Math, 7 TAG Math, or 8 Math

STAAR Assessment Given: Algebra I EOC

*The Algebra 1 EOC score appears on the student's official high school transcript. The grade earned in this class is not used in GPA calculation.

Algebra 1 serves as the critical foundation for all high school mathematics. In this course, students will transition from the concrete concepts of arithmetic to the abstract world of algebraic reasoning. The primary focus is on the study of linear, quadratic, and exponential functions and their related transformations, equations, and associated solutions. Students will use a variety of representations (concrete, numerical, algorithmic, and graphical), tools, and technology to model mathematical situations and solve meaningful problems.

GEOMETRY TAG

High School Credit = 1.0

Prerequisite: Algebra I

STAAR Assessment Given: 7th graders take 7th grade STAAR

8th graders take 8th grade STAAR

This course is specifically designed for students identified as gifted in mathematics who demonstrate a high capacity for abstract reasoning. While the curriculum covers all state-mandated TEKS for Geometry, it is significantly more intensive in its depth and extensive in its scope than the standard course. The curriculum moves beyond rote calculation to prioritize geometric proof and mathematical insight, challenging students to synthesize complex concepts to solve non-routine problems.

SCIENCE

5TH GRADE SCIENCE

In 5th-grade science in Texas, students deepen their understanding of physical, Earth, and life sciences through hands-on investigations aligned with the TEKS. They explore the properties of matter, including mixtures and solutions, and investigate forces such as gravity, friction, and magnetism. Students study energy forms—mechanical, electrical, light, thermal—and learn how energy is transferred and transformed. In Earth science, they examine the water cycle, weather patterns, and the formation of sedimentary rocks and fossils, as well as how natural resources are used and conserved. In life science, students investigate ecosystems, food webs, and the adaptations that help organisms survive in their environments. Throughout the year, they practice the scientific method, collect and analyze data, and use models to communicate their understanding, preparing them for more complex scientific concepts in middle school.

6TH GRADE SCIENCE

In 6th-grade science in Texas, students explore a broad foundation of scientific concepts aligned with the TEKS, focusing on matter, energy, Earth systems, and the diversity of life. They investigate the properties of matter, including density and the behavior of thermal energy, and learn how energy flows through ecosystems and food webs. Students study force and motion, Earth's structures such as the geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere, and the interactions between these systems. They also examine natural resources, weather patterns, and the role of the Sun in driving changes on Earth. Through hands-on investigations, students practice scientific inquiry, data collection, critical thinking, and the use of models to explain natural phenomena. Overall, 6th-grade science builds a strong foundation for the more specialized disciplines of life, Earth, and physical science studied in later grades.

7TH GRADE SCIENCE

Seventh grade Science continues in the study of Texas' four Scientific content areas: Matter & Energy, Force & Motion, Earth & Space, and Organisms & Environments. Students learn about the properties of matter, from elements and compounds to physical and chemical changes and solutions. They study motion, specifically looking at balanced and unbalanced forces. Students will also learn about thermal energy and thermodynamics, transfer of energy and temperature and kinetic energy. In their earth and space unit, they will learn about the solar system, earth's changing surface, and characteristics to support life in space. They also learn about energy flow in ecosystems, human structure and function, evolutionary mechanisms and Taxonomy for identification of organisms.

8TH GRADE SCIENCE

Eighth graders will learn about atoms, protons, the Periodic Table, chemical formulas, reactions and equations. Students will study speed, velocity, acceleration, Newton's Law of motion and the life cycle of a star. Students will consider parts of the universe, the electromagnetic spectrum, types of waves, light years, the life cycle of a star, and the origin of the universe. Students will also focus on plate tectonic theory, atmospheric movement, and the connections between oceans and the weather.

SOCIAL STUDIES

5TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES - U.S. HISTORY

In 5th-grade social studies, students study the history, geography, government, and culture of the United States from its early beginnings to the present, as outlined in the TEKS. They learn about major eras such as colonization, the American Revolution, the founding of the nation, westward expansion, the Civil War, and modern growth and change. Students explore the principles of the U.S. Constitution, the roles of the three branches of government, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. They examine how geography influences settlement and development, analyze economic concepts like supply and demand, and learn about key figures and events that shaped the nation. Throughout the year, students practice map skills, use primary and secondary sources, and develop an understanding of how the United States' past influences its present.

6TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES - WORLD CULTURES

In 6th-grade social studies, students study world history, geography, economics, and cultures, focusing on the development of ancient civilizations and the connections between people and their environments, as outlined in the TEKS. They explore early societies in regions such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Greece, and Rome, examining political systems, social structures, economic practices, and cultural achievements. Students learn to analyze maps, charts, and primary and secondary sources to understand historical events and geographic relationships. They also study the impact of trade, migration, and cultural exchange, as well as the development of belief systems and early scientific and technological innovations. Throughout the year, students build critical thinking and research skills, connecting historical patterns to the modern world.

7TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES - TEXAS HISTORY

Seventh grade Social Studies is designed to survey the development of Texas History from the Pre-Columbian Natives to the end of the 20th Century. Over the course of the year, students develop an understanding and appreciation of the political, economic, and social development of Texas. Students study the events leading to Texas independence, then turn the focus to Texas' developing role in American History. They will develop their historical thinking skills through evaluating documents, exploring multiple viewpoints, drawing conclusions based on reliable evidence, discussing ideas with others, and learning from the past.

8TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES - U.S. HISTORY

Eighth grade Social Studies is designed to study Early American history from the Colonial Era through Reconstruction. Throughout the year, students develop an understanding and appreciation of the political, economic, and social development of the United States. Focus is given to the cause and effect relationship of historical events in addition to the democratic developments of constitutional freedoms and rights. The scope of the course includes European settlement, colonization, revolution and the quest for self-government, as well as the progress of the new nation throughout the test of the Civil War and subsequent Reconstruction.

McCulloch Intermediate School

SPECIALS AND ELECTIVE CLASSES

GRADE 5 SPECIALS

Fifth grade students at McCulloch Intermediate School participate in Specials courses (Art, Music, Theatre, and Spanish) on a nine-week rotation with their homeroom class. In addition, students will attend Physical Education three times per week and Study Skills/Keyboarding twice per week.

This schedule allows students to explore each area in depth while developing skills in creativity, communication, and an appreciation for the arts. A typical daily schedule will consist of two Specials periods:

- **1st Specials Block** - Every day, students attend either Art, Music, Theatre, or Spanish, depending on the nine weeks.
- **2nd Specials Block** - 3 days of PE and 2 days of Study Skills and Keyboarding (one hour class - 30 minutes of Study Skills and 30 minutes of Keyboarding).

ART

Fifth Grade Art introduces students to creative expression through hands-on experiences aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students explore a variety of media and techniques while learning the elements of art and principles of design. The course includes the study of artworks from artists and time periods and emphasizes reflection, responsible use of materials, and art as a form of communication.

KEYBOARDING

Students develop foundational keyboarding skills aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Meeting for 30 minutes twice a week, instruction focuses on proper technique, accuracy, and responsible technology use to support learning across all subject areas.

MUSIC

Fifth Grade Music engages students in active music-making aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students develop skills in singing, playing instruments, reading and writing music, and listening with understanding. The course explores musical styles and historical periods while emphasizing creativity, collaboration, and music as a form of expression and communication.

STUDY SKILLS

This course helps students develop essential habits for academic success. Instruction focuses on organization, time management, goal setting, note-taking, and effective learning strategies to support success across all subject areas.

THEATRE

Fifth Grade Theatre introduces students to dramatic expression aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students explore acting, movement, voice, and storytelling while developing collaboration and communication skills. The course includes the study of theatre and emphasizes creativity, performance, and reflection as tools for self-expression.

SPANISH

Fifth Grade Spanish introduces students to basic Spanish language skills aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through interactive activities while exploring the cultures and traditions of Spanish-speaking countries.

GRADE 6 ELECTIVES

6th grade students at McCulloch Intermediate School will choose two electives as part of their schedule. All electives are year-long courses.

- **Elective Choice 1:** Must choose a Fine Arts Elective
- **Elective Choice 2:** May choose Fine Arts or Academic Electives

FINE ARTS ELECTIVES

BAND

Contact: [John Vanhook](#)

Sixth grade band is open to all students, with no prior instrumental music experience required. Students will select or be assigned an instrument (e.g., flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, percussion) and receive instruction in like-instrument classes to maximize individual learning. The course aims to develop essential skills such as responsibility, self-discipline, goal setting, and teamwork through individual practice and group learning activities.

CHOIR

Contact: [Julia Durbin Nyoka](#)

Sixth-grade choir provides a supportive and collaborative environment for students to develop healthy vocal techniques and a lifelong appreciation for singing. No prior singing experience is required. Students will learn the basics of music reading, ensemble singing, and performance etiquette. The course emphasizes teamwork, discipline, self-expression, and goal-setting through the preparation and presentation of choral music.

ORCHESTRA

Contact: [Shelby Dickey](#)

Sixth grade Orchestra course is open to all sixth-grade students, with no prior instrumental music experience required. Students will select or be assigned a string instrument (violin, viola, cello, or double bass) and receive foundational instruction focused on developing proper playing techniques and musicianship. The course fosters discipline, perseverance, critical thinking, and teamwork through individual practice and group rehearsals.

THEATRE

Contact: [Genevieve Croft](#)

Sixth grade Theatre introduces students to dramatic expression aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students explore acting, movement, voice, and storytelling while developing collaboration and communication skills. The course includes the study of theatre and emphasizes creativity, performance, and reflection as tools for self-expression.

ART

Sixth grade Art, aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), introduces students to the fundamentals of visual arts through four core strands: Foundations, Creative Expression, Historical and Cultural Relevance, and Critical Evaluation and Response. The curriculum is designed to foster visual literacy, critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-expression.

ACADEMIC ELECTIVES

CREATIVE WRITING

The Creative Writing course invites students to explore the power and beauty of language through storytelling, poetry, drama, and personal expression. Students will learn to craft original works of fiction, poetry, and plays while studying techniques used by professional authors and playwrights. Emphasis will be placed on developing a unique voice, experimenting with style and structure, and refining writing through the revision process.

Through reading, discussion, and workshop-based feedback, students will gain confidence as writers and communicators. The class will also explore connections between creativity and real-world communication, preparing students with skills that support success across all subjects and careers.

By the end of the course, students will have built a portfolio of polished creative work and will have participated in a publication or performance opportunity, such as a student literary anthology, reading event, or showcase. This course reflects Highland Park ISD's belief that students should "Enter to learn, go forth to serve," by helping young writers use their words to inspire, connect, and make a meaningful impact on their world.

