



# TUSCALOOSA COUNTY School System

WHERE STUDENTS LEARN, GROW, AND ACHIEVE

2023-2024

Course Information for Middle Schools Grades 6-8 and schools with Grade 5  
at Collins-Riverside Intermediate, Northport Intermediate and Sipsey Valley Middle

<b>BROOKWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>205-342-2748</b>
Principal.....	Mr. Kris Strickland
Assistant Principal.....	Ms. Susan Gossett
Assistant Principal.....	Mr. Brent Rogers
Counselor.....	Mrs. Savannah McLemore
Counselor.....	Mrs. Latoya Miles
<b>COLLINS-RIVERSIDE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>205-342-2680</b>
Principal.....	Dr. Lenoise Richey
Assistant Principal.....	Mr. Daniel Wolfe
Counselor.....	Mrs. Marlana Mason
<b>DAVIS-EMERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL .....</b>	<b>205-342-2750</b>
Principal.....	Dr. Lucretia Prince
Assistant Principal.....	Mr. Travis Storey
Counselor.....	Mrs. Kenyatta Johnson
<b>DUNCANVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL .....</b>	<b>205-342-2830</b>
Principal.....	Mrs. Traci Primm
Assistant Principal.....	Mrs. Leslie Payne
Counselor.....	Mrs. Kristie Cross Smith
<b>ECHOLS MIDDLE SCHOOL .....</b>	<b>205-342-2884</b>
Principal.....	Mr. Jason Stapp
Assistant Principal.....	Mrs. Laurie Copeland
Assistant Principal.....	Mr. Dominic Ingram
Counselor.....	Mrs. Donora Pinkleton
Counselor.....	Mrs. Leah Channell
<b>HILLCREST MIDDLE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>205-342-2820</b>
Principal.....	Dr. Karen Davis
Assistant Principal.....	Mr. Kyle Oden
Counselor.....	Mrs. Lynn Parrish
<b>NORTHPORT INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL .....</b>	<b>205-342-2690</b>
Principal.....	Mr. Michael Tilford
Assistant Principal.....	Dr. Jessica Sartain
Counselor.....	Mrs. Carla Hamner
<b>NORTHSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>205-342-2740</b>
Principal.....	Mrs. Autumn Franks
Assistant Principal.....	Mr. Trent Isom
Counselor.....	Mrs. Rachel Skelton
<b>SIPSEY VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL .....</b>	<b>205-342-2870</b>
Principal.....	Mr. Frank Kelly
Assistant Principal.....	Dr. Cay Strickland
Counselor.....	Mrs. 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. Keri Johnson
Deputy Superintendent.....	Mr. David Patrick
Senior Director of Human Resources.....	Dr. Allison Mays
Chief Financial Officer .....	Mr. Danny Higdon
Director of Curriculum and Instruction (Secondary) .....	Dr. Daniel Bray
Coordinator of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction.....	Mrs. Deidra Crain
Director of Curriculum and Instruction (Elementary) .....	Dr. David Scott
Coordinator of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction.....	Dr. Lillie Lewis
Director of Special Education .....	Dr. Gwen Hardnett
Coordinator of Elementary Special Education.....	Mrs. Pam Stanley
Coordinator of Secondary Special Education.....	Mrs. Nina Graham
Director of Career and Technical Education.....	Mr. Dennis Duncan
Director of Federal Programs .....	Mr. Mark Franks
Director of Student Services.....	Mr. Tyrone Blocker
Coordinator of Student Services.....	Mr. Steven Sims
Director of Technology .....	Mr. Brad Jessen
Director of Accountability.....	Mrs. Jackie Hudgins
Director of Assessment .....	Mrs. Cheryl Wallace
Director of Child Nutrition Program .....	Mrs. Kristi O'Leary
Director of Transportation .....	Mrs. Donna Christian
Director of Public Relations.....	Mrs. Terri Brewer

Visit the Tuscaloosa County School System website at [www.tcss.net](http://www.tcss.net) for current information of interest to students and parents or call **205-758-0411**.  
Follow us on Twitter: **@tcss\_schools**. Follow us on Facebook: Tuscaloosa County School System.

