



TUSCALOOSA COUNTY
School System

WHERE STUDENTS LEARN, GROW, AND ACHIEVE

2019-2020

**Course Information for Middle Schools
Grades 6-8**

BROOKWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	205-342-2748
Principal.....	Mr. Kris Strickland
Assistant Principal	Ms. Susan Gossett
Counselors	Ms. Lacey Lee Ms. Carla Moore
COLLINS-RIVERSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL	205-342-2680
Principal.....	Mr. Craig Henson
Assistant Principal	Ms. Dorotheann McCray
Counselor	Ms. Marlana Mason
DAVIS-EMERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	205-342-2750
Principal.....	Dr. T'Shara King
Assistant Principal	Dr. Darlene Tucker
Counselor	Ms. Danielle Blanks
DUNCANVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL	205-342-2830
Principal.....	Mr. Darrell Williams
Assistant Principal	Mrs. Traci Primm
Counselor	Mr. Will Jarrett
ECHOLS MIDDLE SCHOOL	205-342-2884
Principal.....	Mr. Jason Stapp
Assistant Principal	Ms. Laurie Copeland
Counselors	Ms. Donora Pinkleton Ms. Leah Channell
HILLCREST MIDDLE SCHOOL	205-342-2820
Principal.....	Mrs. Karen Davis
Assistant Principal	Mr. Alan Giles
Counselor	Ms. Lynn Parrish
NORTHSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	205-342-2740
Principal.....	Mrs. Autumn Franks
Assistant Principal	Mr. Larry Ash
Counselor	Ms. Julie McGillivray
SIPSEY VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	205-342-2870
Principal.....	Mr. Frank Kelly
Assistant Principal	Dr. Cay Strickland
Counselor	Ms. Parketta Gardner

MISSION

Our mission is to educate and empower all students to be college and career ready graduates prepared to make positive contributions to our global society.

BELIEFS

- High expectations are necessary to achieve goals and expand opportunities for all.
- Education is a shared responsibility that positively impacts the quality of life.
- Equity, fairness, accountability, and fiscal responsibility are foundations of our decision-making.
- Safe, well-equipped, student-centered schools support student success.
- Diversity and individual learning needs are respected, included, and valued.

CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent.....	Dr. Walter Davie
Deputy Superintendent	Mr. David Patrick
Senior Director of Human Resources	Dr. Allison Mays
Chief Financial Officer.....	Mr. Danny Higdon
Dir. of Curriculum and Instruction – Eastern Region	Dr. David Scott
Dir. of Curriculum and Instruction – Northern Region	Dr. Amanda Cassity
Dir. of Curriculum and Instruction – Southern Region.....	Mrs. Pam Liebenberg
Director of Special Education.....	Dr. Gwen Hardnett
Director of Career and Technical Education	Mr. Dennis Duncan
Director of Federal Programs.....	Dr. Cheryl Fondren
Director of Student Services	Mr. Greg Hurst
Director of Technology	Mr. Michael Townsend
Director of Accountability	Mrs. Jackie Hudgins
Director of Assessment.....	Mrs. Cheryl Wallace
Director of Child Nutrition Program	Mrs. Donette Worthy
Director of Transportation	Mrs. Donna Christian
Coordinator of Student Services	Dr. Antonio Cooper
Coordinator of Elementary Special Education.....	Mrs. Pam Stanley
Coordinator of Secondary Special Education.....	Dr. Patricia Powell

Visit the Tuscaloosa County School System website at www.tcass.net for current information of interest to students and parents or call 205-758-0411. Follow us on Twitter: [@tcass_schools](https://twitter.com/tcass_schools)

EQUAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education that the school system shall place an equal emphasis upon the non-discriminatory provision of education opportunities for students. No student shall be denied the benefits of any education program or activity on the basis of race, color, disability, creed, national origin, age, sex, homeless status, marital status, non-English speaking ability, or migrant status. Programs offered by schools within the school system shall be open to all students in compliance with applicable outside agency guidelines, statutory and judicial requirements, and board policy.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

It is the belief of the Tuscaloosa County School System that all students learn, grow, and achieve. Each student is valuable and important to our future; therefore, the educational success of each student is the focus of every effort of the Tuscaloosa County School System.

