

Junior highs to become middle schools next year

As part of the school district's overall change to preK/K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 grade spans, all four junior high schools in Osseo Area Schools will become gr 6-8 middle schools next year.

Interdisciplinary teams and daily advisories

Two key characteristics of middle schools are:

1. Grade-level interdisciplinary teams for instruction in math, science, social studies, and language arts ("house model"), and
2. Daily advisory with structured curriculum around college/career planning, social/emotional learning, and academic oversight.

The interdisciplinary team model provides middle students with a close, supportive environment where they feel a sense of belonging that is important to success. The team of teachers shares the same group of students, allowing for more communication and collaboration in student learning.

Other middle school highlights

- Each middle school will offer a modified eight-period day that allows for two exploratory classes with flexibility within the six remaining periods to offer four core classes plus advisory and lunch.
- 6th and 7th grade students will have math, language arts, science, social studies and advisory every day. Exploratory courses will complement the core classes.
- Physical education/health and music will meet every other day throughout the year. Students will be able to select which music option they prefer: band, choir, orchestra or a music class called "making music."
- 8th grade students will have math, language arts, science, social studies and advisory every day. 8th grade students will have the opportunity to choose two electives each trimester.
- World language (Spanish and French) is being added as an elective for 8th grade students next year. (For all elective courses, actual offerings will depend on the number of students registering for each course.)
- The middle school math program will continue to have accelerated options. All 6th graders will experience a higher level of rigor in math by taking the traditional 7th grade course. In 7th and 8th grade, two levels of math (core and HP option) will be available.
- As this newsletter went to press, the Middle Level Design Team was nearing a recommendation on how best to meet the needs of high-achieving students.
- Middle school features can be incorporated into any middle school, even if it has a special thematic focus, like the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) program at Brooklyn Middle School, or the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at North View. Course offerings may vary to align with each school's magnet theme.

Ready to welcome new students

At each middle school, next year's 8th graders will be ready to welcome incoming 6th and 7th graders and help them transition to their new school. At each school, students are receiving leadership training so that they can support the transition of students new to the school next year.

What's next?

Information mailed to homes

By mid-February, information will be mailed to families of current 5th through 7th graders to provide more information about what to expect in middle school.

Registration

This spring, school counselors will help current 5th and 6th grade students register for their middle school classes.

Transition activities at elementary schools

Each elementary school is planning some spring activities to help current 5th and 6th graders bring their elementary experience to a close with some “moving on” celebrations.

How you can learn more

- Visit the district website, <http://d279.us/gradespans>, to review planning documents and monthly website updates, and to watch presentations that are given every month at school board meetings.
- Watch for the February mailing (5th-7th-grade families).
- Read your school newsletters to stay informed about planning and activities at your school.