### **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 FOR GRADE 5 (INCLUDING GRADE 5 IN MIDDLE SCHOOL SETTINGS\*)**

The process for making decisions about promotion and retention of elementary students should take into consideration a variety of factors including age, maturity, motor coordination, capacity for learning, and academic progress. The decision-making process should involve the Principal and teacher(s) with THE AUTHORITY FOR DETERMINING PROMOTION AND RETENTION RESTING ENTIRELY WITH THE TEACHER(S) AND PRINCIPAL. If a student needs to be retained based on the teacher's opinion of the student's academic performance and/or other factors, the parents/guardians of that student should be informed as early in the school year as possible. In all cases, the decision of whether a student should be promoted or retained shall be made on the basis of which grade placement provides the student a better chance of progressing in his/her educational development.

Summer school is not offered for fifth grade students who fail one or more subjects in the Tuscaloosa County School System.

## **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 core 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 five (5) years (Policy: 5.26).

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

Services for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are available for students in middle school grades (**including 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Collins-Riverside Intermediate School, Northport Intermediate School, Northside Middle School, and Sipsey Valley Middle School**). 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 2021-2022 academic year, Tuscaloosa County School System will provide gifted services for students in grade five (5) by a GATE teacher for a three (3) hour block of time once a week. Gifted services for students in grade six (6) will be provided through the Creative Expressions – GATE course and through the Academic Scholars Program for students in grades seven (7) and eight (8).**

### **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 (including 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Collins-Riverside Intermediate School, Northport Intermediate School, Northside Middle School and Sipsey Valley Middle School) take physical education each year.

### **REQUIRED COURSES FOR 5<sup>th</sup> grade students located in a middle school**

**100017-Math 5**-Academic Core Coursework- mathematics for fifth grade students

**100027-Language Arts 5**-Academic Core Coursework-language arts for fifth grade students

**100037-Science 5**-Academic Core Coursework-science for fifth grade students

**100047-Social Studies 5**-Academic Core Coursework-social studies for fifth grade students

**100057-Physical Education 5**-Physical Education for fifth grade students

### **ELECTIVE COURSES FOR 5<sup>TH</sup> grade students located in a middle school**

**100077-Tech Ed Grade 5** is a one-semester course designed for fifth grade students. In this course students will learn the basics of technology including digital citizenship, exploring digital footprints, and computer “netiquette” learning skills necessary for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as how to respond to emails appropriately. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: None

**100087-Visual Arts Grade 5** is a one-semester course for fifth graders. 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

**100097-Music Grade 5** is a novice level two-semester course designed for fifth grade students. Throughout the four artistic processes, students will experience the following six concepts of music: rhythm, melody, form, timbre harmony, and expression. These concepts will be experienced through the following skills: performing (singing and playing instruments), responding (reading/writing/listening), creating (planning and making new music), and connecting (tying it all together). \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**101400-Global Studies Grade 5** is a two-semester course for fifth-graders where additional or specialized social studies concepts are explored. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: none

**Hobbies 5** is a one-semester course designed to provide students with an opportunity to explore a new interest in a supervised activity. Activities such as reading, creative writing, sports, computer games, chess, music, and art that gives an intellectual challenge. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**101300 Robotics for Grades 5 & 6** is a two-semester course for fifth and sixth grade students. An integration of science and engineering practices and cross cutting concepts. Must complete the application process and be selected for participation. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Creative Expressions 5** is a one semester course for fifth-graders designed to provide students with opportunities to write and critique creative, original works of prose, poetry, and drama. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: none

### **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 a 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 issues, 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 issues, and self-reflection. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Choir III** is a proficient 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 issues, and self-reflection. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Digital Design I** is a course designed to explore the many different types of art in this world—fine art, classical art, visual art, etc. The impact of digital art and design is all around us, often in ways that we probably aren't even aware of! After taking Digital Art and Design I, students will enjoy a deeper understanding and appreciation for all things digital as they explore this special genre of art found in everything from advertising to animation to photography and beyond. In this course, students will learn about the evolution of art, the basic principles of art and design, and the role of art in politics and society. Additionally, students will actually create digital art and make it come alive. **Course instruction will be offered through an online format; the classroom teacher will serve as the facilitator for student success.** \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: TBD

