

EIGHTH-GRADE CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS



Camas Middle School Programs



CAMAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Welcome to Our Middle School Programs

The Camas middle school experience is integral to the success of every early adolescent in our district. Both Camas middle schools offer students a rigorous and challenging academic program designed to prepare students for high school. Elective courses, sports and extracurricular activities, and unique programs that appeal to the social and emotional characteristics of pre and early teens are also essential. From sixth through eighth grade, all middle school students have the opportunity to exercise higher-order thinking skills, find and analyze information, pose problems, seek solutions, persevere, collaborate and take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL STANDARDS

According to *This We Believe*, published by the National Middle School Association (NMSA), effective middle schools have –

- A shared vision;
- Educators who are committed to young adolescents;
- A positive school climate;
- An adult advocate for every student;
- Family and community partnerships;
- High expectations for all;
- A challenging and exploratory curriculum;
- Varied instructional practices;
- Assessments and evaluations that promote learning;
- Health, wellness, and character education programs;
- Comprehensive guidance policies and support services;
- Seamless vertical articulation; and
- A belief in the synergistic value of the team.

The Camas School District endorses these goals and both Skyridge and Liberty Middle Schools have worked to incorporate as many of these components as possible.

THE CAMAS MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

A blend of innovative ideas tempered with common sense has built a long tradition of solid performance in the Camas School District. Measures of student achievement in the core subject areas are consistently strong when compared with performance of students in the state and region. Seven priorities guide our middle school curriculum development:

1. Tight articulation relative to state and district standards;
2. Adoption of programs with a proven track record;
3. Broad-based teacher involvement in program development;
4. A focus on teacher training and recruitment as the best way to improve student achievement;
5. Development of clear academic targets for each grade level;
6. A focus on a “hands-on” and “minds-on” curriculum appropriate for young adolescents; and
7. The incorporation of technology for research and production purposes.



MATHEMATICS

Eighth-grade students work through a curriculum that is tightly aligned with the Washington State Essential Learnings. This includes the five content strands:

- Number Sense
- Measurement
- Geometric Sense
- Probability and Statistics
- Algebraic Sense

Additionally, students are exposed to extensive math problem solving, reasoning and communication.

KEY MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS INCLUDE:

- Computation with rational numbers
- Positive and negative correlations
- Use of proportions to solve a variety of problems
- Measuring with precision
- Use of derived units of measure
- Distance/time relationship
- Relationship of distance to the Pythagorean Theory
- 3-D shapes represented in 2-D drawings
- Geometric transformations in a coordinate plane
- Probability of compound events
- Analysis of bivariate data sets
- Recursive forms of linear and exponential relationships
- Solving two-step equations and inequalities

MOST EIGHTH-GRADE MATH STUDENTS COMPLETE THESE ANCHOR UNITS OF STUDY:

1. Looking behind the numbers
2. Mathematics in motion
3. Shapes and space
4. Modeling and predicting
5. Exploring the unknown
6. Roads and ramps: slopes, angles and ratios
7. Comparing function families

ADVANCED COURSE OPTIONS

HI-CAP/PRE-AP (ADVANCED PLACEMENT)

The Hi-Cap/Pre-AP block for eighth-grade students is a block of language arts and social studies within the middle-school structure. This classroom offers a very rigorous academic curriculum that will differentiate instruction and meet the needs of the highly capable student. Core curriculum is modified and accelerated to allow in-depth explorations in core discipline areas to encourage student autonomy and self-direction. During the school year, students read one to two novels every two weeks and write numerous essays each trimester.

ACCELERATED/ADVANCED MATH

Beginning at the sixth grade level, the district offers advanced math sections and some accelerated math courses. The overall goal for all middle school students is success, confidence and maintaining ongoing interest in mathematics. Therefore, assuring developmentally appropriate placement in mathematics is essential.

Placement in these courses is determined by performance in multiple areas including aptitude tests, achievement tests and classroom performance. Some eighth-grade students may be eligible to take algebra for high school credit.



Highlights of the Eighth-Grade Program

RICH CURRICULUM — CHALLENGING ACTIVITIES

READING • WRITING • SOCIAL STUDIES

The eighth-grade curriculum offers students a unique and integrated language arts and social studies course that emphasizes linkage among history, quality literature and essential oral and written communication skills. Students work in a two-period block while they explore novel studies, writing tasks and performance-based projects. The social studies themes focus on early United States history from colonization through the Civil War. Formal writing instruction plays a central role along with extensive research practice.

MAJOR UNITS OF STUDY

- Geography
- Colonization
- Revolutionary era
- Government and constitution
- Essay writing using various forms
- Civil War - rift and reunion
- Westward expansion
- Public presentation skills
- Essential grammar and usage targets
- Literary analysis
- Vocabulary development

MAJOR STUDENT PROJECTS

- Persuasive essay
- Literature-based expository essay
- Research formal debate in a "classroom-based assessment model"

ANCHOR NOVELS FOR EIGHTH GRADE

- The Glory Field by Walter Dean Myers
- To Be A Slave by Julius Lester
- Stealing Freedom by Elisa L. Carbone
- Nothing But the Truth by Avi
- The Wave by Todd Strasser

OTHER LIKELY TARGETS/PROJECTS

- Full-block business letter
- WASL preparation
- Narrative war journals
- National History Day projects
- Poetry
- Short stories
- Historical reenactments/simulations
- Novel studies
- Current events
- Creative writing

SCIENCE

Students in eighth-grade science classrooms will find themselves immersed in a rich earth science experience that draws on a wide variety of curriculum tools including inquiry kits; updated texts and labs; and use of unique regional resources like Mt. St. Helens.

INCLUDED ARE THESE ANCHOR UNITS OF STUDY:

1. Safety in the science lab
2. Measurement essentials
3. The scientific method and its use of controlled and responding variables
4. Catastrophic events "storms"
5. Catastrophic events "earthquakes"
6. Catastrophic events "volcanoes and Mt. St. Helens"
7. Sun-earth-moon systems
8. Rocks and minerals
9. Energy resources

HEALTH/FITNESS

Middle school students benefit from alternating health and fitness units that span the entire year.

THE EIGHTH-GRADE FITNESS UNITS INCLUDE:

- Cardio-respiratory endurance
- Muscular strength and endurance
- Flexibility and body composition
- Life-long fitness activities
- Goal setting and data collection analysis

HEALTH UNITS AT THE EIGHTH GRADE COVER:

- Nutrition
- Stress and relaxation
- Goal Setting and refusal skills
- First aid/CPR
- Tobacco and drug awareness
- Human growth and development

A TECHNOLOGY-RICH ENVIRONMENT

Both Liberty and Skyridge Middle Schools boast learning environments with state-of-the-art computer labs. All teachers have access to high-level technology presentation stations and research tools. From sixth through eighth grade, students are encouraged to use technology to enhance productivity, information access and learning.

THE TOP 10 ADDITIONAL REASONS STUDENTS WILL ENJOY THEIR EIGHTH-GRADE EXPERIENCE.

10. A wide variety of exciting extracurricular choices
9. Strong art, music and drama programs
8. Team-based field trips
7. Access to unique programs to meet special needs
6. Two beautiful buildings
5. Caring teacher teams
4. Food kids actually like
3. Student leadership opportunities
2. A welcoming atmosphere for all parents and students
1. Everyone knows your name!

MUSIC

Both schools offer diverse and exciting musical experiences. The music programs have an excellent reputation for quality musicianship and do a great job of preparing any involved student to continue in their musical development.

Curriculum Highlights:

- Science of sound
- Music theory and history
- Drumming
- Guitar
- Musical theater
- Jazz band
- Concert band