

Pilot School News

August 30, 2019 | Volume #1

From the Principal

And suddenly you just know...it's time to start something new and trust the magic of beginnings. Author Unknown

Welcome to a new school year! My name is Jamin McKenzie, your Co-Pilot and principal here at Murray Middle School. It is a brand-new year and I am more excited than ever to begin working with our students, families, staff and community. I want to take a moment to thank all of the staff and partners that have been hard at work preparing our school for a great year. Our custodial staff and educators have been working around construction projects all summer and have been incredibly flexible while preparing their classroom space as construction wraps up. We are truly surrounded by an awesome group of Murray staff members.

We have some changes this year that will impact our day to day business and will ultimately increase the quality of the academic experience your child has while in middle school. Some of the major changes include a move toward teaming, a seven period day and a more intentional implementation of social/emotional/mental health support for our students through their foundations class. We are confident that these elements along with other programming will continue to support our goal of developing and supporting the whole child and providing a premier and equitable academic experience for all of our students.

Celebrations – Over the summer, our History Day representatives rocked it in Washington D.C. and continued the Murray tradition of excellence with History Day. Kevin Torstenson placed 2nd in the nation with his individual performance of “The 26th Amendment: A Triumphant Alliance”. Alice Wagner-Hemstad and Kai Sackreiter earned honorable mention in the group website category with “Reserve Mining v. United States”. Ellery Tennison and Julia Pletch qualified for nationals with their performance of “Making AIDS History”. Phoebe Finlay qualified for nationals in the website category with “Frances Kelsey’s Triumph Over Thalidomide”. Emily Brenner qualified for nationals with her individual exhibit of “The Triumph of Women’s Birth Control: Griswold v. Connecticut”. Huge congratulations to our Pilot historians and a huge thank you to the staff and families that supported them. Way to go!!

Upcoming Events - Please join us on Thursday, September 12, 2019 from 6:00pm-8:00pm for our Title 1 sponsored curriculum review and Murray Open House Event. You will follow your child’s schedule where you will have an opportunity to meet the teachers, receive a syllabus and hear a brief introduction to each class. The hard start for this event is 6:00pm if you wish to follow your student’s schedule. All are welcome if you cannot make it at the scheduled start time. We will use the following schedule:

6:10-6:20 PM-Period 1 – 7th Grade Families Report to Foundations

6:23-6:33 PM-Period 2

6:36-6:46 PM-Period 3

6:49-6:59 PM-Period 4

7:02-7:12 PM-Period 5 – 8th Grade Families Report to Foundations

7:15-7:25 PM-Period 6

7:28-7:38 PM-Period 7 – 6th Grade Families Report to Foundations

Option 1: 7:41 – 8:00 PM – Optional Restorative Practices Informational Session – Library

Option 2: 7:41 – 8:00 PM – Optional Technology support with iUpdate, Schoology, etc. - Cafeteria

This is a highly recommended event to help families learn about your child’s middle school experience, meet staff members and see our wonderful school. We look forward to seeing you all at our annual Open House Event!

Your Co-Pilot,

Jamin McKenzie



UPCOMING EVENTS >>>

September 3, 2019

School in Session

September 12, 2019

Title 1 Annual Meeting

Open House/Parent Curriculum Night

6:00pm – 8:00pm

September 25, 2019

School Picture Day

Murray Middle School

2200 Buford Avenue

Saint Paul, MN 55108

murray.spps.org

651-293-8740

School Hours: 8:30am – 3:00pm

Murray Administration

Jamin McKenzie, Principal

Michelle Bierman, Assistant Principal

Ryan Eggers, Assistant Principal

Murray Office Staff

Maria Flores

Adriana Cruz Trevino

Murray Counselors

Ankquinet (LaShay) Whittaker

Lisa Engelstad

Andrea Dickinson (Get Ready)

Murray School Nurse

Diana Dishop

Murray Parent Liaison

Stefanie Folkema



Staff Spotlight



*One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world. **Malala Yousafzai***

Hello, my name is Jamin McKenzie and I am the proud principal here at Murray Middle School. Welcome to a new school year, Pilots! I am in this business because I love working with kids. Seeing all of those smiles and all of that excitement as students and staff are walking in to start a new school year is something I look forward to every fall. With a new school year comes all of the unknowns, the new discoveries, the numerous challenges, the endless questions and the new relationships. These are all of the things that make working in education the best job in the world!