**Digital Design II** is a course designed to explore the many different types of art in this world—fine art, classical art, visual art, etc. The impact of digital art and design is all around us, often in ways that we probably aren't even aware of! Students will enjoy a deeper understanding and appreciation for all things digital as they explore this special genre of art found in everything from advertising to animation to photography and beyond. In this course, students will learn about the evolution of art, the basic principles of art and design, and the role of art in politics and society. Additionally, students will actually create digital art and make it come alive. This course builds on the foundation established in the prerequisite, Digital Design I. **Course instruction will be offered through an online format; the classroom teacher will serve as the facilitator for student success.** \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: TBD

**Drama** is a two-semester elective 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

**Game Design I** is a course for students who are gamers, coders, and/or are interested in designing virtual worlds and other aspects involved with designing video games. Students will learn about video game software and hardware, various gaming platforms, necessary technical skills, troubleshooting and internet safety techniques, and even the history of gaming. And to top it all off, students will even have the opportunity to create their very own plan for a 2D video game! Turn a hobby into a potential career and go from simply being a player in a virtual world to actually creating one! **Course instruction will be offered through an online format; the classroom teacher will serve as the facilitator for student success.** \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: TBD

**Game Design II** is a course for students who have considered designing their own video games. By signing up for Game Design 2, students will learn the skills needed to conceptualize, design, and fully create their very own video game. Explore various video game software and hardware, sharpen coding skills, learn about game storylines, player progression, and algorithmic decision making. Learn to analyze player goals, actions, rewards, and challenges, among many other game play components. Utilize the 21st century skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and technical expertise. When students sign up for Game Design 2, they are putting themselves at the forefront of a future in technology! Game Design I is the prerequisite course. **Course instruction will be offered through an online format; the classroom teacher will serve as the facilitator for student success.** \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: TBD

**Journalism** is a course where students will learn how ask the right questions, look for the details, and find the story in any situation. Students will learn how to gather information effectively, organize ideas, format stories for media production, and edit articles. Get ready to break that news! **Course instruction will be offered through an online format; the classroom teacher will serve as the facilitator for student success.** \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: TBD

**Photography** is a course where students will learn how to take those excellent, jaw-dropping photographs that we see in magazines and on our favorite social media sites. Students will learn the basics of using a camera and how to avoid common photography mistakes. Once students get the hang of this process, they'll be taking photos that will amaze their friends and have them wondering how to do it! **Course instruction will be offered through an online format; the classroom teacher will serve as the facilitator for student success.** \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: TBD

**101300 Robotics for Grades 5 & 6** is a two-semester course for fifth and sixth grade students based on an integration of science and engineering practices and cross cutting concepts. Must Complete the application process and be selected for participation. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**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 Exploration** is an exploratory course for students in Grade 7 that provides an expanded overview of the agriculture industry. Topics include environmental science, animal science, plant science, drafting, and wood technology. This course can be scheduled for one nine weeks, one semester, or one year. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Career Explorations** is a course designed for students in Grade 6-8 to explore career opportunities and become aware of the importance of basic technology, work ethics, communication skills, the value of work, leadership skills, and basic employability skills. Students will begin investigating career

paths to match their interests and abilities, which builds the foundation for future course selection and postsecondary options. Career Explorations may be offered as a component of a course rotation allowing students to explore different areas of interest. This course can be scheduled for one nine weeks, one semester, or one year. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**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

