

# LET YOUR CURIOSITY LEAD



**Hill-Murray School**  
The Catholic Benedictine Prep School

2025–2026

**Middle School  
Curriculum Guide**

# WELCOME TO MIDDLE SCHOOL



Welcome to the Hill-Murray community! The middle school years are some of the most important years in a child's life, and at Hill-Murray, we understand this and are excited to embark with you on these formative years.

Hill-Murray's Middle School invites you to embrace these years as a time of growth, exploration, transformation, service, and joy. Our culture is rooted in the Pioneer Way, characterized by empathy—the capacity to understand others' perspectives—and a commitment to doing what is right, even in challenging circumstances. Our students actively nurture this mindset throughout their time at Hill-Murray. Middle schoolers learn to support each other during a time of significant change, and our faculty serve as coaches and mentors to support them to resist the pressures to conform and develop a sense of purpose as they explore who they are becoming.

As a PIONEER, you will be asked to try new things. You will be engaged in shaping and advancing your journey on our beautiful campus! Each day, you will immerse yourself in exciting pathways and challenges only Hill-Murray can provide you.

The middle school years are full of transformation. At Hill-Murray these years are grounded in a strong sense of faith, community, and belonging. Surrounded by teachers who care deeply for you, you will be understood and supported—intellectually, socially, and emotionally. As a PIONEER, middle school is about exploring, pushing your limits, and having fun! At Hill-Murray, we encourage you to explore new things, whether in the classroom, on the athletic field, through a new artistic endeavor, or any co-curricular opportunities available.

Our Catholic faith guides everything we do, creating an environment where students are valued and feel a sense of belonging and welcome. As you take on more responsibility as a middle school student, you are given freedom to become more independent as you prepare for your high school years. Along this journey, teachers who care about you, your background, and your experiences will support and challenge you. We will equip you with excellent academic skills, plus the compassion, drive, faith, and integrity to make the world around you better as you prepare to enter high school.

A handwritten signature of Melissa Dan in green ink.

Melissa Dan, Ed.S. President

## — PORTRAIT OF A HILL-MURRAY GRADUATE —

Every Hill-Murray student will be an

**INQUISITIVE,  
RESILIENT, AND  
COMPASSIONATE**

leader grounded in the teachings of Christ.

## IDENTITY

Hill-Murray is an independent, Catholic, co-educational, college, and life-preparatory school serving students in grades 6–12. Rooted in our Benedictine and Lasallian traditions, we embrace the journey of each student and are committed to the growth and well-being of each member of our community.

## MISSION

Hill-Murray empowers students to reach their fullest potential by inspiring them to utilize their God-given strengths to become leaders who will make a positive difference in the world.

## VISION

Hill-Murray will become the preeminent school that partners with families to develop transformational leaders grounded in the teachings of Christ.



**FULFILL YOUR PROMISE. SERVE OTHERS.  
TRANSFORM THE WORLD.**

We are an educational leader in the Twin Cities—an independent, Catholic, forward-looking school rooted in strong values. We provide academic, physical, social, emotional and spiritual support to every student. We focus on personalized learning that empowers students to embrace their journey and make a positive difference in the world. Our faculty are dedicated to addressing the strengths and challenges of each student and creating a space where compassion, service and excellence are the priorities.

# FIND YOUR CALLING

This Middle School Curriculum Guide is designed to aid you in planning your course selections at Hill-Murray. This guide is a catalog of all the 2025-2026 school year courses.

Listed by grade, you will find a brief description of each course, including the semester(s), prerequisites, and other pertinent information you might need. If you are interested in a course that you do not see, please reach out to your School Counselor.

## A CURRICULUM DESIGNED TO AWAKEN CURIOSITY

The Hill-Murray curriculum will engage your mind, encourage you to express your creativity, and expand your knowledge of God and the world around you by exploring the rich history of human thought and endeavor.

**HILL-MURRAY ACADEMICS** Our academic curriculum is designed to reward your passion and develop your capacity for critical thinking and creative problem-solving to pave the way for a lifetime of learning and leadership.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL** H-M's Middle School addresses the distinctive needs of students in Grades 6 through 8. We appreciate and understand their joys, challenges, and developmental changes. We also recognize their vulnerability and learning differences in this remarkable transitional period. Our program provides the support and guidance that allow students to develop independent thinking, intellectual integrity, and physical, personal, and social maturity.

## COURSE REGISTRATION

Middle School students take required English, Math, Physical Education, Theology, Science, and Social Studies courses. In addition to required courses, students will take two to five electives each year and a required Pioneer Pathway course.

The Math Department determines math placement for incoming students. The decision is based on placement exam scores, previous teacher recommendations, prior coursework, grades, and other factors.

Math placement for returning students is determined by that student's current year's progress and the current teacher's recommendations.



## COURSE REGISTRATION POLICY

If a course is not offered due to insufficient enrollment or enrollment exceeding course capacity, a student's alternate choices listed on registration materials will be used to complete the schedule. Therefore, students must list alternate choices they sincerely wish to take.

## PIONEER INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Pioneer Institute for Health and Wellness (PIHW) is an initiative exclusive to the Hill-Murray Community. Programming and support are provided to students through various modes designed to strengthen and challenge their physical, spiritual, social and emotional growth journey. Students will learn the skills, mindsets and beliefs that will endure over time. By participating in the PIHW, students learn essential life skills that help them navigate personal and social challenges effectively. We focus on cultivating emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, stress management, self-awareness and self regulation in the context of a faith based education. Components of the PIHW include curriculum in the Pioneer Pathway courses, special speakers and presentations in grade level sessions during WIN, opportunities to engage in innovative PE elective offerings, tools that support the development of executive function along with opportunities to participate in stress management activities. The PIHW also strengthens the connection between the school and parents/guardians to create the best learning environment for our Hill-Murray students.

# MATH OFFERINGS

Hill-Murray School offers a comprehensive Math Course Offering, giving students the opportunity to gain experience with our math curriculum. Completing these courses will help set students apart from their peers in both college and the workforce at large.