I am entering my 18th year in Saint Paul Public Schools and my 7th year at Murray. I began my career as a science teacher at Battle Creek Middle School and still have a love of everything astronomy. My family consists of my wonderful wife Lisa and our twin children Jadon and Isabelle, who are 12 years old. Our family enjoys time at the family cabin, golfing together and supporting our kids in their sporting events. Jadon and Belle are now entering 7th grade, so I am testing all of these years as a middle school educator and seeing how they translate to being a parent.

I am excited to begin a new school year as I continue to serve our Murray community. As a staff, we are very fortunate to have such a dedicated community and to be educating our young scholars. We thank you for this opportunity and we look forward to another great year!

Welcome to all andGo Pilots!

Staff Spotlight



Hello, my name is Michelle Bierman. I am excited to be at Murray Middle School as an Assistant Principal. I am excited to have our students and families back at school for the 20-21 school year!

I am a proud Saint Paul resident and have been part of Saint Paul Schools for over 21 years. I started as a high school teacher at Highland Park Senior High School teaching History of Americas, Civics, Asian Studies, African American History, and Economics. I continued my work supporting social studies teachers at the district level, working in the teaching and learning department, and then racial equity and gender equity. Most recently, I was the Assistant Principal at Open World Learning (OWL).

I graduated from Minnesota State University with a BS in Social Studies, University of St. Thomas with my Masters of Teaching, and University of Minnesota with my Administrator's license. When I am not at school, my wife and I spend time with our nieces and nephews, dogs, and ride around town on our scooters. Think Vespa. I like to travel, read, kayak, and teach. I teach as an adjunct professor at Metropolitan State University in their Urban Education Program.

My belief is that each student has many talents and gifts. We, as adults, just need to get to know students, provide opportunities for them to be themselves, challenge each student academically, and add some fun into the mix to bring out the best in each student.

I am proud to be a co-pilot at Murray! Please stop by and say hello. I look forward to meeting our new families and students and welcoming back our current students and families.

Staff Spotlight



Hello, my name is Ryan Eggers and I am honored to be serving as an Assistant Principal here at Murray Middle School. Though I am new to the position, I've spent the last six years working with our incredible Murray community as an 8th grade teacher. The dedication and collaborative nature of our staff is what I find most rewarding for our students as we're always finding new, creative means to support their learning.

After completing my undergraduate work at the University of Minnesota Duluth, I began teaching high school social studies at Brooklyn Center Secondary. While working with our Data Analysis Team, I fell in love with numbers and pursued an additional licensure in mathematics to bring a new lens on how to approach problem solving and make math more culturally relevant. In 2013, I joined St. Paul Public Schools as an Algebra 1, Geometry and AVID elective teacher. Being a lifelong learner, I continued to improve upon my craft by receiving my Masters in Leadership Education and Administrative License from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

When I am away from school, I'm chasing around my curious toddler, Maddox and spending time with my wife Nakeea. We enjoy traveling, hiking and scouring the cities for the best new cuisines. You could say we're "foodies" but we only occasionally Instagram our plates.

I believe all children are unique and must have a stimulating educational environment where they can grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. When these needs are met, students are more willing to share their ideas, take risks and be their true, authentic self.

I cannot wait for the start of our new school year and I look forward to building positive relationships with our students, families, and Murray community. Go Pilots!!



Important Information as Your Child Transitions to Middle School

Transition time is upon us! Soon the 2019-2020 school year will start. Our students will transition to a new school or a new grade level. Besides great excitement, many are worried about teachers, classes, friends, lockers, etc. The reality is many will transition without a single issue. Others will need more support academically, socially and emotionally. As a school community using a middle school model and committed to partnering with families, we are here to support the transition. Please contact us early with any questions, concerns or needed supports.