Curriculum offerings in the Tuscaloosa County School System are designed to meet standards and guidelines established by the Alabama State Department of Education. Curriculum planning and student placement decisions reflect policies adopted by the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education. Parents are encouraged to consult the current *Student/Parent Information Guide*, school counselors, administrators, and teachers for additional information needed for course selections.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY (GRADES 6 – 8)

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 must pass all four (4) courses/subjects (English, mathematics, science, and social studies) and one additional subject.

Students who do not pass the required courses/subjects each year will be retained at their current grade level with the following exceptions:

1. A student who does not meet the established criteria for promotion may be retained one time in grades 6 – 8 if the student has been previously retained in grades K – 5;
2. A student who does not meet the established criteria for promotion may be retained twice in grades 6 – 8 if the student has not been previously retained in grades K – 5;
3. A student should not be retained in middle school if the student will reach his/her sixteenth birthday during the following academic year.

Students will be provided an opportunity to recover up to two courses/subjects during a summer program. Students who do not pass the required core courses/subjects for promotion are strongly encouraged to attend the summer program to pass the required course(s) for promotion. Students may be promoted only at the end of the school year or after summer school. No students will be promoted at midyear.

PROMOTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Promotion of any student in a special education program with the exception of gifted students must be based on the student's accomplishments of goals stated in the Individualized Education Program in conjunction with all other regular program requirements. However, a special education student (except gifted) may not be placed at any grade level unless the student has attended school for a commensurate number of years equal to the proposed grade placement; that is, for a special education student to be placed at the sixth-grade level, he/she must have been enrolled in school for at least 5 years (Policy: 5.26).

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Services for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are available for students in middle school grades. Teachers and parents participate in IEP meetings to determine appropriate courses and placement for each student.

GIFTED SERVICES

Intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations across all economic strata and in all areas of human endeavor.

During the 2019-2020 academic year, gifted services for middle school students in the Tuscaloosa County School System will be provided through the Academic Scholars Program for students in grades seven (7) and eight (8) and through the Creative Expressions - GATE course in sixth (6th) grade. (See *Creative Expressions 6 – GATE*, page 5.)

REQUIRED COURSES

Core Courses: All students take academic core courses (English, mathematics, science and social studies) aligned with *The Alabama Course of Study/College and Career Ready Standards*. Students' abilities and interests are considered as teachers, counselors, and administrators make recommendations for placement in appropriate instructional settings.

Physical Education: In addition to the academic core courses, students in middle school grades take physical education each year.

ELECTIVE COURSES

ARTS EDUCATION

Band I is a novice level course designed for students to experience instrumental music in a concert band setting. Students will develop a characteristic tone and engage in the processes of creating, performing and responding as related to instrumental music, while employing the concepts of timbre, rhythm, melody, harmony, form and expression. Students will study works of famous composers of concert band literature and learn to connect musical experiences to other cultures and disciplines within and outside of the arts.

Fee: \$25

Band II is an intermediate level course designed for students to experience instrumental music in a concert band setting. Students will develop a characteristic tone and engage in the processes of creating, performing and responding as related to instrumental music, while employing the concepts of timbre, rhythm, melody, harmony, form and expression. Students will study works of famous composers of concert band literature and learn to connect musical experiences to other cultures and disciplines within and outside of the arts.

Fee: \$25

Band III is a proficient level course designed for students to experience instrumental music in a concert band setting. Students will develop a characteristic tone and engage in the processes of creating, performing and responding as related to instrumental music, while employing the concepts of timbre, rhythm, melody, harmony, form and expression. Students will study works of famous composers of concert band literature and learn to connect musical experiences to other cultures and disciplines within and outside of the arts.

Fee: \$25

Choir I is novice level course designed for students to explore choral music from a wide variety of cultures and time periods through academic study and performance. By creating, performing, and responding, students will develop basic vocal skills and sight-reading techniques. Allowing musical experiences to other cultures and disciplines within and outside of the arts, music history and theory are embedded so students may connect these experiences to historical relevance, contemporary issue, and self-reflection.

