

"When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed."
— **Maya Angelou**



Principal's Corner

Dear Merrill Students and Families,

As we evaluate the effectiveness of our current academic program and begin preparing for the 2016-2017 school year, we have determined that changes need to be made to our Honors/Pre-AP program. In evaluating our program, we kept four key ideas at the forefront of every conversation.



- Students who are advanced at their current grade level should be grouped together in core classes.
- Students may excel in specific content areas but not in all content areas.
- The new CCSS are much more rigorous for all students and alignment of grade level standards have shifted to lower grade levels.
- High school placement is based on teacher recommendation, **not** on whether or not a student is in an honors class during their 8th grade school year.

Merrill will continue having Honors at Grade 6 and 7 and a strong Pre Advanced Placement Program in 8th grade. The 8th grade program will continue to prepare students with skills and content they will need to be successful in AP courses in high school.

December 4th
December 11th

Events

Restaurant Night

December 15th

Max Gill and Grill
4:00-10:00

December 10th

Merrill Dance Concert
6:30 pm

Athletics

Boys and Girls Basketball

December 7th

3:45 at Merrill

Listed in the chart below are the requirements for Honors/Pre-AP placement for the 2016-2017 school year.

Content Area	Grade 6 Honors Placement	Grade 7 Honors Placement	Grade 8 Pre-AP Placement
Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced on majority of ANet Assessments - Advanced on CMAS/PARCC LA (if available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced on majority of ANet Assessments - Advanced on CMAS/PARCC LA (if available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced on majority of ANet Assessments - Advanced on CMAS/PARCC LA (if available)
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced on majority of ANet Assessments - Advanced on CMAS/PARCC Math (if available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced on majority of ANet Assessments - Advanced on two Unit Assessments – Decimal Ops, Variables and Patterns (2017-18 add Bits and Pieces) - Advanced on CMAS/PARCC Math (if available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced on majority of ANet Assessments - Advanced on two Unit Assessments – Comparing and Scaling, Moving Straight Ahead (2017-18 add Stretching and Shrinking) - Advanced on CMAS/PARCC Math (if available)
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No Honors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced on majority of Interim or Summative Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced on majority of Interim or Summative Assessments - Distinguished Command CMAS Science (if available)
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No Honors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced on majority of Interim or Summative Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced on majority of Interim or Summative Assessments - Distinguished Command CMAS SS (if available)
English Language Learners who score a 5 on ACCESS or who are re-designated will be considered for Honors or Pre-AP.			

ANet assessments have replaced the DPS Interim or Benchmark assessments. Students will take these assessments three times during the 2015-2016 school year. These assessments are snapshots of how students are progressing on content standards aligned with grade level curricula. Today, we talked with 6th and 7th grade students at grade level meetings about the changes to Honors and Pre-AP. Content teachers will continue to reinforce grade level expectations and opportunities for student growth in the coming months.

In addition, the leadership team will be working with grade level teachers to strengthen criteria and syllabi for Honors and Pre-AP.

Thank you for your continued support of Merrill Middle School.

-Amy Bringedahl; Principal

Mark Your Calendar

December 10th 4:00-10:00 pm

Restaurant Night at
Max Gill and Grill

December 10th 6:30 pm

Merrill Dance Concert

December 16th 10:15 am

Choir Concert

December 18th 2:00-3:35 pm

Talent Show and Social

Community Announcement

Dear Merrill Community,

It has been an honor and a joy to be a Merrill Jaguar for the past two and a half years. As a member of this community, I have grown, and seen so much growth in our students. It is with bittersweetness that I share with you all: as of January 1, 2016, I will be leaving Merrill and taking up a new challenge to serve students and teachers in a different way, as Academic Manager of Response to Intervention at the DPS Central Office. To the parent community, I sincerely thank you for the support and partnership I have shared with so many of you over the years.

With humility,
Amanda Rau

ANet Assessments

Students will be coming home with their first round of interim results on Tuesday of next week. Each student will receive a report on their areas of strength and areas for growth. Please take the time to review their results with them. For a student to be considered at grade level, they need to have scored 75% of the assessments.

Merrill Has a NEW Website!



In our continued effort to stay connected with our community, our new website went live on this week! In the design, we wanted to make sure that information was easy to find and that we were highlighting and celebrating our students and teachers.

Take a minute to check it out! <http://merrill.dpsk12.org/>

Advisement

Advisement classes have each been planning community service projects. Here are some of the great ideas:

Ms. Bergquist's class would like to have a sled race. In order to enter the race you must donate a canned good/food item, piece of clothing, new toy or school supplies.

Ms. Ayluardo & Mr. Lubanga's class will be creating a gift tree to raise money for the veterans' hospital. It'll be like the Make-a-Wish Christmas tree and we will use the money to send gifts. We will also be collecting thank-you notes for veterans.

Ms. Hunter's class will be delivering plastic bags in the neighborhood next Wednesday (12/9) with a note asking for Toys for Tots donations. We will then go back the next week (12/16) to collect any donations and deliver the donations right before break! The students would also love any additional donations from the Merrill Community whose houses we are unable to get to!