STEM INTEGRATIONS

The 6th Grade STEM Integrations course is designed to challenge students with more advanced problem-solving and project-based experiences, the course emphasizes growth over time, allowing students to deepen their skills in engineering design, logical reasoning, and collaborative innovation. Students will tackle extended projects that encourage perseverance, creativity, and iteration, reinforcing the importance of testing, refining, and improving solutions.

While technology plays a supporting role, the majority of TEKS in this course are met through hands-on, non-digital activities. Students engage in designing models, organizing data, creating systems, and exploring robotics and engineering concepts in tangible ways that do not depend on devices. This approach ensures that students focus on core STEM thinking —computational reasoning, critical analysis, and clear communication—while still gaining an awareness of digital citizenship and responsible technology use.

Through the year-long structure, STEM Integrations provides sustained opportunities for students to grow as problem solvers and innovators. The course prepares students not only for the rich variety of robotics and engineering opportunities available in 7th and 8th grade but also for the challenges of applying STEM thinking across all areas of their academic journey.

Highland Park Middle School

ELECTIVE CLASSES

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH (LOTE)

Competitive colleges and the HPMS Distinguished Achievement Diploma require **three years of the same world language**. Research shows that studying a second language strengthens students' English skills and supports higher performance on college entrance exams.

HPMS Program Structure and Changes

- Historically, HPMS offered **LOTE I** across two years (LOTE IA in 7th grade and LOTE IB in 8th grade), totaling **1.0 high school credit**.
- Beginning **2026–2027**, LOTE I will be offered as a **single-year high school credit course** for **8th graders only**, consistent with other high school level courses at HPMS. **7th graders** will be able to select the ***Spanish Foundations*** course to continue preparation for high school Spanish in the 8th grade. This course is ***not*** a prerequisite for high school Spanish.
- **For the 2026–2027 school year only:**
 - Students who completed **LOTE IA** in 7th grade will enroll in **LOTE IB**.
 - Students who did **not** take LOTE IA may enroll in **LOTE I** to complete the full Level I credit in 8th grade.

Workload & Expectations

- Students should expect a **more rigorous and faster-paced workload** consistent with a high school credit course. Homework is assigned regularly to reinforce new grammar, speaking, writing, and listening skills. Because language learning is cumulative, students must remain current with all coursework.
- Assessments are administered each quarter (**two major, three minor**) and students will take **fall and spring comprehensive semester exams**.

Contact: [Steve Iler](#)

FRENCH 1

Grade Placement: 8th grade only

Prerequisite: None

 **High School Credit** = 1.0

Course Length: 1 year

With a curriculum anchored in TEKS, this course is an introduction to and a development of the three modes of communication: interpersonal writing and speaking, interpretive reading and listening, and presentational writing and speaking. Basic grammar concepts and vocabulary building are presented. An introduction to the culture of the French-speaking world is also included as well as STEAM-oriented, student-centered design projects that employ French skills to explore issues pertaining to real-life problems. By the end of this course, students will achieve Novice Mid to Novice High on the ACTFL proficiency levels. There will be an average of twenty minutes' minimum homework nightly to reinforce daily concepts.

FRENCH 1B

Grade Placement: 8th grade only

Prerequisite: French 1A

Required: Must have successfully completed French 1A in the 2025-2026 School Year

 **High School Credit** = 1.0* (Combined with French 1A with a year-end grade of above 70%.)

Course Length: 1 year

Students continue their study of French in the 8th grade. This is the second half of the high school Level 1 language class, which includes listening, speaking, reading, writing and culture. The pace and daily homework resemble a high school class.

SPANISH FOUNDATIONS: PREPARING FOR HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS

Grade Placement: 7th grade only

Prerequisite: None

Not for High School Credit

Course Length: 1 year

The course is designed for seventh-grade students who wish to further develop their Spanish skills in a supportive, skill-building environment. While it does not earn high school credit, the curriculum is intentionally structured to prepare students for a high school-level Spanish course in eighth grade. Students will build upon the Spanish learned in Highland Park ISD, strengthening their reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities through interactive activities and real-world communication. Emphasis is placed on the most frequently used Spanish words and phrases to get students feeling confident in their ability to communicate. By the end of the course, students will have a strong foundation and increased confidence to successfully transition into a high school credit Spanish class.

SPANISH 1

Grade Placement: 8th grade only

Prerequisite: None

 **High School Credit** = 1.0

Course Length: 1 year

This course focuses on the Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational modes of communication which include understanding of print and audio material, speaking and writing exchanges with another person, and presentations in written and spoken formats. Spanish I includes an introduction to basic grammar concepts, vocabulary building strategies, and cultural background. By the end of this course students should be able to communicate at a Novice Mid to Novice High level. This means the students will be able to participate in conversations and maintain social interactions about familiar and predictable topics in everyday situations using learned and recombined phrases and short sentences. Additionally, students will have online access to the textbook, homework assignments, videos, and other resources. The class will be increasingly taught in the target language with a student speaking goal of 90% Spanish.

SPANISH 1B

Grade Placement: 8th grade only

Prerequisite: Spanish 1A

Required: Must have successfully completed Spanish 1A in the 2025-2026 School Year

 **High School Credit** = 1.0* (Combined with Spanish 1A with a year-end grade of above 70%.)

Course Length: 1 year

Students continue their study of Spanish in the 8th grade. This is the second half of the high school Level 1 language class, which includes listening, speaking, reading, writing and culture. The pace and daily homework resemble a high school class.