Fee: \$25

Choir II is an intermediate level course designed for students to explore choral music from a wide variety of cultures and time periods through academic study and performance. By creating, performing, and responding, students will develop basic vocal skills and sight-reading techniques. Allowing musical experiences to other cultures and disciplines within and outside of the arts, music history and theory are embedded so students may connect these experiences to historical relevance, contemporary issue, and self-reflection.

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Fee: \$25

Drama elective is a two-semester course that is introductory for students who are interested in performing in school plays. Students will learn about dramatic structure, the acting process, the collaborative nature of a theatrical production, and the role of the production staff.

Fee: none

Visual Art – Grade 6 is a one semester or two semester course. Through creating, producing, and responding, students will explore the elements of art and principles of design by utilizing a variety of traditional media, digital media and multimedia projects. Students will study works of art to make connections and understand historical relevance, contemporary issues, and self-reflection to their work and the work of others. This course is taught by a certified visual arts teacher.

Fee: \$25

Visual Art – Grade 7 is a one semester or two semester course. Through creating, producing and responding students will compare and relate the elements of art and principles of design by utilizing a variety of traditional media, digital media and multimedia projects. Emphasis will be placed on independent work and investigation through projects of personal interest. Students will explore techniques, styles, media, methods and procedures for creating works of visual arts. Students will demonstrate higher technical proficiency while still developing self-confidence and refining motor skills. With guidance students will develop and apply criteria to works of art to make connections and understand historical relevance, contemporary issues, and self-reflection to their work and the work of others. This course is taught by a certified visual arts teacher.

Fee: \$25

Visual Art – Grade 8 is a one semester or two semester course. Through creating, producing and responding students, will assess and connect the elements of art and principles of design by utilizing a variety of traditional media, digital media and multimedia projects. Independent work and investigation through projects of personal interest will allow students to demonstrate original works that communicate complex interpretations. Students will explore techniques, styles, media, methods and procedures for creating works of visual arts. Students will demonstrate higher technical proficiency while still developing self-confidence and refining motor skills. Students will develop and apply criteria to works of art to make connections and understand historical relevance, contemporary issues, and self-reflection to their work and the work of others that relates to global interest and social commentary with personal voice. This course is taught by a certified visual arts teacher.

Fee: \$25

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Agriscience Explorations is a one-semester course for Grade 8 students. Topics include career guidance, animal and plant science, natural resource management, and workplace skills. Available at Brookwood and Davis-Emerson Middle Schools.

Fee: \$25

Career Cluster Technologies I is a one-semester 7th grade course that introduces students to foundational knowledge and processes needed to increase their technological literacy, exposing them to the 16 career clusters and related pathways in transportation, communication, manufacturing and construction.

Fee: \$25

Career Cluster Technologies II is a one-semester 8th grade course that provides students in Grade 8 with an in-depth study of the knowledge and processes needed to further increase their level of technological literacy.

Fee: \$25

Career Preparedness A is a year-long 8th grade half-credit (Carnegie Unit) course that provides students with knowledge and skills in the areas of career development and academic planning and computer skills application. This course is a pre-requisite to Career Preparedness B. The 20-hour online experience can be met by completing both Career Preparedness A and B.

Fee: none

Computer Science Discoveries is a full-year introductory computer science survey course for students in Grades 7-8. The course takes a wide lens on computer science by covering topics such as programming, physical computing, HTML/CSS, and data. Students are empowered to create authentic artifacts and engage with CS as a medium for creativity, communication, problem solving, and fun.

Fee: \$25

Introduction to Agriscience is an exploratory one-semester course that provides Grade 7 students with an overview of the agriculture industry. Available at Brookwood and Davis-Emerson Middle Schools.

Fee: \$25

Introduction to Career Cluster Technologies is a one-semester 6th grade course that introduces students in to the 16 career clusters, related pathways, and the core areas of technology.

Fee: \$25

GUIDED INSTRUCTION – STRATEGIES ELECTIVES

Student placement in the following courses is based on several qualifying factors.

Guided Instruction is a one-semester course offering academic support and tutorial guidance for students. Retention of information, note taking, test strategies and interpersonal communication skills are addressed. Placement is determined by IEP.