Many educators feel that for some students the transition is harder on the parent/caretaker. What can parents do to erase the strain and concern of transitions?

First, please take a step back, stay calm and know that your child is growing up and you can help. They are feeding off of your emotion. Be confident and your child will feel that. The reverse is true as well. If you are nervous or upset, your child will feel those emotions. Supporting your child can simply start with your excitement and confidence as they grow up to more independence in middle school.

Another way to support your child is making sure that they are in good physical and mental health. If you have concerns about your child's health, talk to your pediatrician, they can help determine if your concerns are normal, age appropriate issues. You may also reach out to our school counselors Lashay Whittaker at lashay.whittaker@spps.org or Lisa Engelstad at lisa.engelstad@spps.org and our nurse, Diana Dishop at diana.dishop@spps.org. These professionals can assist in navigating school supports and services as well as any needed community resources.

Next, look carefully at the information sent from school. Mark your calendar with important dates, check out volunteer opportunities, participate in advisory councils and Murray's Parent Teacher Association. Visiting school can also help with transitions. Attend those "meet the teacher" opportunities. Being present at school events is important through your child's secondary school experience. Your child may not tell you that and that's developmentally typical. However, they want you there and will someday thank you for your presence.

Your presence at school is as important as your child's participation in not only academics, but extra-curricular as well. When students try new things, find their passions or join clubs to meet new friends, middle school is a better experience. Please see information in this newsletter that describes athletic opportunities and for our comprehensive after school opportunities, use the following link: <http://murray.spps.org/afterschool>.

Securing the school supplies early can alleviate stress from students who are worriers. Plan to set or reset a schedule once school starts again. Talk with your children regarding how important it is to have a routine that includes homework time and a clear space to do it, bedtime, reading and any chores they may be responsible for. Encouraging less passive activities like the television can also better prepare children for learning.

All recommendations above are only suggestions. They can contribute to a positive transition. Most children are absolutely resilient, with your support and encouragement they will grow and prosper throughout their middle school experience. Thank you for being a part of our school community. All of us at Murray look forward to welcoming your family and making it an amazing school year.



Welcome to Murray Middle School Athletics

The coaches and I are proud and excited to welcome you to Murray's very successful sports program. We offer many opportunities for students to participate.

Boys Sports

Soccer (fall)
Basketball
Baseball
Track and Field

Girls

Soccer (fall)
Volleyball (fall)
Basketball
Badminton
Softball
Track and Field

Co-Ed

Flag Football (fall)
Wrestling

Practice for all fall sports teams begins September 9th. The schedules and registration forms are on the district sports website, <http://sports.spps.org>. All applicable fees are listed on the registration forms. Murray coaches will be posting practice schedules once the teams are formed. Schedules can be synced with iCal and once student iPads are distributed, coaches will work with athletes to complete this process.

Murray Middle has a no cut policy and maintains both A and B-teams. A-teams play the schedule currently posted on the district site. B-team games will be scheduled once all schools know the number of participants. At that point, a B team competition schedule is developed and communicated to families. All flag football B games will be played prior to the A games. There are uniform expectations as a student athlete. All players are provided a Murray team jersey for the games. Coaches will communicate expectations to each team at the preseason meeting if they expect a certain color shorts. We unfortunately are unable to provide shoes for players. If you have an extreme case that would prohibit participation, please call me and I am happy to discuss possible supports.

In order for student athletes to participate on any SPPS sports team, a sport's physical must be on file with the Murray School Nurse, Diana Dishop. Students must also meet academic eligibility to play sports in any SPPS program. Student athletes at Murray are students first. In order to play sports at Murray students must pass classes. Players lose eligibility once they have failed two classes at any point in the school year. A student failing two classes in the fall quarter cannot play the rest of the school year. This is a district policy. It is important for all students to start the year strong academically and continue all year long.