MATHEMATICS COURSE OFFERINGS	
MIDDLE SCHOOL	Pre-Algebraic Concepts
	Pre-Algebra
	Middle School Algebra
HIGH SCHOOL	High School Algebra
	Intermediate Algebra or Intermediate Algebra through coding or Honors Intermediate Algebra
	Geometry or Geometry Through Woodworking or Honors Geometry
	Algebra II or Honors Algebra II
	Pre-Calc or Honors Pre-Calc
	Statistics or Honors Statistics
ELECTIVES	Calculus Basics or Honors Calculus Basics
	AP Honors Calculus BC
	CIS College Algebra
ADDITIONAL MATH CLASSES	

# GUIDANCE, COUNSELING & SUPPORT SERVICES

An effective Counseling Department recognizes individual growth and that learning takes place in all aspects of one's life: intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical. Supporting this growth and development is essential in helping students make healthy and beneficial decisions.

Academic and life goals, as well as post-secondary planning, are also critical. The Hill-Murray Counseling Department is staffed by Licensed School Counselors, College Counselors, and a Clinical Psychologist.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Lisa Valentine  
lvalentine@hill-murray.org | 651-748-2224

### PIONEER INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH & WELLNESS

Katie Francis, Director  
kfrancis@hill-murray.org | 651-777-1376

### CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST\*

Dr. Julie Robinson  
jrobinson@hill-murray.org | 651-748-2414

*\*For student referrals, please start with the student's School Counselor.*

Counseling services include academic, personal-social development, as well as post-secondary planning. Services available to all students: personal counseling, individual, post-secondary planning, mental health education, monitoring of academic progress.

## HM PIONEER SUMMER

Pioneer Summer offers a variety of experiences in three main categories:

**ACADEMIC:** Credit and enrichment classroom experiences – contact your School Counselor for recommendations

**ARTS & ACTIVITIES:** Fine arts and experiential learning

**ATHLETICS:** Sport development camps

These summer classes are designed to help you explore, try something new, meet friends, and have FUN! Information coming soon for Pioneer Summer 2025.

# THE NICHOLAS CENTER

Through The Nicholas Center, Hill-Murray can meet the needs of neurodiverse students where they are in their educational journey. The Nicholas Center can provide coursework that provides enriching interventions for students to meet their goals. The prescriptive coursework is based on the student's individual cognitive needs and has built-in assessments to measure growth. Currently, The Nicholas Center provides classes to support students who may have a diagnosed emotional or learning difference in multiple areas.

To learn more about The Nicholas Center and how the program may work with your son or daughter, contact:

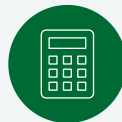
**Brent Johnson,**  
**Vice President of**  
**Operations &**  
**The Nicholas Center**  
bgjohnson@hill-murray.org

**Sara Johnson,**  
**Director of Literacy**  
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## READING SKILLS

The Nicholas Center offers the Wilson Reading System® program to assist students who are reading below grade level or who have a language-based learning disability. We assist students with vocabulary development with the Just Words® program and Achieve 3000® helps boost reading comprehension.



## MATH SUPPORT

In The Nicholas Center we meet students at their current skill level and guide their progress with tailored instruction. Our program integrates whole group lessons with small group, targeted instruction, as well as adaptive learning technology ensuring every learner gets the support and challenge they need to thrive.



## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

All Hill-Murray Middle School students receive an iPad and our Assistive Technology program helps students maximize the capabilities of these machines. This program is available by individual request.

# RESOURCES THAT FOSTER SUCCESS

## ACADEMIC STUDY SKILLS

### ACADEMIC COACH/ TUTOR

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits Total*

Academic Coaches/Tutors work 1-on-1 with students to improve the students' executive functioning skills. The Academic Coach/ Tutor will work with teachers to enhance students' performance by creating study plans and supporting assignment, study, and assessment follow-through. For students with learning differences, their tutor will work with them to appropriately advocate for their individual learning needs

### MIDDLE SCHOOL STRATEGIC STUDY LAB

#### GRADE 6 | GRADE 7 | GRADE 8

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits Total*

*Required approval of TNC*

Students will be assigned to this class based on academic needs with required approval from TNC staff. Strategic Study Lab (SSL) is a structured support class designed to provide students with individualized instruction and support in various areas of executive functioning skills (planning, organization, study strategies) as well as providing structured academic support with reading comprehension, writing, and work completion. This targeted approach aims to create a comprehensive support environment that goes beyond a typical study hall.

## READING

### MIDDLE SCHOOL READING SKILLS

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

*Elective 6-8, approval of The Nicholas Center*

Students in this course will improve reading proficiency with instruction in fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Students will receive direct instruction in word recognition, vocabulary knowledge, background information, language structures, and comprehension strategies. Emphasis will be placed on phonology, morphology, and reading fluency. Students will be assigned to this class based on their academic plan.

### WILSON JUST WORDS®

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

*Elective 6-12, approval of The Nicholas Center*

The Wilson Just Words program is a fast-paced, sophisticated study of word structure that provides direct and explicit teaching of "how English works" for decoding and spelling automaticity. It is appropriate for students in grades 6-8 who need a brush-up on basic word analysis skills, suffixes, prefixes, and roots.

### WILSON READING SYSTEM®

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

*Elective 6-8, approval of The Nicholas Center*

The Wilson Just Words program is a fast-paced, sophisticated study of word structure that provides direct and explicit teaching of "how English works" for decoding and spelling automaticity. It is appropriate for students in grades 6-12 who need a brush-up on basic word analysis skills, suffixes, prefixes, and roots.

### MS READING AND LITERACY SKILLS

#### GRADE 6 | GRADE 7 | GRADE 8

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

Students in this class will be engaged in targeted literacy and reading instruction in alignment with the English Language Arts standards. Students will be placed in this class based on their entrance screener.

## MATH

### MATH SUPPORT

#### GRADE 6 | GRADE 7 | GRADE 8

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

This middle school class is for students who need extra time and assistance with their current math coursework. When needed, students will spend time relearning material taught in their assigned math course, engage with their daily math homework, and, with extra time, will learn basic strategies for working through multi-step problems. Students are placed in this class based on academic need.