Fee: none

Learning Strategies is a one-semester course offering academic support and tutorial guidance for students. Retention of information, note taking, test strategies and interpersonal communication skills are addressed.

Fee: none

Math Strategies: Math Strategies is a one-semester required course for some students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Achievement test scores in mathematics are used to determine placement.

Fee: none

Reading is a one-semester course for students in grades 6, 7, and 8 that focuses on creating thoughtful readers. This course emphasizes student reading comprehension across literature and informational text while utilizing a variety of strategies.

Fee: none

Reading Strategies: Reading Strategies is a one-semester required course for some students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Achievement test scores in reading and language are used to determine placement.

Fee: none

ACADEMIC ELECTIVES – EXPLORATORY ELECTIVES – GENERAL ELECTIVES

AAS: Community Based Instruction is a course for students in grades 7-8 with significant cognitive disabilities who are enrolled in a community based instruction working towards the Alabama High School Diploma following the Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway and are assessed using alternate achievement standards (Extended Standards).

Fee: none

AAS: Elective is a course for students in grades 7-8 with significant cognitive disabilities who are enrolled in an elective course working towards the Alabama High School Diploma following the Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway and are assessed using alternate achievement standards (Extended Standards).

Fee: none

AAS: Functional Performance is a course for students in grades 6-8 with severe cognitive disabilities who are enrolled in a nonacademic course that addresses routine activities of everyday living.

Fee: none

AAS: Life Skills is a course for students in grades 7-8 with significant cognitive disabilities who are working towards the Alabama High School Diploma following the Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway and are assessed using alternate achievement standards (Extended Standards).

Fee: none

AAS: Pre-Vocational is a course for students in grades 7-8 who are enrolled in a pre-vocational course working towards the Alabama High School Diploma following the Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway and are assessed using alternate achievement standards (Extended Standards).

Fee: none

AAS: Vocational is a course for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are enrolled in a vocational course working towards the Alabama High School Diploma following the Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway and are assessed using alternate achievement standards (Extended Standards).

Fee: none

Chinese I is a two-semester course that develops listening and speaking skills including understanding and responding to simple directions, expressions of courtesy, and questions related to daily routines; reading and writing skills including words and phrases used in basic situational contexts; beginning understanding of Chinese-speaking cultures. Available at Brookwood.

Fee: none

Communications 6, 7, and 8 electives are one-semester courses. Students develop and practice skills that enhance oral communication, public speaking, listening, and group discussion.

Fee: none

Computer Science - Web Design I enables the student to become a Web Design Intern for a virtual company called Education Designs. The student will use the same computer each day and will have access to storage space on that computer. The student will learn Internet basics, HTML, and the file structure of a well-organized Web site. Visually interesting Web pages will be developed using clear text, complimentary colors, visual assets, and appealing designs. The student will learn how to navigate the Internet to build a Web site with useful and well-researched information. The Web pages developed can be used as information sources for other Internet users. This is a 7th and 8th grade course.

Fee: \$25

Creative Expressions 6, 7, and 8 are one-semester classes designed to provide students opportunities to write and critique creative, original works of prose, poetry, and drama.

Fee: none

Creative Expressions 6 – GATE is a two-semester course designed to provide 6th grade students who have been identified as gifted and talented opportunities to explore a variety of rigorous and creative critical-thinking topics and activities, including robotics, coding, and engineering, as well as the arts and humanities. Project-based learning will be a significant part of the learning approach. This class is specifically for students who have qualified as gifted and talented through the TCSS Special Education process.

Fee: none

Creative Writing is a two-semester course for 8th grade students. This course offers the emerging writer a framework through which he/she can develop his/her literary talents. The course will guide the student through an exploration of different literary genres and offer a plethora of activities that will result in the practice of the craft of writing through the creation of both fiction and non-fiction writing samples. Writing assignments are age appropriate for middle school students.

Fee: none

ESL Level I is a one semester or two semester course. This course is for students learning core English language development at the secondary level. The English Language Learners (ELLs) acquire academic language and communicative competence through the implementation of the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment-English Language Proficiency (WIDA-ELP) Standards. This course may not be used to fulfill core course requirements.