ACADEMIC ELECTIVES

Grade Placement: 7th grade only

Prerequisite: None

Contact: Dr. Mike Schraeder- schraem@hpisd.org

Course Length: 1 year

CREATIVE WRITING

The Creative Writing course invites students to explore the power and beauty of language through storytelling, poetry, drama, and personal expression. Students will learn to craft original works of fiction, poetry, and plays while studying techniques used by professional authors and playwrights. Emphasis will be placed on developing a unique voice, experimenting with style and structure, and refining writing through the revision process.

Through reading, discussion, and workshop-based feedback, students will gain confidence as writers and communicators. The class will also explore connections between creativity and real-world communication, preparing students with skills that support success across all subjects and careers.

By the end of the course, students will have built a portfolio of polished creative work and will have participated in a publication or performance opportunity, such as a student literary anthology, reading event, or showcase. This course reflects Highland Park ISD's belief that students should "Enter to learn, go forth to serve," by helping young writers use their words to inspire, connect, and make a meaningful impact on their world.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

★ Upon successful completion, grades from CTE courses designated to award high school credit will be reflected on the student's high school transcript. GPA points do not factor into the student's high school GPA; however, the course name and the grade earned will appear on the student's transcript. Completion of both semesters with a year-end grade average above 70% (in the Skyward column YAF) will award 1.0 high school credit.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY - BROADCASTING

Grade Placement: 8th grade only

 **High School Credit** = 1.0

Prerequisite: Principles of Arts, Audio/Video Technology (Intro to Digital Media) and/or with teacher approval while concurrently enrolled in Principles of Arts, Audio/Video Technology.

Required: Application & teacher approval

Contact:

Course Length: 1 year

NOTE: Satisfies technology credit for high school graduation

This course is open to students who are selected as staff members of Raider Media News. Students will create content for, update, and manage school news, and website - raidermedia.net. The majority of the class time is spent working on video production. They will be covering school news and events, creative video projects, and web authoring. Students in this class are involved in the production of the weekly live Friday video that is broadcasted to the entire school. Students will create all the content for this show. Students must apply and are selected based on Film Production work samples, responsibility, leadership, communication skills, grades, and teacher recommendations.

PRINCIPLES OF APPLIED ENGINEERING

Grade Placement: 8th grade only

 **High School Credit** = 1.0

Prerequisite: None

Contact: [James Sciandra](#)

Course Length: 1 year

NOTE: Satisfies technology credit for high school graduation

Principals of Applied Engineering (formerly Engineering Basics) provides an overview of the various fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and their interrelationships. Students will develop engineering communication skills, which include computer graphics, modeling, and presentations, by using a variety of computer hardware and software applications to complete assignments and projects. Upon completing this course, students will understand the various fields of engineering and will be able to make informed career decisions. Further, students will have worked on a design team to develop a product or system. Students will use multiple software applications to prepare and present course assignments. This course is the first pathway course to Robotics I /II and other engineering courses.

FUNDAMENTALS OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Grade Placement: 8th grade only

 **High School Credit** = 1.0

Prerequisite: None

Contact: [Landry Flynn](#)

Course Length: 1 year

NOTE: Satisfies technology credit for high school graduation

Fundamentals of Computer Science (Formerly Intro to Computer Science) is intended as a first course for those students just beginning the study of computer science and coding. Students will learn about computer tools and coding languages that are used every day. Students will foster their creativity and innovation through opportunities to

design, implement, and present solutions to real-world problems. Students will collaborate and use computer science concepts to access, analyze, and evaluate information needed to solve problems. Students will learn the problem-solving and reasoning skills that are the foundation of computer science. By using computer science knowledge and skills that support the work of individuals and groups in solving problems, students will select the technology appropriate for the task, synthesize knowledge, create solutions, and evaluate the results. Students will learn digital citizenship by researching current laws and regulations and by practicing integrity and respect. Students will gain an understanding of the principles of computer science through the study of technology operations and concepts. The six strands include creativity and innovation; communication and collaboration; research and information fluency; critical thinking; problem-solving, and decision making; digital citizenship; and technology operations and concepts. This course is the first pathway course to Computer Science I and II.

PRINCIPLES OF ARTS, AUDIO/VIDEO (A/V) TECHNOLOGY, AND COMMUNICATIONS

-Formerly INTRO TO DIGITAL MEDIA

Grade Placement: 7th or 8th Grade

 **High School Credit** = 1.0

Prerequisite: None

Contact: [Amanda Wall](#)

Course Length: 1 year

NOTE: *Satisfies technology credit for high school graduation*

This year-long interactive technology course introduces students to the skills related to various forms of digital media. In one semester, emphasis is placed on print media: writing, editing, photography, graphic design, and desktop publishing. During this semester, students engage in journalistic research, interviewing, and reporting, while demonstrating various journalistic writing styles. Students use Canon DSLR cameras to learn and perform digital photography techniques, photographic composition techniques, and demonstrate proficiency in photo editing and enhancement using Adobe Photoshop. Students also bring their work to life through graphic design and desktop publishing, using Adobe InDesign in a lab of iMac computers. In the other semester, the emphasis is placed on broadcast media: how to properly use video cameras, microphones, lighting systems, scripting software, and audio/video editing software. The learning environment is outfitted with iMac computers, Final Cut Pro, Reason, Adobe Photoshop, and Chroma Key Green Screen studio. During this semester, students script, act in, and produce a variety of informative and entertaining video projects, such as commercials and short films. Successful completion of both semesters of this course earns one high school credit and is a prerequisite to apply for the yearbook, newspaper, or broadcasting classes in eighth grade at HPMS.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY - NEWSPAPER

Grade Placement: 8th grade only

 **High School Credit** = 1.0

Prerequisite: Principles of Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications (Intro to Digital Media) and/or with teacher approval while concurrently enrolled in Principles of Arts, Audio/Video Technology.

