

Frequently Asked Questions for 7/8th grade

What is the aim of the Jr. Academy?

The aim of the 7th and 8th grade Jr. Preparatory Academy at MHS is that of improving students' levels of achievement and raising teachers' and students' expectations. The model includes a systematic reorganization of the school into a small learning community, organized around interdisciplinary teacher teams that share the same students and have common planning time. It infuses the curriculum with academic courses in English, language arts, mathematics, science, and U.S. history that are based on nationally recognized standards. Teachers receive professional development on the use of the curriculum and accompanying instructional practice. The model provides catch-up opportunities during the school day to students who are struggling with mathematics or reading as well as accelerated learning opportunities for talented students.

What will the Jr. Academy offer?

- Ongoing, grade- and subject-specific teacher support and professional development;
- Standards-based, research-based curriculum in four core subject areas;
- Integrated extra help for students;
- More productive relationships through small learning communities and school reorganization;
- A safe, supportive environment through our school climate program;
- A school within a school concept (small learning community)
- Smaller class sizes
- Student will stay with the same teachers for both years (looping).
- A fine arts program
- Parent Partnerships and Compacts
- Opportunities for community service and leadership development
- Career/College Counseling – Each academy will have its own counselor. Each student will have a Personal Education Plan developed by the student and monitored by the student, parents, and staff.
- Smooth Transitions from middle school to high school

How will the program help struggling learners?

Students who need additional help attend elective extra-help labs in reading and/or mathematics in addition to their regular classes. “Extra dose” classes that use cooperative groups, computers, small-group instruction, and other activities to provide targeted, intensive instruction will be provided.

What does the program offer gifted and talented students?

Accelerated classes; Leadership opportunities; Opportunities for problem solving projects and experiences; Comprehensive, multidimensional learning opportunities; Fine Arts programs and foreign languages.

Are children in the 7/8th grade kept separate from the older students?

Yes, younger students are housed in their own academy. They will have their own entrance and exit from the building.

What are the expectations of the parents?

Partnerships with families are the cornerstone of student achievement. Parents will be expected to work collaboratively with staff to monitor student achievement as well as expected to attend an orientation at the start of the year and at minimum meet with staff once a month throughout the year. For the 7-9th grades, failure to honor the parent compact will impact re-enrollment status of the student for the subsequent year.

How many students will be enrolled? How many per class?

The program is designed for 80 7th grade students and 80 8th grade students
The class sizes will remain at approximately 20 students per class.

What is the application process? What are the deadlines?

To apply:

1. Students must complete a one page essay on why they want to attend the Jr. Academy.
2. Parents must sign a parent compact agreeing partner with staff to help their child to be successful in school.
3. Parents must sign a parent compact agreeing to partner with staff to help their child to be successful in school
4. Complete the 'free and reduced' lunch form

Applications will be available at Central office, and on the District website, by March 18, 2008. The deadline for application will be May 1, 2008. Notices of acceptance will be mailed May 15, 2008.

Will my child be safe?

Part of the redesign of the building includes additional security cameras both inside and outside the building. New key locks for entry into the building and additional lighting around the outside of the building. Students will be housed in small learning communities or academies allowing greater accountability of student's whereabouts and greater more time spent with staff. Students and staff will enter designated entrances in the morning. After school starts, only one entry into the building will be allowed.