**Computer Science Endeavors** is designed for students in Grade 6. Students will be introduced to computer science and will strengthen their coding skills. As a foundational computer science course, students will understand the basics of block coding, coding concepts, algorithms, the Internet of Things (IoT) and ethical computing. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Computer Science and Society** is designed for students in Grade 8. Students will be able to enhance their knowledge of computer science and how it affects society as they explore topics that include: facial recognition, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and ethics, coding, app development, and other innovations in computing. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**CS Makers** is a one semester stand-alone Computer Science course designed for students in Grade 8 that focuses on foundational Computer Science concepts, computational practices, and making things from software and computer hardware. The goal of CS Makers is to engage students in the computational practices of algorithm development, problem solving, and computer programming activities within the context of problems that are relevant to the lives of Alabama students. Students will design and create computational artifacts in a CS makerspace while exploring human/computer partnerships, digital citizenship, and the role of computers in society. Students will learn how to design items, develop algorithms, and create computer programs. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Exploring Information Technology Careers** is an exploratory course designed to introduce students to pathways in the Information Technology Cluster and to careers in the informational technology field. Students will explore foundational concepts, terminology and skills needed to choose and progress in an IT field. This course is most effective in a project-based environment. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Introduction to Cybersecurity** is designed to acquaint students in Grades 6-8 with the technology and methods of modern information and system protection. This course presents basic knowledge of computer structure and functions as well as ethics and security concepts which can be applied in everyday life. Standards introduce basic computer security principles and procedures and allow students to explore hardware and software components. This course can be scheduled for one nine weeks, one semester, or one year. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Orientation to Agriscience** is an exploratory course for students in Grade 6 that provides an overview of the basics of the agriculture industry. Topics include the importance of agriculture, the history and purpose of agriculture education, ecology and conservation, animal science, plant science, and agricultural mechanics. This course can be scheduled for one nine weeks, one semester, or one year. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Pre-Agriscience** is an exploratory course that provides students in Grade 8 the opportunity to gain knowledge and acquire skills relating to the agricultural industry. It may be offered as a component of a course rotation allowing students to explore different career fields. Topics include animal science, plant science, forestry and natural resources, leadership in the FFA, and Supervised Agriculture Experience. Instruction also focuses on agriscience technologies in the areas of woodworking, electricity, and power mechanics. This course can be scheduled for one nine weeks, one semester, or one year. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**STEM Technologies I** provides students in Grades 6-8 with knowledge and processes needed to begin their attainment of technological literacy and awareness of careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Students gain knowledge and skills in the application, design, production, and assessment of products, services, and systems in a variety of areas. This course can be scheduled for one nine weeks, one semester, or one year. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**STEM Technologies II** provides students in Grades 6-8 with knowledge and processes needed to further their attainment of technological literacy and awareness of careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Students gain skills in the application, design, production, and assessment of products, services, and systems in a variety of areas. This course can be scheduled for one nine weeks, one semester, or one year. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**STEM Technologies III** provides students in Grades 6-8 with knowledge and processes needed to extend their attainment of technological literacy and awareness of careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Students gain skills in the application, design, production, and assessment of products, services, and systems in a variety of areas. This course can be scheduled for one nine weeks, one semester, or one year. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**We Build It Better** provides students in Grade 8 with the knowledge that goes along with understanding the process behind developing a new product. Students learn foundational skills so they can create unique solutions to real-world industry-based challenges. This course is powered by Flight Works Alabama. \_\_\_\_\_ 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** 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** 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. Not 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 course for students in grades 7-8. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Computer Science Elective** is a two-semester computer science elective focusing on coding basics, web design, and other computer fundamentals. \_\_\_\_\_ 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 sixth 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 eighth 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

requirements. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: none

**Foreign Language Survey** is a one-semester course for sixth 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 includes 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 seventh and eighth 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 sixth, seventh and eighth 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 seventh and eighth grade students 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 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students grade 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 seventh eighth grade students with no prior formal training. Students are introduced to a variety of dance techniques and genres. Classes will focus on introductory and 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 seventh and eighth grade students with some prior formal training. Students are introduced to a variety of dance techniques and genres. Classes will focus on introductory and 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 eighth 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 sixth, seventh and eighth 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 sixth 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 seventh and eighth grade students designed to generate variations of goals and solutions for media arts products, utilizing chosen creative processes. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: \$25

**Publications** is a two-semester elective designed to introduce students to aspects of publishing newspapers, magazines, and/or school yearbooks. A grade of 80 or above in English and teacher approval are required. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee: none

**Spanish Survey** is a one-semester course for seventh and eighth 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 eighth 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 sixth 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 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 seventh and eighth 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 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, in-school intervention, 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.

Fifth grade students who are in the middle school setting will attend classes composed of diverse sets of students reflecting the overall population at the middle school. Students will learn in classrooms with a variety of their peers. They will be provided with rigorous, appropriate, learning and instruction with rigorous, appropriate, project-based learning and instruction, with differentiation occurring within each classroom to meet the various needs of middle school learners.