Required: Application & teacher approval

Contact: [Amanda Wall](#)

Course Length: 1 year

NOTE: *Satisfies technology credit for high school graduation*

This course is open to students who are selected as staff members of Raiders Digest Newspaper/ Magazine. Students will cover school events, manage, and produce all issues of the full-color school magazine, which is published every six weeks. Students must apply and are selected based on responsibility, grades, writing skills, photography skills, design skills, leadership skills, communication skills, computer skills, and teacher recommendations.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY - YEARBOOK

Grade Placement: 8th grade only

 **High School Credit** = 1.0

Prerequisite: Principles of Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications (Intro to Digital Media) and/or with teacher approval while concurrently enrolled in Principles of Arts, Audio/Video Technology.

Required: Application & teacher approval

Contact: [Amanda Wall](#)

This course is open to students who are selected as staff members of The Legend. Students will cover school events and be responsible for making the award-winning 224-page MIS/HPMS school yearbook. Students must apply and are selected based on responsibility, grades, writing skills, photography skills, design skills, leadership skills, communication skills, computer skills, and teacher recommendations.

TECHNOLOGY

EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY BASICS - (KEYBOARDING AND COMPUTER APPLICATION)

Grade Placement: 7th or 8th Grade

Prerequisites: None

NOT for High School Credit

Technology is more than just a convenience—it is a vital tool for problem-solving, collaboration, and professional communication. This course is designed to transform students from casual technology users into proficient digital creators.

Students will begin by mastering the fundamental "language" of the computer: keyboarding. Once a baseline of speed and accuracy is established, the focus shifts toward leveraging the Google Workspace suite to solve complex problems and communicate ideas effectively.

EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY DESIGN - CODING AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

Grade Placement: 7th or 8th Grade

Prerequisites: None

NOT for High School Credit

The coding course is a survey course that provides students an opportunity to learn and work in various coding languages, such as HTML, CSS, Scratch, Javascript, and Python. Students will learn to design and make websites, design games, code games, develop applications for mobile devices, program robots, learn the history of coding and research professions involving coding. In addition, students will use the principles of good design to create original digital artwork. Graphic design will be taught using professional software made by Adobe: Photoshop, Illustrator and Animate. Students will develop an online portfolio, including photo collages, personal logos, business cards, buttons, and font creation.

FINE ARTS

HPMS BAND (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th & 8th Grade

Required: Prior band experience and audition

Contact: [John Vanhook](#)

Band is divided into three ensembles; Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, and Concert Band. Every effort is made to place band students based on musical development. All seventh and eighth grade band students will participate in football game performances, concerts, contests, individual auditions, solos and small ensembles. Unlike beginning band classes where students spend the year learning to play their instrument, advanced band classes learn ensemble skills that help to prepare them for high school band and beyond. As in beginning band classes, private lessons are highly encouraged for all students involved in the band program.

- ★ **Course Selection:** *students will choose “Band” and after auditions will be placed into Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, or Concert Band based on director recommendations.*

BEGINNER BAND (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th & 8th Grade

Required: No prior experience necessary

Contact: [John Vanhook](#)

Beginner Band is open to all students, with no prior instrumental music experience required. Students will select or be assigned an instrument (e.g., flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, percussion) and receive instruction in like-instrument classes to maximize individual learning. The course aims to develop essential skills such as responsibility, self-discipline, goal setting, and teamwork through individual practice and group learning activities.

TENOR/BASS CHOIR (full year)

Grade Placement: Boys' 7th & 8th Grade

Contact: [Julia Durbin Nyoka](#)

All Tenor-Bass Singers in 7th and 8th grade are welcome to join the 7/8th Grade Tenor-Bass Choir. There are no auditions! This is an exciting, energetic class where students master the fundamentals of singing, sight-reading, and vocal musicianship. Concepts and musical repertoire will be intermediate to advanced. Performance opportunities include the Fall Concert, NorthPark Concert, Pre-UIL Concert, Spring Pop Concert, All-Region Choir, UIL Solo & Ensemble, UIL Concert & Sight-Reading Contest, and performances around the campus and community. The Raider Choir is a place where you make life-long friends that create one big family full of laughter and fun!

- ★ *7th Grade Choir allows eligibility to audition for 8th Grade **Pop Choir**.*
- ★ *Pop Choir meets during Raider Hour and is not a separate class period.*

TREBLE CHOIR (full year)

Grade Placement: Girls' 7th & 8th Grade

Contact: [Julia Durbin Nyoka](#)

All Treble Singers in 7th and 8th grade are welcome to join the 7/8th Grade Treble Choir. There are no auditions! This is an exciting, energetic class where students master the fundamentals of singing, sight-reading, and vocal musicianship. Concepts and musical repertoire will be intermediate to advanced. Performance opportunities include the Fall Concert, NorthPark Concert, Pre-UIL Concert, Spring Pop Concert, All-Region Choir, UIL Solo & Ensemble, UIL Concert & Sight-Reading Contest, and performances around the campus and community. The Raider Choir is a place where you make life-long friends that create one big family full of laughter and fun!