## GRADE 6 SCHEDULE

HR	1ST SEMESTER	2ND SEMESTER
1	Theology 6/Phy Ed 6	Theology 6/Phy Ed 6
2	Lit. & Language Arts 6	Lit. & Language Arts 6
3	Mathematics	Mathematics
4	Earth and Space Science	Earth and Space Science
5	Minnesota History	Minnesota History
	Lunch	Lunch
6	Pioneer Pathway	Stem Lab
7		
8		

The worksheet above can be used to help plan your course selections. Required courses are already listed, so fill in your elective choices in the open spaces.

Required courses are listed period 1-6. Choose courses to fill in student's additional 4 elective spots. Electives are shown on page 14.

## THE 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE ADVANTAGE

The "6th-grade advantage" refers to the unique support Hill-Murray offers during this developmental stage as our youngest students transition into Middle School. Students are still relatively young and familiar with their elementary school environment and need the care and attention from their teachers as they transition into Middle School.

## ENGLISH

### 0201 LITERATURE & LANGUAGE ARTS 6

*Required for Grade 6*

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

This course intertwines fundamental writing, literature, reading, and communication skills throughout the year. Students will focus on reading comprehension, vocabulary development, writing, literary study, language development, and lifetime study skills. Collaborative strategies are utilized to build knowledge and skills to help students become independent readers, thinkers, and writers.

## INNOVATION AND DESIGN

### 0710 STEM LAB

*Required for Grade 6*

*One Semester, 1 Credit total*

STEM Lab is designed to provide 6th-grade students with an engaging and foundational exploration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The course will introduce basic concepts, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through hands-on projects, collaborative work, and interactive learning experiences. Students will explore the application of STEM in everyday life, encouraging creativity, curiosity, and a love for discovery. This course will foster a growth mindset and build a foundational knowledge base that students can expand upon in future STEM coursework.

## MATHEMATICS

### 0301 PRE-ALGEBRAIC CONCEPTS

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

This course continues the study of mathematics. Topics include numbers and their operations, beginning algebra, geometry, data analysis, and probability. Technology applications are integrated throughout the course to make concepts more meaningful. The emphasis of this class is to prepare students for Pre-Algebra.

### 0304 PRE-ALGEBRA

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

Topics in this course include: operations with positive and negative rational numbers, algebra, geometry, and data analysis. The focus of this course is proportional reasoning.



### 0306 MS ALGEBRA

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This first course in algebra will enable the student to represent problem situations with expressions, equations, inequalities, and graphing. The focus will be on linear functions and algebraic techniques for application in various situations.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### 0006 PHYSICAL EDUCATION 6

Required for Grade 6

One Semester, 1 Credit total

This course encourages students to discover the joy of physical activity through a variety of sports, circuits, and skill-building exercises. Students will engage in dynamic, hands-on experiences that emphasize teamwork, personal fitness, and the development of motor skills. By participating in diverse activities, from traditional team sports to individual challenges, students will gain a deeper appreciation for movement, improve their physical health, and develop strategies for participating in lifelong activity.

## PIONEER PATHWAY

### 0891 TO BE A PIONEER

Required for Grade 6

One Semester, 1 Credit total

Pioneer Pathway is a required Middle School course created to give students the tools to become engaged and successful Hill-Murray students and leaders. This course will focus on the "The Pioneer Way". It will include the following units: Belonging, Executive Functioning, Goal Setting and Reflection, Relationships, Digital Citizenship, Navigating Challenges, Mindset, School Spirit, and Leadership.

## SCIENCE

### 0501 EARTH & SPACE SCIENCE 6

Required for Grade 6

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This course explores the interactions and formation of Earth's main systems. Students will investigate the geosphere, atmosphere, and hydrosphere and how these systems interact with each other. Additionally, students will explore the interactions of the sun, moon and Earth systems and how these interactions cause seasons, tides and moon phases.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### 0401 MINNESOTA HISTORY 6

Required for Grade 6

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

Students will explore the rich heritage of the state's longest residents, the Dakota and Ojibwe, and how the arrival of European traders impacted their lives, as well as the impact of the Civil War on the state of Minnesota, the U.S. Dakota War, and the new immigrants whose cultural mosaic has enriched our state. Minnesota History students will also engage in a History Day research project that will challenge the students with skills such as writing, discourse with peers, and the ability to formulate an opinion based on facts.

## THEOLOGY

### 0106 THEOLOGY 6

Required for Grade 6

One Semester, 1 Credit total

This course introduces students to the foundational beliefs of the Catholic faith through the framework of One, Holy, catholic, and Apostolic Church, who Jesus Christ was, the power within the Community of Saints, and the beliefs of the Nience Creed. Students will also gain an understanding of how to lead a life within the Church, belong to the Community of believers and try to understand the main mystery of our faith: the Trinity.



### PORTRAIT OF A HILL-MURRAY GRADUATE

## INQUISITIVE

Driven by curiosity, an independent thinker and lifelong learner

A critical thinker and innovator willing to take risks

A problem solver with the intellectual courage to consider new perspectives

## GRADE 7 SCHEDULE

HR	1ST SEMESTER	2ND SEMESTER
1	Theology 7/Phy Ed 7	Theology 7/Phy Ed 7
2	Lit. & Language Arts 7	Lit. & Language Arts 7
3	Mathematics	Mathematics
4	Life Science 7	Life Science
5	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 7
	Lunch	Lunch
6		Pioneer Pathway
7		
8		

The worksheet above can be used to help plan your course selections. Required courses are already listed, so fill in your elective choices in the open spaces.

Required courses are listed period 1-6. Choose courses to fill in student's additional 5 elective spots. Electives are shown on page 14.

## ENGLISH

**0200 LITERATURE & LANGUAGE ARTS 7**

Required for Grade 7

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This course builds upon the fundamentals of 6th grade through an integrated approach to reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Literature studies include analyzing key ideas and details and examining craft and structure in novels, short stories, poetry, drama, and non-fiction texts. Students will read widely to understand multiple perspectives, including those from diverse cultures. Language studies include developing the writing process to produce clear and coherent writing. Another primary goal of the course is to foster independent learners and encourage in-depth content exploration.