Athletics should be a positive aspect in every student's school experience. Both coaches and parents help make that happen by helping our players understand that participation is meant to be positive, fun, and a great growth experience.

Please call Murray at 651-293-8740 with questions.

Again, please bookmark the district sports website <http://sports.spps.org>. All forms, schedules and schedule changes, eligibility information, etc is communicated at that site. Let's all have a great year. Hope to see you at a game, soon.



flipside

the opposite of boredom.
Afterschool activities for middle school youth.

The Flipside afterschool program at Murray Middle will begin Monday 10/7/19!

Registration forms will be available in the coming weeks.

Please reach out with any questions!
Kari Gonzalez – Flipside Coordinator
651-774-3189 / kari.gonzalez@spps.org



Preparing
Students for
Tomorrow



Dear Parents/Guardians of Murray Middle School,

Welcome to the 2019-20 school year! We have some exciting news to share with you. Going into our second year the Get Ready/GEAR UP Program will be at Murray Middle School to help you and your child begin the college and career planning process. We believe that parents and guardians are an integral part of every child's education and your engagement is extremely important to us. Some of the Get Ready/GEAR UP services that will be available to you and your child will include Postsecondary Pathways Workshops, College and Career Counseling, College Visits, Cultural Nights, Financial Aid Planning Assistance, Youth Leadership Institute and many more!

All of these services are free to you and your child. In order to take full advantage of these free services it is very important that you complete and sign the Get Ready Registration Form that will be coming to you soon!

Over the next several months, we will be reaching out to gather information to help us better serve you, your child and Murray Middle School. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact Andrea Dickinson-Llaurado, Get Ready/GEAR UP Postsecondary Pathways Coordinator at Murray.



Nutritional Services

Nutritional Services - It is recommended lunch money be prepaid the first week of school. You may send cash or checks in an envelope marked with the child's name and PIN# (Student ID#). Make checks payable to: Saint Paul Public Schools' Nutrition Services. You can also go online by going to schoolcafe.com and set up an online account where you can pay from home. You can use credit cards, debit cards or bank account transfers. Please be aware, funds require two days for processing before your child's account is credited. To avoid disruption in meal services, we have processes in place to notify you if you child's account needs attention. Please take this into consideration when prepaying for meals as the District has a limited Charge Meal Policy.

	<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Lunch</u>
Middle School grades 6-8 (paid)	No Charge	\$2.70
Middle School grades 6-8 (reduced)	No Charge	No Charge
Middle School grades 6-8 (free)	No Charge	No Charge

Free and Reduced Lunch Applications were mailed to every family at the beginning of August. The application is also online at schoolcafe.com. Even if you feel your family will not qualify, please complete an application as this ensures that Murray receives all funding available.

Tutors Needed at Murray Middle School!

Murray Middle School (located at 2200 Buford Ave, St. Paul, in St. Anthony Park) offers a comprehensive tutoring/study skills support program called the Murray Pilot One-on-One Tutoring Program. This program (now in its 13th year) is offered during the school day as an elective class Monday through Friday during the last three class periods of the day from 12:29-1:17, 1:21-2:08 and 2:12-3:00 pm. Volunteers pick a day/time that works best with their schedules!

The 7th and 8th grade children involved in the program are students who benefit from obtaining daily support from a tutor/mentor. Tutors work with students on developing solid study skills and they work on core subjects including: English, Science, Math and Social Studies. The goal is to have 75 tutors each week.

People enjoy working at Murray because it is an urban middle school with a diverse population and they have an opportunity to work with the same student each day. This lends itself to developing positive relationships with the Murray students. Cindy Thrasher is present in the classroom during the entire time so that both the Murray student and the tutor have a support system in place at the school.

We ask that all tutor volunteers participate in a 90-minute training/orientation session which allows time for us to further describe how the program works at Murray.

Please contact Cindy Thrasher, coordinator, to sign up for a training session or for more information at 651.293.8740 or cindy.thrasher@spps.org

Thank you!