### **SIXTH GRADE STRUCTURE**

Sixth grade classes will be composed of diverse sets of students reflecting the overall population at each middle school. In place of separate leveled classes, students will learn in classrooms with a variety of their peers. They will be 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 will enable 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 change 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 (seventh) 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 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Basics of Academic Scholars courses**

- Provided at the middle school level in grades 7 and 8.
- Offered 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).

### **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 2021-2022 school year are as follows:

<b><i>Methods of Qualifying to Receive an Invitation to Enroll in Academic Scholars Classes</i></b>	
<b><i>Invitation Based on Gifted and Talented Status</i></b>	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.
<b><i>Invitation Based on Assessment Data</i></b>	Students who score at least 90% of the scaled score on the state assessment (iReady) 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"> <li>• If students score 90% or higher on the math portion, they will be invited to enroll in Accelerated Math 7 and AS science.</li> <li>• If students score 90% or higher on the reading portion, they will be invited to enroll in AS English and social studies.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Invitation Based on Rubric</i></b>	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"> <li>• If students earn 13 points for the math and science sections of the rubric, they will be invited to enroll in Accelerated Math and AS science classes.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

### **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 7<sup>th</sup> grade in 2022-2023 school year may continue in Academic Scholars’ Courses in 2023-2024 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 seventh and eighth 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 **as space allows**; 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*. **All waivers must be submitted with course card selections and prior to the stated deadline for course cards to be returned.**

### **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](mailto:leap@ccs.ua.edu) or call (205) 348-7083.

### **Changes in Mathematics Courses**

In following the mathematics pathways for the Alabama State Department of Education's 2019 Course of Study, beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, **Algebra I will no longer be offered in the middle school setting.**

During the 2020-2021 school year, 7<sup>th</sup> grade Academic Scholars Mathematics was replaced by 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Accelerated Mathematics.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Accelerated Mathematics was implemented in the 2021-2022 school year.

7<sup>th</sup> grade students who take and successfully pass 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Accelerated Mathematics will be allowed to take 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Accelerated Mathematics the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Combined, these courses contain all ALSDE standards for 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, 8<sup>th</sup> grade math, and Algebra I.

Students who did not take 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Accelerated Mathematics will not be allowed to take 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Accelerated Mathematics as they will have missed the foundational coursework needed to be successful in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Accelerated Mathematics.

Accelerated courses have been carefully aligned and designed for middle school students who show particular motivation and interest in mathematics. In this pathway, ALSDE standards for Grade 7 math, Grade 8 math, and *Algebra I with Probability* have been merged into two years of coursework. This enables students to move through the content more quickly. Students who complete this pathway will be prepared to enter *Geometry with Data Analysis* in Grade 9 and then accelerate directly into *Algebra II with Statistics* in grade 10, thus providing them with an opportunity to take additional, specialized mathematics coursework in Grades 11 and 12, such as AP Calculus, AP Statistics, or college dual enrollment classes. Clearly, this pathway will be challenging and should be reserved for Grade 7 students who demonstrate a high level of motivation and interest in studying mathematics.

In the graphic below, the standard and accelerated/advanced mathematics pathways are shown.

In grade 6, all students take Math 6. Those who receive gifted services may choose a GATE elective to complement the Math 6 course.