Attendance

In the past, on a Trimester system, we have been in the middle of the marking period at the winter break. It is important to note these two weeks are now the last in our first major marking period, Semester 1. We have two full weeks until the end of quarter 2, and the start of our winter break! We have a lot to learn in this time, and want to make it count! As such, we are offering an attendance challenge for all students:

Any student with perfect attendance between December 7 and December 17 will be invited to take part in an ice cream social during lunch on Friday, December 18.

Parents, we know that getting students to school during December can be challenging because of the cold, the snow, and family plans. We sincerely appreciate your continued partnership in this effort.

Dance Concert

Welcome to Friends and Families!
Dance Concert **December 10th at 6:30**

Come see historic choreography, new contemporary and hip hop, student choreography and a new piece by Ms. Hatch!

Over 100 students on stage!



PTSA News

The Bookies Fundraiser

If you haven't started your holiday shopping yet, we will help get you started! Join the Merrill Middle School PTSA for a fun filled evening!



Thursday, December 10th at [The Bookies](#) from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Enjoy light snacks, refreshments, holiday music and SHOPPING!
20% of ALL check and cash purchases and 15% of ALL credit card purchases are donated to the school
[Click here to help out...](#)

The Bookies will give back to Merrill from 12/10 through 12/17. Just mention that you are supporting Merrill Middle School. **Spread the word with your friends and family on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.**

'Tis the season of giving.....

- **Teacher Appreciation.....** In addition, the Teacher Appreciation Breakfast will be on Thur Dec 17th. The PTO will purchase Santiago Burritos and Starbucks coffee to thank our teachers for a wonderful first part of the year. If you want to assist, **please contribute to the [Merrill Community Fund](#) or [signup here](#).**
- **New Kiln for the School...** Our pottery kiln is dead – not safe, missing parts, super old, and not up to code. The Art Department would like to grow the art program with pottery which will enhance the student's experience. A new kiln is around \$2,500 - \$3,000 and the PTO has been asked to support this expense. If you want to assist, **please contribute to the [Merrill Community Fund](#).**

Want to help out? We need volunteers!

Check out the upcoming events and what you can do to support your kids.

Makin' Copies! – every day

The Bookies Night – Thur. Dec 10

Teacher Appreciation Breakfast– Thur. Dec 17

[Click here to help out...](#)

Please direct PTO questions to ptomerrill@gmail.com

Stay Connected



Don't miss out on what happens on a daily basis at Merrill. Follow us on [Facebook](#), Instagram ([MERRILL JAGUARS](#)) and twitter ([@merrill_jaguars](#)).

Restaurant Night



Help support Merrill by eating at [Max Gill & Grill !](#)
Tuesday, Dec 15, 4pm – 10m
1052 S. Gaylord St. / 303.722.7456

Max Gill and Grill will give 15% of your purchase back to Merrill. Just mention that you are with Merrill Middle School!

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Students may arrive at school as early as 7:30 AM, and should be dropped off on Iowa, which is on the south side of the building. Students will walk from Iowa to our blacktop, where all students line up in the morning for school.

Students may be picked up in front of the school on Monroe at 3:35 PM. Please note that C3 parents are picking their students up on Monroe starting at 2:45. The parking lots on the north side (off Florida) and south side (off Iowa) are for staff only. Please do not use it to park. Thank you.

Because we do not have supervision after 3:50, students MUST be picked up no later than 3:50 every afternoon. Thank you for your support.

Also, please park along the sidewalk. FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN, NO DOUBLE PARKING.

Merrill Community Fund



Want to support Merrill? Make a contribution to the Merrill Community Fund to enrich opportunities for students. What can you give – \$5, \$25, \$100, more? For more information, please visit <http://merrill.dpsk12.org/mcf/>.

Thank you in advance for your support!

What's Up at the High Schools?

Each week we will highlight events happening at our surrounding high schools. We encourage our families and students to get out and support our community!

- **Shadowing and Touring:** [CLICK HERE](#) to schedule a shadowing experience at South!



Shadowing and Touring: [CLICK HERE](#) to schedule a shadowing experience at Thomas Jefferson High School!



Sports



Page

Excellence in Athletics

We had a huge showing this past week for our boys' and girls' basketball tryouts! We saw a lot of great talent and are excited about the season! Our first games will be next Monday at Merrill.

6th Grade Sports

For the last many years, DPS has provided our 6th graders with opportunities to participate in a league that is dedicated to building team and student engagement. These leagues were for volleyball and basketball. There were no cuts and 6th grade students were able play other DPS middle schools.

DPS suspended these leagues this year. We urge you to reach out to the DPS Athletics and give your support for bringing them back. We had close to 80 students tryout for basketball this past week and we would love to have more engagement.

Next Week's Games

Boys Basketball
December 7th
3:45 at Merrill

Girls Basketball
December 7th
3:45 at Merrill