## MATHEMATICS

**0301 PRE-ALGEBRAIC CONCEPTS**

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This course continues the study of mathematics. Topics include: numbers and their operations, beginning algebra, beginning geometry and data analysis and probability. Technology applications are integrated throughout the course to make concepts more meaningful. The emphasis of this class is to prepare students for Pre-Algebra.

**0304 PRE-ALGEBRA**

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

Topics in this course include: operations with positive and negative rational numbers, algebra, geometry, and data analysis. This focus of this course is proportional reasoning.

**0306 MS ALGEBRA**

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This first course in algebra will enable the student to represent problem situations with expressions, equations, inequalities and graphing. The focus will be on linear functions and algebraic techniques for application in various situations.

**0307 INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA**

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This course is a continuation of MS Algebra. The focus will be on quadratic functions, exponential functions, and will include data analysis and probability.

**0313 INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA THROUGH CODING**

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

Prerequisite: Completion of MS Algebra

This course combines Intermediate Algebra with the basics of computer programming, offering students a dynamic approach to learning key math concepts through coding. The course covers all essential concepts from Intermediate Algebra including quadratic functions, exponential models, data analysis, probability, and inequalities as well as topics in computer programming. Students will use both spreadsheet tools and Python programming to explore and solve real-world problems, applying their coding skills to deepen their understanding of algebraic principles. This course will satisfy a mathematics requirement and prepare students for Geometry, Honors Geometry, and other future high school mathematics courses. This course will also count toward the Innovation and Design Pathway Certificate and allow students to advance to a second level computer science course.

### 0308 HONORS INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This course is a continuation of MS Algebra. The focus will be on quadratic functions, exponential functions, and will include data analysis and probability. This course has more rigor than Intermediate Algebra, moves at a faster pace, and includes more topics.

## PIONEER PATHWAY

### 0892 DEVELOP YOUR PIONEER PATH

Required for Grade 7

One Semester, 1 Credit total

Pioneer Pathway is a required Middle School course created to give students the tools to become engaged and successful Hill-Murray students and leaders. This course continues from Pioneer Pathway (6) and will focus on Executive Functioning, Growth Mindset, Community Service & Leadership Projects, Digital Citizenship, and Social and Emotional health. This class is designed to dive deeper into students' academic, social, and emotional growth over the past year.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### 0001 PHYSICAL EDUCATION 7

Required for Grade 7

One Semester, 1 Credit total

This course encourages students to discover the joy of physical activity through a variety of sports, circuits, and skill-building exercises. Students will engage in dynamic, hands-on experiences that emphasize teamwork, personal fitness, and the development of motor skills. By participating in diverse activities, from traditional team sports to individual challenges, students will gain a deeper appreciation for movement, improve their physical health, and develop strategies for participating in lifelong activity.

## SCIENCE

### 0500 LIFE SCIENCE 7

Required for Grade 7

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This course introduces students to the study of living organisms and their interactions. Throughout the year, students will learn about topics such as: lab safety, the metric system, characteristics of life, ecology, cells, genetics, evolution, and body systems. Students will perform various labs, including dissections, as well as many other activities and investigations to help build their understanding of the living world.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### 0420 SOCIAL STUDIES 7

Required for Grade 7

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

American History from Colonial America through Present Day sets the backdrop for this course, where seventh graders will hone their skills in comparing and contrasting, critical thinking, and forming an opinion based in historical fact. Students will also utilize Socratic seminars, project-based learning, and a variety of alternative assessments.

## THEOLOGY

### 0107 THEOLOGY 7

Required for Grade 7

One Semester, 1 Credit total

Through this course, students will understand the journey and process of a person practicing the Catholic faith. We will cover the seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church; learning about the ceremonies, requirements, and graces involved. We will discuss why rituals and ceremonies are essential practices for human beings to experience. We will also look at how these Sacraments relate to a person's life as they grow from infancy to late adulthood and how the Church can be involved with a person's life experience throughout their time on earth.



### PORTRAIT OF A HILL-MURRAY GRADUATE

## RESILIENT

Demonstrates perseverance and grit—to keep going when it gets hard—A PIONEER!

Acts with the courage to navigate the challenges they know are a part of the journey

Develops the muscles of their body, mind, and spirit, which they know only get built by discomfort, mistakes, and the productive struggle inherent to growth

## GRADE 8 SCHEDULE

HR	1ST SEMESTER	2ND SEMESTER
1	Theology 8/Phy Ed 8	Theology 8/Phy Ed 8
2	Lit. & Language Arts 8	Lit. & Language Arts 8
3	Mathematics	Mathematics
4	Physical Science 8	Physical Science 8
5	Social Studies 8	Social Studies 8
	Lunch	Lunch
6	Pioneer Pathway	
7		
8		

The worksheet below can be used to help plan your course selections. Required courses are already listed, so fill in your elective choices in the open spaces.

Required courses are listed period 1-6. Choose courses to fill in student's additional 5 elective spots. Electives are shown on page 14.

## ENGLISH

**0202 LITERATURE & LANGUAGE ARTS 8**

Required for Grade 8

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This course's primary goal is to continue building knowledge and skills that help students transition into high school by becoming independent readers, writers, and thinkers. Reading focuses include fiction, drama, poetry, and non-fiction. Writing includes perfecting the short answer paragraph and writing a literary analysis, a creative short story, and a personal narrative in verse form. Students also create a Capstone project, researching a topic of their choice and synthesizing information and data that they present in a written research paper. Grammar, vocabulary, media literacy, and speech are also areas of focus.

## MATHEMATICS

**0306 MS ALGEBRA**

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This first course in algebra will enable the student to represent problem situations with expressions, equations, inequalities and graphing. The focus will be on linear functions and algebraic techniques for application in various situations.

**0307 INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA**

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

Prerequisite: Completion of MS Algebra

This course is a continuation of MS Algebra. The focus will be on quadratic functions, exponential functions, and will include data analysis and probability.

**0308 HONORS INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA**

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

Prerequisite: MS Algebra and approval of the Math Department

This course is a continuation of MS Algebra. The focus will be on quadratic and exponential functions, including data analysis and probability. This course has more rigor than Intermediate Algebra, moves faster, and includes more topics.

