



Saint Paul
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Independent School District 625
360 Colborne Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102-3299

Murray Middle School
2200 Buford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55108

Phone: (651) 293-8740 | Fax: (651) 293-8742 | <https://www.spps.org/murray>

Good afternoon Murray families,

I am connecting with you today to provide updates regarding school start times, an open math position Murray is working with and 6th grade math placement.

School Start Times

As you may be aware, there is a nationwide shortage of school bus drivers impacting districts throughout Minnesota and across the country. The issue has been made worse by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. At this time SPPS is in need of approximately 40 additional school bus drivers to meet the needs of our daily bus routes.

SPPS is committed to providing safe and reliable transportation to those Murray families who request it. Due to the extreme shortage of school bus drivers, Murray will begin each school day 30 minutes later than originally scheduled. **That means your child's school day will begin at 9:00AM instead of 8:30AM. The school day will now end at 3:30PM instead of 3:00PM.** This schedule will remain in effect at least through the middle of October and possibly longer.

We know making this change will not be easy for many families, and we sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact Murray at 651-293-8740.

Thank you for your understanding and support regarding this significant challenge.

Open Math Position

Murray currently has an open Math position due to the fact that our very own Mr. Wachholz has been presented with opportunities that are connected to his long military career. We will certainly miss Mr. Wachholz and we wish him the very best wherever he may land in the world with his upcoming responsibilities. Murray is working diligently with our human resources department to gather potential candidates, interview and secure our new Pilot. In the meantime, we are working to hire a long term guest teacher that is qualified in math to support. I will continue to update our community regarding this vacancy. If you have questions, please feel free to connect with me or Mr. Eggers (6th grade assistant principal).

6th Grade Math Placement

Greetings on behalf of the Murray Middle School mathematics staff, along with the Office of Teaching and Learning Departments of Math and TDAS (Talent Development and Acceleration



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Services); you are receiving this message as there's been an update for student enrollment into their 6th grade mathematics course.

At our core, we believe in differentiated mathematics instruction; i.e. every student has unique needs, pace, and consequently requires opportunities and instructional practices that support them as such. There is specific content in our middle school courses that is foundational to students' future math careers, so we have designed our coursework at Murray to provide rich experiences within a classroom learning community for all of our courses - Math 6, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Intermediate Algebra and Geometry.

We also believe every student deserves rich, engaging, "just right" challenge and rigor. Not every student *needs* acceleration as an intervention. Time and time again, we will hear accelerated students say, "I used to be good at math." This is because of an inappropriate stimulus-response: students are accelerated as an "opportunity" instead of as an "intervention". Students who are "good at math" do need access to the rich, engaging math instruction that keeps them appropriately challenged (and that they absolutely deserve), but too often they are instead given levels of *inappropriate* challenge, moved beyond their zone of continued success, increasing stress, anxiety, and confusion.

All of this is not to say SPPS doesn't believe in acceleration. Indeed, we have processes in place to respond to evidence of learning needs: best practice says "accelerate the student" not "accelerate the class." This allows students to test out of content *they already know and have mastered*, and move ahead. They are not skipping content they *don't* know (and *need* to understand to be successful with later learning). Again, that acceleration is an intervention, not an opportunity.

So to ensure we're collecting accurate data and scaffolding our curriculum appropriately, all incoming 6th graders will be given a placement exam during the first full week of school. This exam will determine which math class your child will be in for the year and will help our math department better design targeted interventions that align to the needs of the students in their classrooms.



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If you have any further questions, regarding our practices, philosophies, or otherwise, please feel free to reach out to the following individuals:

[Ishmael Robinson](#) - K12 Math District Supervisor

[Collin Malaney](#) - Secondary Math Specialist

[Benjamin Lacina](#) - Talent Development and Acceleration Services District Supervisor

[Ryan Eggers](#) - Murray Assistant Principal and Former Math Teacher

Thank you for supporting your student and for cultivating a love of mathematics in your home.

Your Co-Pilots,

Jamin McKenzie, Principal
and our Mathematics Department

SPPS ONE STOP for various needs and solutions - <https://www.spps.org/ONESTOP>
Technology Info. - <https://www.spps.org/Page/39811>

Murray website - <https://www.spps.org/murray>

Principal - Jamin McKenzie (Jamin.McKenzie@spps.org)

Assistant Principal - Michelle Bierman (Michelle.Bierman@spps.org)

Assistant Principal - Ryan Eggers (Ryan.Eggers@spps.org)

Office Manager - Maria Flores (Maria.Flores@spps.org)

Counselor (Schedule questions) - Lisa Engelstad (Lisa.Engelstad@spps.org)

Counselor (Schedule questions) - New staff member Justine Revermann is currently in training

Attendance/Registration - Adriana Cruz-Trevino (Adriana.Cruz-Trevino@spps.org)

These staff members will be available beginning Monday, August 30

Nurse - Diana Dishop (Diana.Dishop@spps.org)

Social Worker (Special Education Questions) - Pam Lombardi (Pam.Lombardi@spps.org)

Social Worker (Special Education Questions) - Jessie Phillips (Jessie.Phillips@spps.org)

Social Worker (General Education Questions) - Cori Boehm-Peterson

(Corie.Boehm@spps.org)

Family Involvement Coordinator - Stefanie Folkema (Stefanie.Folkema@spps.org)