Fee: none

ESL Level II is a one semester or two semester course. This course is for students learning core English language development at the secondary level. The English Language Learners (ELLs) acquire academic language and communicative competence through the implementation of the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment-English Language Proficiency (WIDA-ELP) Standards. This course may not be used to fulfill core course requirements.

Fee: none

ESL Level III is a one semester or two semester course. This course is for students learning core English language development at the secondary level. The English Language Learners (ELLs) acquire academic language and communicative competence through the implementation of the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment-English Language Proficiency (WIDA-ELP) Standards. This course may not be used to fulfill core course requirements.

Fee: none

Foreign Language Survey is a one-semester course for 6th grade students. This course provides students with the opportunity to explore languages other than English. Through basic listening, reading, speaking and writing experiences students will develop skills in oral and written communication, master common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a range of grammar patterns. Common vocabulary for study include greetings, classroom surroundings, family contexts, commands, numbers, foods, time, color, weather, seasons, months and days of the week .

Fee: none

French Survey is a one-semester course for 7th & 8th grade students. This course is an introduction to basic French Communication Skills through a variety of learning experiences. Students will develop skills in oral and written communication, master common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a basic range of grammar patterns, and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts.

Fee: none

Global Studies is a one-semester course for 6th, 7th & 8th grade students. This course explores various cultures, customs, cuisines, and languages. Students will develop cultural awareness, an ability to think globally and locally, skills in research, awareness of current affairs and an ability to communicate effectively in a range of situations.

Fee: none

Health is a one-semester course for students in grades 7 and 8 designed to develop an understanding of health issues and personal responsibilities related to adolescent growth and development.

Fee: none

Hobbies is a one-semester class designed for 6th – 8th grade students to provide them opportunities to explore a new interest in a supervised activity such as reading, creative writing, sports, computer games, chess, music, dance, foreign languages, and art.

Fee: \$25

Intermediate Dance I is a two-semester class designed for 7th & 8th grade students with no prior formal training. Students are introduced to a variety of dance techniques and genres. Classes will focus on introductory & intermediate movement and continually build upon previously acquired dance concepts. Basic dance vocabulary, performance skills, choreography, improvisation and performance appreciation skills will be explored.

Fee: none

Intermediate Dance II is a two-semester class designed for 7th & 8th grade students with some prior formal training. Students are introduced to a variety of dance techniques and genres. Classes will focus on introductory & intermediate movement and continually build upon previously acquired dance concepts. Dance vocabulary, performance skills, choreography, improvisation and performance appreciation skills will be explored.

Fee: none

Introduction to Careers will help 8th grade students design and select their high school program of study. Students will participate in career exploration activities, interest and abilities identification activities, and work related skills development.

Fee: none

Introduction to Greenhouse Production is a one-semester or two-semester course that introduces 6th, 7th and 8th grade students to manipulating the greenhouse environment to grow plants. It also includes identification of specific requirements for growing plants commonly grown in greenhouses.

Fee: \$25

Introductory Dance is a one-semester class designed for 6th grade students with no formal training in dance. Students are introduced to a variety of dance techniques and genres. This class will focus on introductory movement and continually build upon previously acquired dance concepts. Basic dance vocabulary, performance skills, choreography, improvisation and performance appreciation skills will be explored.

Fee: none

Media Arts is a two-semester elective for students in grades 7 and 8 designed to generate variations of goals and solutions for media arts products, utilizing chosen creative processes.

Fee: \$25

Spanish Survey is a one-semester course for 7th & 8th grade students. This is an introduction to basic Spanish Communication Skills. Through a variety of learning experiences, students will develop skills in oral and written communication, master common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a basic range of grammar patterns, and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts.

Fee: none

Spanish or French Exploration is a two-semester exploratory course for 8th grade students which will focus on one area of Foreign Language. Students will continue to develop skills in oral and written communication, master common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a basic range of grammar patterns, and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts.

Fee: none

Survey Elective is a one-semester exploratory course for 6th grade students exploring the areas of arts education, career and technical education, and/or languages other than English.