**0313 INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA THROUGH CODING**

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

Prerequisite: Completion of MS Algebra

This course combines Intermediate Algebra with the basics of computer programming, offering students a dynamic approach to learning key math concepts through coding. The course covers all essential concepts from Intermediate Algebra including quadratic functions, exponential models, data analysis, probability, and inequalities as well as topics in computer programming. Students will use both spreadsheet tools and Python programming to explore and solve real-world problems, applying their coding skills to deepen their understanding of algebraic principles. This course will satisfy a mathematics requirement and prepare students for Geometry, Honors Geometry, and other future high school mathematics courses. This course will also count toward the Innovation and Design Pathway Certificate and allow students to advance to a second level computer science course.

**0312 GEOMETRY**

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This course covers basic Euclidean geometry. The focus will be on reasoning and proof. Topics include triangle properties, right triangle trigonometry, polygons, circles, and solids.

### 0314 HONORS GEOMETRY

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total  
Prerequisite: Approval of the Math Department and completion of Intermediate Algebra or equivalent.

This course covers basic Euclidean Geometry. The focus will be reasoning and proof. Topics include: triangle properties, right triangle trigonometry, polygons, circles, and solids. This course has more rigor than Geometry, moves at a faster pace, and includes more topics.

### 0316 GEOMETRY THROUGH WOODWORKING

Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total  
Teacher Approval Required

This hands-on course combines the principles of geometry with the art and craft of woodworking. This course is designed to teach participants how geometry plays a crucial role in the design, construction, and aesthetics of woodworking projects. Whether you're a novice woodworker or have some experience, this course will enhance your skills and help you create more precise and visually appealing pieces.

## PIONEER PATHWAY

### 0893 PORTRAIT OF A PIONEER

Required for Grade 8, One Semester, 1 Credit total

Pioneer Pathway is a required Middle School course created to give students the tools to become engaged and successful Hill-Murray students and leaders. This course will focus on the four pillars of Hill-Murray's Portrait of a Graduate (Leadership, Resiliency, Inquisitiveness and Compassion.). This course will incorporate elements of The Social Institute curriculum, encourage and inspire students to pursue their passions through exploring different H-M clubs and activities, career exploration and interests, and academically and socially prepare students for High School at Hill-Murray.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### 0002 PHYSICAL EDUCATION 8

Required for Grade 8, One Semester, 1 Credit total

This course encourages students to discover the joy of physical activity through a variety of sports, circuits, and skill-building exercises. Students will engage in dynamic, hands-on experiences

that emphasize teamwork, personal fitness, and the development of motor skills. By participating in diverse activities, from traditional team sports to individual challenges, students will gain a deeper appreciation for movement, improve their physical health, and develop strategies for participating in lifelong activity.

## SCIENCE

### 0502 PHYSICAL SCIENCE 8

Required for Grade 8  
Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

This course encourages students to discover the joy of physical activity through a variety of sports, circuits, and skill-building exercises. Students will engage in dynamic, hands-on experiences that emphasize teamwork, personal fitness, and the development of motor skills. By participating in diverse activities, from traditional team sports to individual challenges, students will gain a deeper appreciation for movement, improve their physical health, and develop strategies for participating in lifelong activity.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### 0421 SOCIAL STUDIES 8

Required for Grade 8  
Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total

In this course, students will prepare for high school while practicing contextualization, historical research analysis and interpretation, and argumentation. Students will study influential groups and people from specific periods in World History and how they impacted civilizations culturally, economically, religiously, and politically.

## THEOLOGY

### 0108 THEOLOGY 8

Required for Grade 8, One Semester, 1 Credit total

This course exposes students to the Christian tradition of prayer, which they will have the opportunity to practice, and the basic tenets of Christian morality. Students will be exposed to prayer in various forms, such as the Our Father, Adoration, Meditation, Lectio Divina, Ignatian Prayer, and others. Students will also learn about Christian morality's foundational aspects, including the Old and New Law, Sin, Virtue, and Catholic Social Teaching.



### PORTRAIT OF A HILL-MURRAY GRADUATE

## COMPASSIONATE

- Sees the face of Jesus in everyone they meet–We Welcome All Guests As Christ
- Demonstrates personal courage, empathy, and uses their voice to help others
- Acts with humility and considers how their actions affect the world around them

# MIDDLE SCHOOL ELECTIVES

## ART

### 0835 MIDDLE SCHOOL ART 1

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 6-8*

This course offers students a comprehensive exploration of art by engaging them in a variety of media and techniques such as drawing, painting, sculpture, and collage. Each project emphasizes the elements and principles of design, allowing students to refine their artistic abilities and conceptual understanding. Through hands-on activities, students will develop both creative and critical problem-solving skills as they experiment with two-dimensional and three-dimensional art forms.

### 0839 MIDDLE SCHOOL ART 2

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

Students will have the opportunity to build upon their creative experiences from Middle School Art 1 by creating a portfolio of artwork for the first time. Students will learn more sophisticated techniques with drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and collage, and gain more exposure to contemporary and historical artists and their work. They will have freedom to follow their artistic interests and use the elements and principles of design to refine artwork and express their creative visions. Students will develop skills to produce quality photos of their finished work and assemble them into a digital portfolio which can grow and expand should they choose to take more visual arts courses in both middle and high school. Students must complete Middle School Art 1 before enrolling in Middle School Art 2.

### 0811 MIDDLE SCHOOL COMPUTER GRAPHICS & DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 6-8*

The purpose of this course is to allow students to explore the ever-growing world of digital imaging and enable students to develop awareness of visual communication concepts and graphic design techniques. Students will develop an understanding of essential digital camera functions and photo composition. Students will learn what it takes to create a good photograph and how to improve their pictures. Throughout the semester, students will learn the basics of Adobe Creative Suite®.

## BUSINESS

### 0700 BUSINESS AND ME

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

This course introduces students to basic business, entrepreneurship, and marketing concepts. Students will learn about consumer needs and wants. Students will be able to manage their own virtual business through an online simulation. They will explore business opportunities and create a basic business plan for their dream business. This class will stretch students' imaginations and creativity by allowing them to develop innovative ideas. Students will be challenged to think creatively, collaborate, and make wise financial and business decisions.