- ★ *7th Grade Choir allows eligibility to audition for 8th Grade **Pop Choir**.*
- ★ *Pop Choir meets during Raider Hour and is not a separate class period.*

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th & 8th Grade

Required: Audition and teacher approval

Contact: [Shelby Dickey](#)

The Chamber orchestra is a unique, rigorous class that focuses on advanced musical techniques and prepares students for many different types of performances and musical engagements. Students in this class get to participate in concerts, competitions, field trips, and exciting activities throughout the school year. This group is comprised of auditioned orchestra students who play challenging music while also having a rewarding, fun experience. Members of the Chamber Orchestra are expected to demonstrate musicianship, technical proficiency, and commitment to detailed rehearsal and individual practice. Students are placed in the appropriate orchestra based on audition and previous experience.

PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th & 8th Grade

Required: Audition and teacher approval

Contact: [Shelby Dickey](#)

The Philharmonic orchestra is an exciting class that focuses on music fundamentals and all other skills necessary to prepare performances and musical engagements. Students in this class get to participate in concerts, competitions, field trips, and exciting activities throughout the school year. This group is comprised of orchestra students of all levels who enjoy creating music and having a fun, positive experience. Members of the Philharmonic Orchestra are expected to develop technical and musical proficiency, mature their instrument skills and tone production, as well as learn ensemble skills. Students are placed in the appropriate orchestra based on audition and previous experience.

BEGINNER ORCHESTRA (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th & 8th Grade

Required: No prior experience necessary

Contact: [Shelby Dickey](#)

Beginner Orchestra is open to all sixth-grade students, with no prior instrumental music experience required. Students will select or be assigned a string instrument (violin, viola, cello, or double bass) and receive foundational instruction focused on developing proper playing techniques and musicianship. The course fosters discipline, perseverance, critical thinking, and teamwork through individual practice and group rehearsals.

THEATRE (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th & 8th Grade

Required: None

Contact: [Genevieve Croft](#)

This class is an introduction to dramatic performance. Students will explore all areas of theatre arts including basic stage movement, voice, pantomime, improvisation, script writing, performance, theatre history, lip sync, musical theatre, and reader's theatre. Students will also be introduced to duet and monologue-based performances. Beginner technical theatre skills and aspects of design are introduced and practiced within the course curriculum. Students are encouraged to audition for the UIL One Act Play in the fall semester (for Spring competition) and the Spring musical. Theatre 1 will prepare and produce a theatrical performance in the Spring.

TECHNICAL THEATRE (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th & 8th Grade

Required: None

Contact: [Genevieve Croft](#)

This class will focus on the different elements of theater that exist off stage, looking at each through the lens of design. Specific design units include set, lighting, sound, and costume design; as well as theatre safety and building & stage construction. In addition to projects done within class, students may have the opportunity to help set up and

facilitate various performances held in the auditorium throughout the year. Students in this class help build sets and props, program lights, create and design costumes and help with Theatrical Marketing. Students are encouraged to audition for crew for the UIL One Act Play in the fall semester (for Spring competition) and the Spring musical. Technical theatre students are required to compete in UIL Theatrical Design in the Spring semester (in-class, virtually submitted, as of 2026).

EXPLORING ART: ART and CERAMICS (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th or 8th Grade

Prerequisites: None

A mixed-media introductory course that combines two- and three-dimensional art practices. Students explore drawing, painting, and foundational ceramics techniques while developing creative problem-solving skills and personal expression through both clay and traditional art media.

ADVANCED ART (full year)

Grade Placement: 8th Grade

Prerequisites: Teacher Approval

Contact:

An advanced studio course for students who have successfully completed Art and Ceramics 1 or have received teacher approval. This class provides in-depth exploration of drawing, painting, and mixed media, emphasizing composition, technique, and personal artistic development. Students create a cohesive portfolio and prepare work for exhibition opportunities.

ADVANCED CERAMICS (full year)

Grade Placement: 8th Grade

Prerequisites: Teacher Approval

Contact:

An advanced-level ceramics course for students who have completed Art and Ceramics 1 or have received teacher approval. The class builds on foundational skills with refined hand-building, intermediate wheel work, and advanced surface techniques. Students focus on craftsmanship, creative problem-solving, and individual artistic style while preparing work for display and portfolio documentation.

ATHLETICS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

1 year of either Athletics or PE is required to take at HPMS

ATHLETICS (full year) 7th grade = 1st period 8th grade = 8th period

Girls Athletics Coordinator/Contact: Coach [Ben Fuqua](#)

Boys Athletics Coordinator/Contact: Coach [Brady Thomas](#)

Athletics provides the student with the opportunity to participate in competitive sports. It is expected that students who sign up for athletics try out for one or more of our competitive sports teams as well as develop the proper attitude and work ethic that it takes to be a contributing team member.

Please Note: Per HPISD Athletic Department, students currently enrolled in athletics are not permitted to transfer from Athletics to OCPA during the school year if they wish to participate in athletics in the future.

