



Dear Parents/Guardians of Fifth Grade Students:

Welcome to middle school! This letter will help guide you and your child through the selection process for your 6th grade fine arts class next year. We encourage you and your child to have a conversation and make selections based on strengths and interests to ensure a successful transition to Grade 6. **Registration for these courses will be available online during the window of January 30, 2025 - February 12, 2025.**

### **Middle School Fine Arts Curricular Options**

Students are required to take fine arts each year. As space allows, students may be scheduled for more than one fine arts class, particularly courses that are offered as a quarter class.

**Art:** In this course students continue to develop their observational skills in order to inform their imagination and memory with a goal toward refining personal solutions to given visual arts problems. As well as presenting challenging and engaging open ended tasks, the problems presented are designed to include a variety of studio practices and media. Through the critical analysis and making of visual images students will make personal discoveries, which reflect their own experiences and ideas, their relation to their peers and family, and their place in the world. This grade 6 class is offered in one quarter.

**General Music:** This course is designed to expose students to the basics of playing music on various instruments, including guitar, keyboard, drums, and through music technology. Students learn how to read and write music using traditional notation, and begin to expand their knowledge of various music genres. Experiences include performances on all classroom instruments, as well as simple composition and improvisation. This grade 6 class is offered in one quarter.

**Music Performance Ensemble:** Ensemble options include **band**, **orchestra**, or **chorus**. Coursework focuses on individual instruments and vocal techniques in order to develop musical behaviors, creative thinking, and critical skills, both as individual musicians and in an ensemble setting. Students who are enrolled in band or orchestra will participate in music sectionals on a rotating schedule and after school performances as part of the class requirements. Each of these ensemble courses are full year courses.

**Theatre Arts:** In this course students begin to develop an understanding of acting techniques and strategies. Students will be presented with challenging and engaging open ended tasks, designed to instill confidence and promote communication and collaboration with peers. Through the study of theatre genres and crafts, students will make personal discoveries, which reflect their own experiences and ideas, their relation to their peers and family, and their place in the world. This grade 6 class is offered in one quarter.

### **Registration for Middle School Fine Arts**

School staff will make every effort to schedule students for their top choices to the greatest extent possible. During the course selection process, parents will choose **one Selected Course Request** (i.e. the student's top choice), and **two Selected Alternate Course Requests** in priority order. We are asking for alternate course requests in the event of a scheduling conflict and/or availability in the schedule to take a second fine arts class. Students who are scheduled for an intervention may have fewer options regarding participation. Additionally, particular courses may not be offered if enough interest is not shown through course selection.

To register for courses, parents must register online in HCPSS Connect. Directions for registering online are linked below or can be found at <https://www.hcpss.org/connect/guides/>. Included on this page is step-by-step video directions.

Online Course Requests – Rising 6th to 8th Grade Students

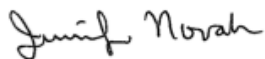
### **G/T Research**

This course is designed for sixth grade students who participate in G/T English and G/T Mathematics, **based upon the recommendation of the G/T Placement Committee**. Taught by the G/T Resource Teacher, this class provides a curricular framework for students to become producers of new knowledge as they apply the research skills modeled in the curriculum to an original investigation in a self-selected area of study. Participating students are expected to culminate their research investigation by creating an original product to be shared with an authentic audience. This grade 6 course is offered for one semester.

Families of students eligible for enrolling in the G/T Research class will receive an email with a registration form in late February.

For questions regarding scheduling, please contact your elementary school counseling office.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Novak  
Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  
Howard County Public Schools  
[jennifer\\_novak@hcpss.org](mailto:jennifer_novak@hcpss.org)

## Middle School Schedule in Detail

- The middle school schedule consists of seven periods. All students receive daily instruction aligned to Maryland’s College and Career-Ready Standards in English, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- Maryland regulations require:
  - All students take Health Education, Physical Education, and a Fine Arts course every year.
  - Students to take the following content one time during middle school:
    - Technology (Grade 6)
    - Financial Literacy (Grade 7)
    - Careers (Grade 8)
- The Grade 6 Schedule at a Glance consists of the following:

| <b>Grade 6 Schedule</b>        |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Course 1</b>                | <b>English Language Arts</b>  |
| <b>Course 2</b>                | <b>Mathematics</b>  |
| <b>Course 3</b>                | <b>Science</b>  |
| <b>Course 4</b>                | <b>Social Studies</b>   |
| <b>Course 5</b>                | <b>Physical Education / Health / Technology</b>   |
| <b>Course 6 &amp; Course 7</b> | <b>Fine Arts (Students must take at least one fine arts class)</b><br>- Art ( <i>quarter class</i> )<br>- Band ( <i>full year</i> )<br>- Chorus ( <i>full year</i> )<br>- General Music ( <i>quarter class</i> )<br>- Orchestra ( <i>full year</i> )<br>- Theatre Arts ( <i>quarter class</i> )<br><br><b>Additional Quarter/Semester Classes</b><br>- Digital Citizenship<br>- 21st Century Learning<br>- Boost Your Brain<br>- Introduction to Readers & Writers Workshop<br>- Family and Consumer Science (FACS)<br>- GT Research ( <i>Teacher Recommendation Required</i> )<br>- Reading Seminar<br>- Mathematics Seminar<br>- English Language Development |

If you have questions about any of the courses, please do not hesitate to contact:

- Office of ELD Programs 410.313.6640 / direct emails to [deborah\\_puhak@hcpss.org](mailto:deborah_puhak@hcpss.org)
- Office of Fine Arts-Visual Arts, Theatre, Dance 410.313.6634 / direct emails to [gino\\_molfino@hcpss.org](mailto:gino_molfino@hcpss.org)
- Office of Fine Arts- Music 410.313.6626 / direct emails to [terry\\_eberhardt@hcpss.org](mailto:terry_eberhardt@hcpss.org)
- Office of Career and Technology Education 410.313.6769 / direct emails to [daniel\\_rosewag@hcpss.org](mailto:daniel_rosewag@hcpss.org)
- Office of Gifted and Talented 410.313.6670 / direct emails to [debbie\\_blum@hcpss.org](mailto:debbie_blum@hcpss.org)
- Office of Health and Physical Education 410.313.7150 / direct emails to [eric\\_bishop@hcpss.org](mailto:eric_bishop@hcpss.org)
- Office of Secondary Language Arts 410.313.6623 / direct emails to [lee\\_read@hcpss.org](mailto:lee_read@hcpss.org)
- Office of Secondary Mathematics 410.313.6635 / direct emails to [jon\\_wray@hcpss.org](mailto:jon_wray@hcpss.org)
- Office of Secondary Science 410.313.6616 / direct emails to [jaclyn\\_austin@hcpss.org](mailto:jaclyn_austin@hcpss.org)
- Office of Secondary Social Studies 410.313.6632 / direct emails to [renee\\_bos@hcpss.org](mailto:renee_bos@hcpss.org)