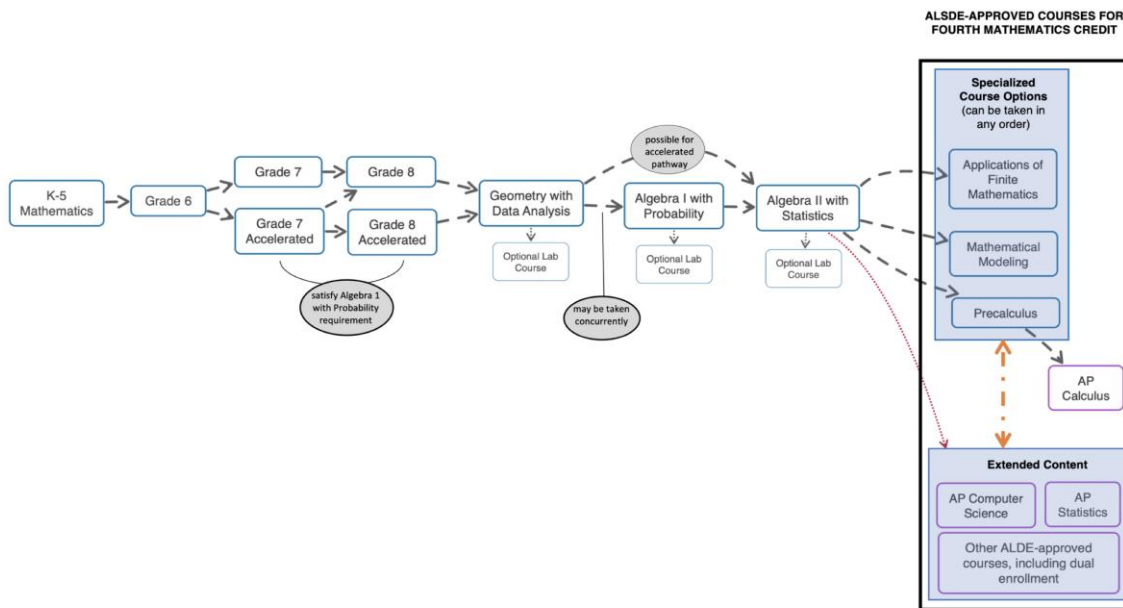
In grade 7, students are recommended by their teacher for either Math 7 or Accelerated Math 7 based on their academic performance and test scores.

In grade 8, students who took Math 7 continue their progress in Math 8. Students who took Accelerated Math 7 continue their progress in Accelerated Math 8.

Once a student begins grade 9, he/she has multiple options for earning the four required math credits.

Students working towards the standard Alabama High School Diploma typically take Geometry with Data Analysis in grade 9, Algebra I with Probability in grade 10, Algebra II with Statistics in grade 11, and the appropriate math elective (for example, Algebra with Finance, Career Math, Mathematical Modeling, or Finite Math) offered on the respective high school campus for grade 12.

Students working towards the Alabama High School Diploma with Distinction typically take Advanced/Honors Geometry with Data Analysis in grade 9, Advanced/Honors Algebra II with Statistics in grade 10, Advanced/Honors Pre-Calculus in grade 11, and the appropriate advanced math elective (for example, AP Calculus, AP Statistics, AP Computer Science, or an advanced dual-enrollment math) in grade 12.



TUSCALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM  
2023-2024  
SCHOOL CALENDAR

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY.....	AUGUST 2, 2023
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY.....	AUGUST 3, 2023
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY.....	AUGUST 4, 2023
INSTITUTE/TEACHER WORK DAY.....	AUGUST 7, 2023
TEACHER WORK DAY .....	AUGUST 8, 2023
SCHOOLS OPEN-FIRST DAY STUDENTS.....	AUGUST 9, 2023
LABOR DAY HOLIDAY .....	SEPTEMBER 4, 2023
FALL BREAK .....	OCTOBER 9, 2023
TEACHER WORK DAY .....	OCTOBER 10, 2023
VETERANS' DAY HOLIDAY .....	NOVEMBER 10, 2023
THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS .....	NOVEMBER 20-24, 2023
EARLY RELEASE FOR STUDENTS .....	DECEMBER 15, 2023
<i>WINTER HOLIDAYS – DECEMBER 18, 2023 – JANUARY 1, 2024</i>	
TEACHERS RETURN – TEACHER WORK DAY .....	JANUARY 2, 2024
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY.....	JANUARY 3, 2024
STUDENTS RETURN.....	JANUARY 4, 2024
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY .....	JANUARY 15, 2024
PRESIDENT'S DAY .....	FEBRUARY 19, 2024
SPRING BREAK .....	MARCH 11-15, 2024
TEACHER WORK DAY (*WEATHER DAY) .....	MARCH 29, 2024
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY.....	APRIL 1, 2024
EARLY RELEASE FOR STUDENTS/LAST DAY FOR STUDENTS .....	MAY 23, 2024
TEACHER WORK DAY/LAST DAY FOR TEACHERS.....	MAY 24, 2024
MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY .....	MAY 27, 2024
INDEPENDENCE DAY .....	JULY 4-5, 2024