IN-SEASON SPORTS TEAMS: BEFORE and/or AFTER school practices as well as game attendance are required. Placement on athletic teams will be determined by the coaching staff through a tryout process prior to each athletic season.

OFF-SEASON ATHLETICS: Students who are not participating in the in season sport or those that did not make the team after the tryout process will be participating in daily off-season workouts. Off season consists of a supervised work out program, during the athletic period, that includes but is not limited to strength/conditioning training, agility drills, and etc.

The REQUIRED athletic forms that should be completed prior to the first day of school are as follows:

- **UIL PHYSICAL form:**
 - Physicals must be completed on May 1st of the year, or later.
 - Physicals must be completed on the UIL forms, signed by a medical doctor, and turned in to the Athletic training staff at HPMS.
 - Students may not participate in Athletics or sport tryouts in any way until the UIL Physical forms are completed and turned in.
 - There are no makeup tryouts for students who do not have their forms turned in on time.
- **ONLINE FORMS:**
 - There are several UIL forms that must be completed online before any Athletic period participation.
 - All online forms should be completed before the first day of school.
- These forms may be downloaded and completed at the HPISD website under “Athletics” or click on the links above.
- **QUESTIONS about Physicals or Online Forms?** - Contact [Jordan Graham](#) (Athletic Trainer)

Competitive sports offered at HPMS:

- **FALL SEASON:** Cross Country, Football, and Volleyball
- **WINTER SEASON:** Basketball
- **SPRING SEASON:** Track & Field

OFF-CAMPUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY - OCPA (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th and/or 8th grade

Required: Application **(due August 2026)**

Required: One time fee (\$150) paid in full at the beginning of the year through Skyward.

Required: Students must sign themselves out daily through specified exits.

Required: OCPA coaches/facilities will be vetted to ensure the safety of our students.

Contacts: Coach [Reesa McFarlin](#) / Coach [Colleen Johnson](#)

The Off-Campus Physical Activity Program has been established to allow students to pursue high-level capabilities in specialized areas of sports and physical education through individual programs offered outside the district. Students who are currently participating in individual programs, which involve a minimum of 15 hours of intense, professionally supervised training, may apply to pursue their outside interests, and substitute off-campus physical education for state and local P.E. requirements.

Please Note: OCPA is a full year course, therefore, students are not allowed to transfer into OCPA between semesters. Per HPISD Athletic Department, students currently enrolled in athletics are not permitted to transfer from Athletics to OCPA during the school year if they wish to participate in athletics in the future.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th or 8th grade

Prerequisite: None

Contact: Coach [Brock Blair](#)

The Adventure/Outdoor Education course will enhance and educate students in outdoor activities and wildlife conservation. The curriculum includes: The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Hunter Education, Boater Education, and Angler Education courses. Wilderness Survival, Trip planning, camping, backpacking, orienteering, archery and tackle crafts, are also areas of exploration for the student. Emphasis is placed on ethics, safety, conservation, laws, responsibilities, and physical fitness.

- *Athletic physicals are not required.*
- *Successful completion of this course results in certification in **Hunter Education** and **Boater Education**.*

PARTNER PE (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th or 8th grade

Prerequisite: Teacher Approval

Contact: Coach [Travis Snowden](#)

Physical Education is adapted to each student's individual physical capabilities. This class is designed to develop recreational and leisure skills that can lead to life-long physical fitness. Peer tutors provide assistance to students in need of extra support. Peer tutors are expected to be a leader/role model for other students by supporting age-appropriate social skills and helping with academic (PE) tasks.

- *Athletic physicals are not required.*

PE TENNIS (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th and/or 8th grade

Prerequisite: None

Contact: Coach [Mitch Hallum](#)

This course affords the student the opportunity to learn how to play the sport, and have lots of fun while learning. Emphasis is placed on learning the rules, proper etiquette and fundamental skills. Students will work on all strokes (forehand, backhand, serve, serve return, volley, overhead and lob). There will also be fitness days to encourage healthy physical activity to promote lifelong fitness.

- *Athletic physicals are not required.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE) (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th or 8th grade

Prerequisite: None

Contact: Coach [Colleen Johnson](#)

Physical Education involves achieving and maintaining the optimal physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being of the individual. Activities will include team-based sports, as well as individual challenges. Participation in healthy physical activity and practicing healthful behavior are goals of the physical education program.

- *Athletic physicals are not required.*

TEAM TENNIS (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th and/or 8th grade

Prerequisite: Coach Approval Only

Required: Online athletic forms (please refer to complete list, under Athletics)

Contact: Coach [Mitch Hallum](#)

Team Tennis is a highly competitive tennis class for experienced driven players. Players are expected to put in an additional 15-20 hours a week on the court outside of school. Players will actively participate in USTA and UTR tournaments throughout the year. The focus will be on double skills, strategy, and preparing kids to be a part of a high school State Championship team.

GYMNASTICS (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th and/or 8th grade

Prerequisite: None

Required: Online athletic forms (please refer to complete list, under Athletics)

Contact: Coach [Justin James](#) (Girls Coach) or Coach [Mark Sherman](#) (Boys Coach)

Register for Athletics during course selection. Parents are responsible for transportation to and from HPHS.