### 0704 CAREERS AND ME

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 6-7*

Through this course, students will be able to identify their personal brand. Students will determine their skills, values and interests which will help them recognize potential future career opportunities. Students will learn about multiple career paths across industries. In addition, students will recognize numerous jobs within communities and globally, and will appreciate the value each brings to the economy.

### 0705 THE WORLD AND ME

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

Throughout this course, students will experience the worldwide interdependence of producers, consumers, and the global workforce. Students will gain an appreciation for cultural business practices around the world. The pros and cons of global trade will be presented, and trade barriers will be discussed. Students will recognize currency exchange rates and participate in a global international business multi-cultural project.

### 0714 MONEY AND ME

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

Students will examine and analyze the skills necessary to foster and develop effective and fiscally sound money habits for life. Curriculum will include themes of cash management, developing an income stream, budgeting, and saving for the future. Core curricular concepts also include developing good credit, obtaining a credit card, the time value of money, building solid investing habits, and an examination of critical insurance products. Through an online simulation, students will have the opportunity to manage a diverse investment portfolio. Throughout this project based course, students will learn foundational skills to help them implement excellent financial habits for their future.

## ENGLISH

### 0227 CREATIVE WRITING

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

Students will be introduced to the writing process through journal writing and the writing of short stories and poetry. Techniques for brainstorming and idea development will be emphasized. One-act plays, descriptive, and persuasive writing are some of the assignments that students will explore utilizing writing skills for the 21st century.

### 0239 READING THROUGH THE GENRES

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 6-8*

This course will allow students to find new books in current genres they enjoy and find new genres to explore in their future readings. The genres covered in this class will include Realistic Fiction, Historical Fiction, Science Fiction, Fantasy, Non-Fiction, Drama, and Poetry. Each mini-unit will provide different ways for students to interact with the text through writing, speaking and listening, and project-based activities.

## INNOVATION AND DESIGN

### 0905 STEM 1: ENGINEERS WORKSHOP

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

As a project-based course, students will delve into topics related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. They will develop basic competencies in computer-aided drafting software and design principles. Students will use 3D printers, vinyl cutters, and a laser cutter to produce their designs. Students will keep a log and develop practices for documenting their ideas, designs, and data.

### 0906 STEM 2: ENGINEERING AND DESIGN

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

*Prerequisite: STEM 1*

STEM 2 is a project-based course where students will explore topics related to technology, engineering, and robotics. Students will continue to develop proficiencies in computer-aided drafting software and programming languages learned in STEM 1. They will have access to 3D printers, Spike Prime, a CNC LASER Cutter and a vinyl cutter. Students will apply mechanical and mathematical concepts to reflect on the performance of their designs. Projects will vary from year to year to reflect the interests of the students/instructor.

### 0727 COMPUTER SCIENCE FOUNDATIONS: AN INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTATIONAL THINKING AND CODING

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

Students begin the semester engaged in “unplugged” games and activities designed to hone their skills in computational thinking. These skills are directly related to structures commonly found in computer code, including giving clear directions to be followed correctly every time (algorithms), choosing an efficient way to give directions when repetition is involved (loops), and providing a decision-making process when multiple options exist. Students move into doing block-coding in Scratch (developed by MIT), which is used worldwide to teach basic coding and Code.org. Students will complete a research project on computers’ history and technology’s evolution.

## MUSIC

### 0824 MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND WIND ENSEMBLE AND 0826 DRUMLINE PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

*One Semester, 1 Credit total, or Full Year 2 Credits total  
Elective Grades 6-8*

This performing ensemble stresses fundamentals of instrumental technique, music reading, and overall musicianship. Large group rehearsals are augmented by sectionals, individual assignments, and periodic written work. All members are required to attend concerts. Most performances happen outside the school day. Prior playing experience is not necessary, and beginners are welcome.

### 0822 MIDDLE SCHOOL CHOIR

*One Semester, 1 Credit total, or Full Year, 2 Credits total  
Elective Grades 6-8*

This course is designed to provide a positive learning environment in which students can discover musical talents and skills. The Middle School Choir will perform in at least two concerts per semester. Attendance at Concerts is required of all members.

### 0840 MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA

*One Semester, 1 Credit total, or Full Year, 2 Credits total  
Elective Grades 6-8*

This performing ensemble stresses basic fundamentals of string technique, music reading and overall musicianship. Full group rehearsals are augmented by sectionals, individual assignments and periodic written work. The orchestra performs several concerts throughout the year. Most performances happen outside the school day. All interested students in grades 6-8 are accepted. Prior playing experience is not necessary and we accept beginners. Attendance at concerts is required of all members.

# MIDDLE SCHOOL ELECTIVES

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### 0007 MOVEMENT & WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 6-7*

This course offers 6th and 7th grade students the chance to explore a variety of physical activities that promote cross-training benefits. Through problem-solving, cooperation, and skill development, students will focus on personal fitness, including strength, endurance, flexibility, and agility. Activities will include individual, dual, and team sports, with a focus on student preferences and team-building.

### 0004 MOVEMENT & WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

This course offers 7th and 8th grade students the chance to explore a variety of physical activities that promote cross-training benefits. Through problem-solving, cooperation, and skill development, students will focus on personal fitness, including strength, endurance, flexibility, and agility. Activities will include individual, dual, and team sports, with a focus on student preferences and team-building.



## SCIENCE

### 0503 EXPLORERS OF THE GALAXY

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 6-7*

In this one semester course, students will look deeper at Earth's role and place in our solar system. They will get an intro to astronomy by investigating the earth-moon-sun system. We also will study the eight planets in our solar system as well as constellations. Throughout their learning, they will also learn the tools that are used to make the amazing discoveries in space. Students will also apply content covered in their core science classes and see how its real-life applications impact space. This course will be hands-on, collaborative, and technology based. We will use computer models, virtual reality as well as manipulatives to better understand Earth's role in our universe. Students will use interactive notebooks to record labs and activities.