Fee: none

Technology Education-6 is a one-semester course for students in grade 6 that teaches students basic concepts and operations; technology problem-solving and decision-making tools; technology research tools; social, ethical and human issues; technology communications tools; technology productivity tools.

Fee: none

Technology Education-7-8 is a one-semester course teaches students in grades 7 & 8 basic troubleshooting strategies; basic features of word processing, spreadsheets, databases; keyboarding techniques; safe uses of social networking; digital file transfer

Fee: \$25

SERVICE ELECTIVES – STUDENT AIDES

Counselor Assistant
Office Assistant
Library Assistant
Teacher Assistant

Students are selected as assistants based upon skills, academic averages, level of maturity, and ability to assume responsibility. Student assistants perform tasks including filing; sorting and distributing materials; running errands; greeting visitors; taking and delivering messages; and generally assisting with clerical duties under the direction of the professional office staff, teacher, counselor, or library staff. Students do not receive grades for student assistant courses. Eighth (8th) grade status is required.

Fee: None

GENERAL INFORMATION

Fees: Fees for elective courses must be paid at the time of schedule pick-up. Some schools may allow for pre-payment of fees or the payment of a deposit on fees at the time schedule cards are returned or before school is out for the current year. Contact the school principal to discuss any difficulty with fee payments.

Schedules and Schedule Changes: Class scheduling is performed by computer. A fee of \$10 is required for any schedule change initiated by the student. Schedule changes are not made after the fourth class day of a term. Course availability is affected by student demand, school demand, school enrollment, personnel availability, facilities, and funding constraints. Dates for schedule pick-up will be announced in the local media. To obtain a schedule, the student must pay all fees required for courses selected. No schedule may be obtained by a student until all monies owed to the school (lost textbooks, library fines, etc.) have been paid.

Required Examinations: Comprehensive assessments for all middle school students are administered at the end of each nine weeks. Written examinations or other assessment techniques that measure student mastery of the nine weeks content may be used. Assessments may include portfolios, products, performances, research papers, or projects. Nine-week assessments should count no more than twenty (20) percent of the nine-week grade. The term grade will be determined from the average of the two nine-weeks' grades.

Exam Exemptions: Students may be exempt from a semester exam under the following conditions:

- Possess an A (90–100%) average with three (3) or fewer absences, or
- Possess a B (80–90%) average with two (2) or fewer absences, or
- Possess a C (70-79%) average with one (1) or fewer absences, **AND**
- Have no discipline referrals that result in detention or suspension during the semester.

The course semester grade for students who meet exemption criteria will be determined from the average of the two nine-week grading periods.

SIXTH GRADE STRUCTURE

Sixth grade classes are composed of diverse sets of students reflecting the overall population at each middle school. In place of separate leveled classes, students learn in classrooms with a variety of their peers. They are provided with rigorous, appropriate, project-based learning and instruction, with differentiation occurring within each classroom to meet the various needs of middle school learners. STEAM curriculum enables collaboration and real-world application of problem-solving skills. One of the goals of middle school is to provide students the opportunity to develop their abilities to interact both socially and academically with many types of people. Another is to be able to integrate their experiences into a diverse culture both within their own school and within their community. Sixth grade is the transition between elementary and secondary. Sixth grade students will continue with the familiar classroom-based groupings and differentiated activities and assessments they experienced in elementary school while also moving into the secondary format of going to content-specific classes.

The purpose for this structure is three-fold: (1) to enable more time for adjustment to middle school; (2) to create meaningful, purposeful social interaction and collaborative skills; and (3) to provide opportunities for accurate planning as students continue into the secondary structure of seventh (7th) grade. Students who have been identified as *gifted and talented* will have the opportunity to continue in the GATE program through the Creative Expressions 6 – GATE course that will explore a variety of rigorous and creative critical-thinking topics and activities, including robotics, coding, and engineering, as well as the arts and humanities.

ACADEMIC SCHOLARS COURSES

What is the purpose of Academic Scholars courses?