BOYS OFFERINGS, with link: [HPMS Boys Gymnastics](#)

GIRLS OFFERINGS, with link: [HPMS Girls Gymnastics](#)

OTHER ELECTIVES

HEALTH AND SPEECH (full year with 2 one semester high school credit courses)

HEALTH

Grade Placement: 8th grade only



High School Credit: 0.5

Prerequisites: None

Course Length: 1 Semester (either fall or spring)

This co-ed course follows the same curriculum as 9th -12th Health. The course is designed to provide accurate health information that will enhance decision-making and quality of life. Units taught are (1) Personal Health, (2) Mental Health, (3) Nutrition & Physical Activity (4) Injury & Violence Prevention with First Aid & CPR, (5) Drugs, Alcohol, & Tobacco, (6) Sexual Reproduction

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS (SPEECH)

Grade Placement: 8th grade only



High School Credit: 0.5

Prerequisites: None

Course Length: 1 Semester (either fall or spring)

Understanding and developing skills in communication are fundamental to all other learning and all levels of human interaction. For successful participation in professional and social life, students must develop effective communication skills. Rapidly expanding technologies and changing social and corporate systems demand that students send clear verbal messages, choose effective nonverbal behaviors, listen for desired results, and apply valid critical thinking and problem-solving processes. Students enrolled in Professional Communication will be expected to identify, analyze, develop, and evaluate communication skills needed for professional and social success in interpersonal situations, group interactions, and personal and professional presentations.

★ **PLEASE NOTE:** The following courses are **not available for students to select in Skyward** during course selection. If a student is interested, he/she needs to make their 3 elective choices in Skyward but indicate their class preference, below, on their course selection sheet. Approval & placement in one of the following courses will replace one of the student's elective choices.

OFFICE AIDE

Grade Placement: 7th and/or 8th grade

Required: Admin Approval

Course Length: Full year

Students will be assigned to work in the 5/6 or 7/8 Attendance Office or the Counseling Office. Aides are expected to be responsible, trustworthy and friendly with a positive attitude.

LIBRARY AIDE

Grade Placement: 7th and/or 8th grade

Required: Admin Approval

Course Length: Full year

Students will be assigned to work in the Library. Aides are expected to be responsible, trustworthy and friendly with a positive attitude.

PEER TUTOR

Grade Placement: 7th and/or 8th grade

Required: Admin Approval and Teacher Interview

Course Length: Full year

Student peer tutors will be working with other students in an inclusive situation (electives, PE, general education, fundamental classes, lunch and/or transition between classes). Peer tutors are expected to be a leader/role model for other students by supporting age-appropriate social skills and helping with academic tasks. They will receive training that addresses maintaining student confidentiality and strategies to be an effective Peer Tutor.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT ELECTIVES

The courses listed below are not available for student selection. Students will be placed in these courses according to the criteria established in each course description.

- ★ *Space is limited. Students will be selected for this course based on committee recommendation of teachers, parents, and counselors.*

STUDY SKILLS (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th and/or 8th grade

Required: Admin Placement

Study Skills is designed to serve as a support for students who need further instruction and development of executive functioning skills. These skills may include, but are not limited to, organization of materials, time management, test taking skills, study skills, understanding personal learning strengths, developing personal strategies, self-advocacy, and self-inhibitory skills. The class offers a time for students to develop and build strong necessary study and executive functioning skills as well as time to study, complete work, organize and plan. This class will follow a specific structure and routine and is not intended to be a "study hall" or free period, but an opportunity for growth and learning of skills.

Study Skills is meant to be a tier 3 intervention designed for students that need support to meet grade level proficiency (passing grades). Since it is intended to be a remediation class (like Math/ELAR lab), not all students will "qualify" to be enrolled.

MATHEMATICS LAB (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th or 8th grade

Required: Admin Approval

Limited Availability Offering

HPMS Math Lab provides targeted support for students needing additional help in mastering key mathematical concepts. The primary goal is to reinforce students' understanding of current grade-level instruction, preparing them for success in standard core math classes. A low student-teacher ratio is maintained to maximize 1:1 attention; lessons are strategically designed to address individual learning needs. While occasionally revisiting foundational skills, each lesson maintains a close connection to the ongoing content in students' core math classes. The course aims to empower students with the skills needed to confidently navigate their regular math classes.

***Please Note:** Math lab is designed to be a tier 3 intervention. For reference, tier 1 is class time support, tier 2 is small group support (being pulled out of Raider Hour for interventions), and tier 3 is individual support. This class is for students who struggle with math concepts and have significant gaps in their learning based on previous and current year MAP, STAAR, and grades in class.*

ELAR LAB (full year)

Grade Placement: 7th or 8th grade

Required: Admin Placement

Limited Availability Offering

ELAR Lab is a specialized intervention course designed to support 7th and 8th grade students in improving their reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar skills. The reading component focuses on building essential skills such as word recognition, vocabulary development, language comprehension, and fluency. Students participate in activities aimed at strengthening these areas to boost overall reading comprehension. In the writing component, students learn to effectively navigate the writing process and create texts across various genres. With personalized instruction and individual feedback, the course equips students with the necessary tools to succeed in their standard ELAR classes.

***Please Note:** ELAR lab is designed to be a tier 3 intervention. For reference, tier 1 is class time support, tier 2 is small group support (being pulled out of Raider Hour for interventions), and tier 3 is individual support. This class is for students who struggle with English Language Arts concepts and have significant gaps in their learning based on previous and current year MAP, STAAR, and grades in class.*