### 0507 EXPLORERS OF THE GALAXY 2

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

*Also available to new 8th grade students*

In this one-semester course, students will continue to build upon what they learned in Explorers of the Galaxy (1). They will study star features and systems. We will learn and discuss how the Milky Way compares to other galaxies in the universe. We will discuss cosmology as well as the history of space exploration and how it relates to the future of space exploration. Students will also research and discover what benefits we have gained in our daily lives through space exploration. This course will be hands-on, collaborative, and technology based. We will use computer models, virtual reality as well as manipulatives to better understand Earth's role in our universe. Students will use interactive notebooks to record labs and activities.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### 0402 ME, MYSELF AND MY BRAIN

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 7-8*

Why do we sleep? What are feelings? How do we make decisions, and how do we learn from them? Psychology helps us ask and answer these big questions about ourselves, others, and the world around us. This exciting elective introduces 7th and 8th graders to the science of psychology, including units on the brain, personality, intelligence, emotions, social relationships, and more. With lots of hands-on experiments and activities, there's no better way to dive into the fascinating science of the mind.



## STUDY SKILLS

### 0252 MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDY SKILLS

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 6-8*

This course will focus on developing vital study skills for Middle School students that they can apply and practice in their content area classes. Students will work to develop test-taking skills, increase their reading speed, and use various study strategies. In addition, students will work to apply literacy strategies (e.g., using context clues, and identifying main ideas and details) to content. After taking this course, students should feel better equipped to handle the organizational and cognitive challenges of middle school and beyond.

## THEATRE

### 0850 CREATIVE DRAMATICS

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 6-8*

Creative Dramatics combines theater games, exercises, and story-telling techniques. Students will strengthen creativity, imagination, sensory awareness, and problem-solving skills. This course improves social skills such as self-control, group work, self-image, self-confidence, and overcoming shyness. Theater skills developed include pantomime, improvisation, and dialogue.

### 0855 THEATRE FUNDAMENTALS

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 6-8*

This Middle School level course introduces students to the exciting world of Theatre, providing them with a foundation in the fundamental aspects of theatrical production. The curriculum is designed to foster creativity, collaboration, and self-expression while also developing essential skills such as communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving when exploring the different elements and history of Theatre.

## WORLD LANGUAGE

6th and 7th grade students are able to take the Exploring World Languages elective. It's a great way to experience world languages and cultures through games, activities, food, songs, and more in a semester-long elective. Students in 7th grade may register for French 1A or Spanish 1A. Each is a full-year Middle School language course that covers the first half of the High School curriculum. Upon successfully completing the course, students can register for French 1B or Spanish as 8th graders. Incoming 8th graders are encouraged to sign up for High School Spanish 1 or French 1 in order to register for Spanish 2 or French 2 as freshmen upon successful completion of the course.

### 0604 EXPLORING WORLD LANGUAGES

*One Semester, 1 Credit total - Elective Grades 6-7*

The goal of the course is to introduce World Languages and cultures to students, as well as to excite them about taking a World Language in the future. Students will explore the world through French, Spanish, and Chinese, basic vocabulary, cultural information, and geography. Students will also experience authentic art, music, and cuisine. This elective may be taken only once during middle school.

### 0607 FRENCH 1A

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

*Elective Grade 7*

This course will cover the 1st half of French 1 curriculum. Basic vocabulary (introductions, weather/calendar/time, classroom, adjectives, foods, activities) and basic grammar (conjugating -er verbs, noun/adjective agreement, articles, the verbs *aimer*, *avoir*, and *être*).

### 0630 SPANISH 1A

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

*Elective Grade 7*

This course will cover the 1st half of Spanish 1 curriculum. Basic vocabulary (introductions, weather/calendar/time, classroom, adjectives, foods, activities) and basic grammar (conjugating -ar verbs, noun/adjective agreement, articles, the verbs *gustar* and *ser*).

### 0609 FRENCH 1B

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

*Elective Grade 8. Prerequisite: Completion of French 1A OR adequate score on placement exam \**

*\*Note that incoming 8th graders can enroll in a full year of French 1.*

This course will cover the 2nd half of French 1 curriculum Continuing with basic vocabulary (family, clothes/colors, city) and expanding grammar concepts (conjugating -er, re, and -ir verbs, possession and possessive adjectives, stem-changing verbs, comparisons, and the verbs *faire*, *aller*, and *mettre*). Successful completion of this course will allow the student to take French 2 as a freshman.

### 0632 SPANISH 1B

*Full Year, 1 Credit each semester, 2 Credits total*

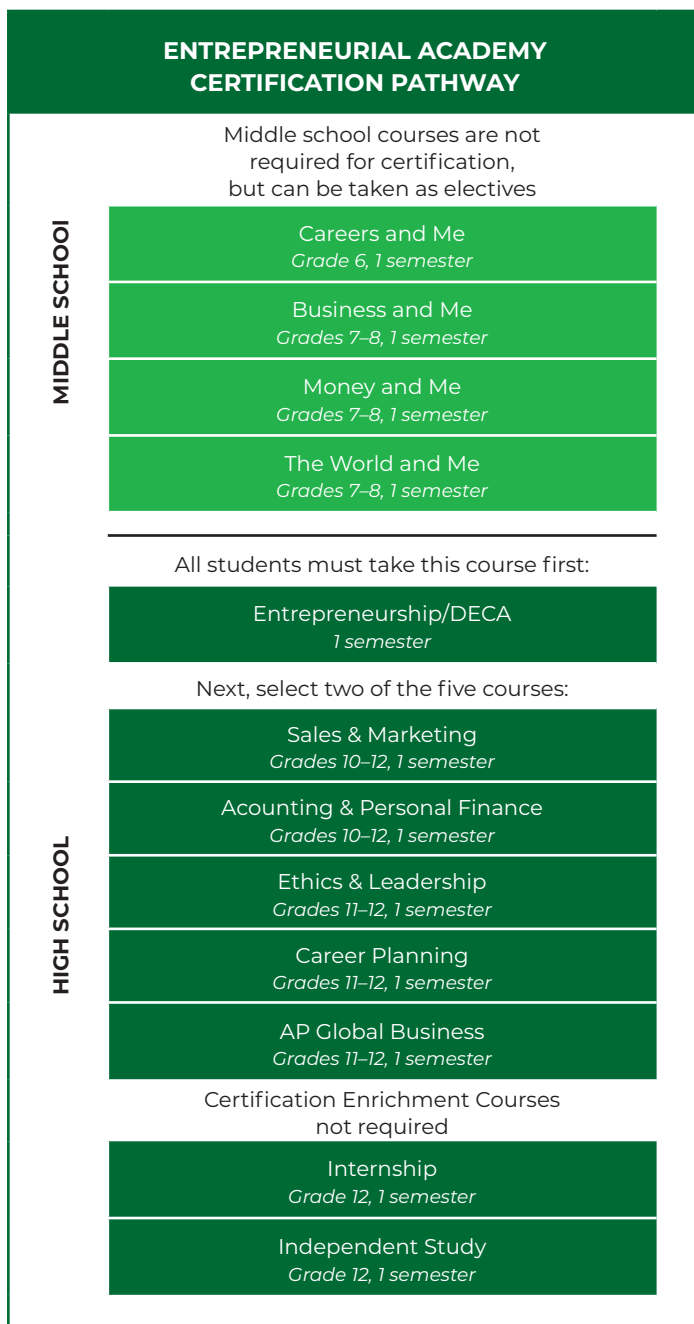
*Elective Grade 8. Prerequisite: Completion of Spanish 1A OR adequate score on placement exam.*