As part of our mission to educate and empower all students to be college and career ready graduates, eligible students in middle school can participate in *Academic Scholars courses*, which are strengthened, rigorous classes for our high-achieving students. Offered in all four academic core disciplines in grades seven (7) and eight (8), the classes provide intellectual and creative challenges to help students become skilled problem solvers and critical thinkers. In addition, they incorporate project-based activities to give hands-on opportunities for students to learn, fostering the development of skills for communication, understanding, and team building, qualities that are essential for life in the 21st century.

What are the basic facts of the courses?

- Provided at the middle school level in grades 7 and 8.
- Offers courses in all four core disciplines: English, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- Emphasis on project-based learning and “Science and Technology interpreted through Engineering and the Arts, all based in Mathematical elements” (STEAM).
- Goal of producing students who are problem-solvers and have high critical thinking skills.
- Provision for training and sustaining new, experienced, and expert teachers on providing appropriate, challenging instruction (differentiated) for higher achieving students while still challenging all students to reach and exceed potential for *all* students.

How will students qualify?

The Academic Scholars courses are reviewed annually by a system team composed of school administrators, teachers, counselors, instructional coaches, and central office personnel. The team’s recommendations for 2019-2020 are as follows:

Methods of Qualifying to Receive an Invitation to Enroll in Academic Scholars Classes	
Invitation Based on Gifted and Talented Status	Students who have been identified as “gifted and talented” through the Special Education Referral Process will automatically qualify for at least one Academic Scholars course.
Invitation Based on State Assessment	Students who score at least 90% of the scaled score on the state assessment will be invited to enroll in Academic Scholars classes. The most recent available assessment results will be used for qualifications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If students score 90% or higher on the math portion, they will be invited to enroll in AS math and science. • If students score 90% or higher on the reading portion, they will be invited to enroll in AS English and social studies.
Invitation Based on Rubric	Students who earn at least 13 points on the Academic Scholars Rubric will be invited to enroll in Academic Scholars classes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If students earn 13 points for the math and science sections of the rubric, they will be invited to enroll in AS math and sciences classes. • If students earn 13 points for the English and social studies sections of the rubric, they will be invited to enroll in AS English and social studies classes.

Requirements and Expectations for Academic Scholars Participation

- Significantly increased rigor with assignments, class activities, and assessments
- Additional outside class responsibilities
- Frequent writing assignments
- Creation of a digital portfolio to chronicle the entire year
- Presentation of portfolio at least twice during the year

How will students who are *currently* in the Academic Scholars program continue to qualify?

- *Students in 7th grade in 2018-2019 may continue in Academic Scholars’ Courses in 2019-2020 by maintaining an 80% yearly average in each core course (English, math, science, and social studies).*

What about students who do not meet eligibility for Academic Scholars’ courses?

All 7th and 8th grade students, whether part of Academic Scholars courses or not, will be taught following the Alabama College and Career Standards and provided with rigorous, appropriate, project-based learning and instruction, with differentiation occurring within each classroom to meet the needs of the variety of middle school learners. STEAM curriculum will enable collaboration and real-world application of problem-solving skills for *all* students.

Parents may choose to request a waiver for their child to enroll in any of the four Academic Scholars courses during course registration; however, they should *carefully weigh the high demands of Academic Scholars coursework* with their child’s demonstrated academic ability, extracurricular obligations, motivation, and work ethic to determine if Academic Scholars coursework is the best choice. If a student is waived into an Academic Scholars course, *he/she will be required to remain in the course for the entire school year.*

ALGEBRA I IN THE EIGHTH GRADE

Algebra I is a formal, in-depth study of algebraic concepts and the real number system. The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) requires the instruction of the Algebra I course in the 8th grade to include all course content standards from Algebra I and the course content for 8th grade math.

This course builds on foundational mathematics content learned by students in Grades K-8 by expanding mathematics understanding to provide students with a strong mathematics education. Content is designed to engage students in a variety of mathematical experiences that include the use of reasoning and problem-solving skills, which may be applied to life situations beyond the classroom setting. This course serves as the cornerstone for all high school mathematics courses; therefore, all subsequent mathematics courses require student mastery of the Algebra I content standards.

The rubric below identifies the criteria and point system used to determine eligibility for Algebra I in the eighth grade. The minimum required number of points to meet the criteria for Algebra I is five points from any combination of criteria.