This course will cover the 2nd half of Spanish 1 curriculum. Continuing with basic vocabulary (family, clothes/colors, city) and expanding grammar concepts (conjugating -er and -ir verbs, possession and possessive adjectives, stem-changing verbs, comparisons and the verbs *hacer* and *ir* a). Successful completion of this course will allow the student to take Spanish 2 as a freshman.



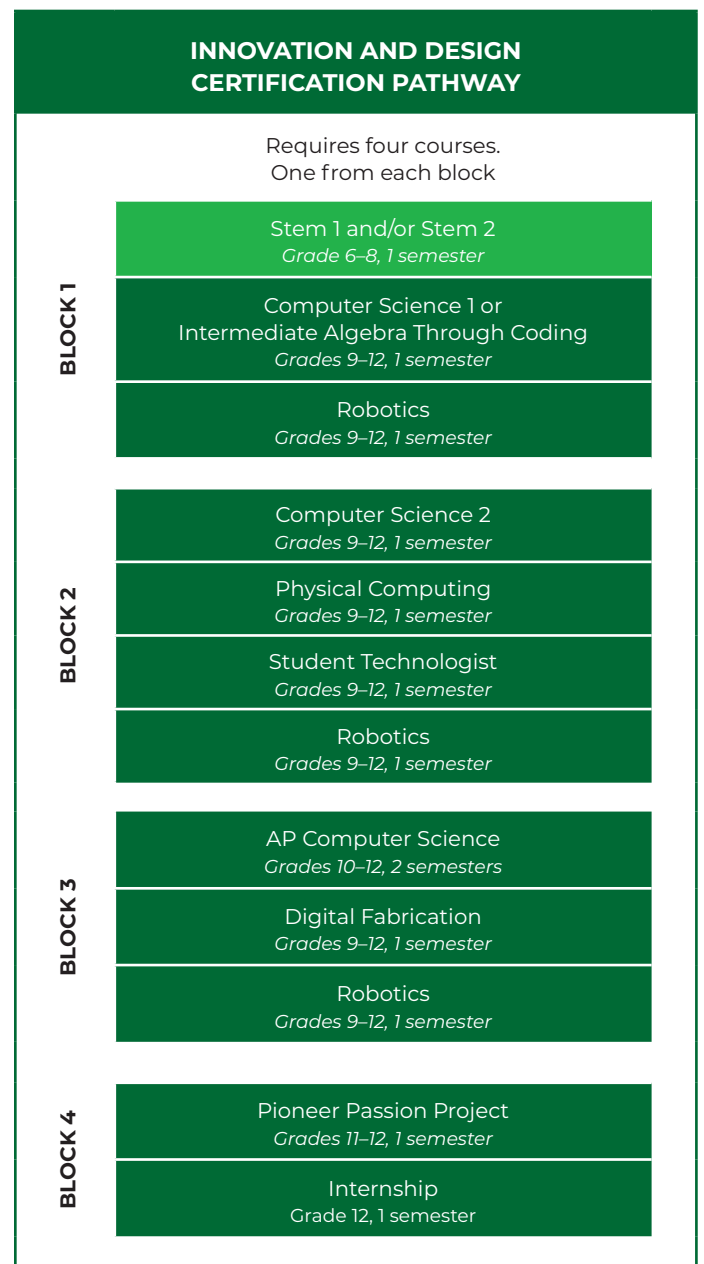
## ENTREPRENEURIAL ACADEMY CERTIFICATION PATHWAY

Hill-Murray School offers a comprehensive Entrepreneurial Academy Pathway allowing students to gain experience with career exploration, entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, accounting and international business. These courses introduce students to advanced business topics, and develop their interpersonal and problem-solving skills by working in collaborative teams. See chart below. Our Entrepreneurship Certification Pathway takes it to the next level, and prepares students for the Enterprise Business Internship which will allow them to gain experience in a professional business setting. Completing this pathway will help set students apart from their peers in both college and the workforce at large.



## INNOVATION AND DESIGN CERTIFICATION PATHWAY

Hill-Murray School offers pathways to certification in Innovation and Design, allowing students to gain experience in a comprehensive science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curriculum. This includes hands-on experience with computational thinking, engineering, 3D printing, fabrication, design, and computer programming. This pathway introduces students to innovative and cutting-edge topics and allows them to develop their technical skills with industry-standard software and tools. It culminates with a capstone research or design project in the Pioneer Passion Projects course. As students work toward this pathway certificate, they will develop creativity, problem-solving skills, and technical abilities vital for college success and beyond. See the diagram for course requirements to complete the pathway.



**HILL-MURRAY SCHOOL**  
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