Number of Points	State Assessment NPR or Same Percent of Scaled Score	OHAPT Test	6 th & 7 th grade math average
1	70 – 79%	70 – 79%	80 – 86%
2	80 – 89%	80 – 89%	87 – 93%
3	90 – 99%	90 – 100%	94 – 100%

*The *Orleans-Hanna Algebra Prognosis Test (OHAPT)* provides teachers, counselors, students, and parents with objective results to support decisions about students' readiness for Algebra I course placement.

Students who qualify and successfully complete Algebra I in the 8th grade will earn a mathematics Carnegie Unit (credit) toward high school graduation and will meet the Algebra I requirement for high school graduation in Alabama. The final grade earned in this course will be used in calculating cumulative grade point average (GPA) at any high school in the Tuscaloosa County School System.

Students who pass Algebra I in the eighth grade will **not** be allowed to re-take Algebra I at the high school level. The minimum passing grade on the Tuscaloosa County School System's grading scale is 60%.

Students who **fail** Algebra I in the eighth grade may take the eighth grade mathematics course **or** Algebra I in a summer course recovery program. Note: the eighth grade mathematics course does not count as a high school math credit.

Students will be advised to take four (4) additional math courses at the high school level.

LEAP (Leaders Exploring Academic Possibilities)

Leaders Exploring Academic Possibilities (LEAP) is a five-day academic, leadership, and service exploration summer program for rising high school freshmen hosted by UA Early College at The University of Alabama. Rising high school freshmen will participate in team-building exercises, The University of Alabama college activities, Tuscaloosa community service opportunities, and group project planning. Students who meet the criteria must submit an application and be extended an invitation to participate in a camp session.

Students must submit an online LEAP application, which includes a short essay and submission of two online letters of reference. The application process begins in the fall. Due to each camp being limited to 55 participants, not all applicants will be extended an invitation to participate in a camp session. Once final selections are made, invitations will be extended. Students must accept their invitation to participate, as well as attend a required orientation session with their parent/guardian.

The cost is \$250.00 per student. No money is due until a student has been accepted into LEAP. Specific details and payment deadlines will be communicated to those students who accept their invitation to participate. For additional information or questions about the LEAP program, email leap@ccs.ua.edu or call (205) 348-7083.

TUSCALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOLS

**2019-2020
SCHOOL CALENDAR**

INSTITUTE.....	AUGUST 1, 2019
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY (SYSTEM).....	AUGUST 2, 2019
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY (LOCAL).....	AUGUST 5, 2019
TEACHER WORK DAY.....	AUGUST 6, 2019
SCHOOLS OPEN-FIRST DAY STUDENTS.....	AUGUST 7, 2019
LABOR DAY HOLIDAY.....	SEPTEMBER 2, 2019
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY.....	SEPTEMBER 3, 2019
FALL BREAK HOLIDAY.....	OCTOBER 14, 2019
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY.....	OCTOBER 15, 2019
VETERANS' DAY HOLIDAY.....	NOVEMBER 11, 2019
THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS.....	NOVEMBER 25-29, 2019
HALF DAY FOR STUDENTS.....	DECEMBER 20, 2019
WINTER HOLIDAYS – DECEMBER 23, 2019 – JANUARY 7, 2020	
TEACHERS RETURN – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY.....	JANUARY 6, 2020
TEACHER WORK DAY.....	JANUARY 7, 2020
STUDENTS RETURN.....	JANUARY 8, 2020
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY.....	JANUARY 20, 2020
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY.....	FEBRUARY 17, 2020
SPRING BREAK.....	MARCH 16-20, 2020
APRIL HOLIDAY.....	APRIL 10, 2020
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY.....	APRIL 13, 2020
HALF DAY FOR STUDENTS.....	MAY 20, 2020
HALF DAY FOR STUDENTS/LAST DAY FOR STUDENTS.....	MAY 21, 2020
TEACHER WORK DAY/LAST DAY FOR TEACHERS.....	MAY 22, 2020
MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY.....	MAY 25, 2020