

Academic Classes

West Briar Middle School is committed to meeting the instructional needs of all students. Our academic classes – English, Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies – offer three levels of instruction. They are as follows:

On-Level: instruction addresses the grade-level learning objectives as outlined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) through the state curriculum standards known as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Houston ISD Advanced: instruction addresses the grade-level learning objectives along with additional skill sets and strategies designed to help students acquire analytical thinking and communication skills necessary for success in Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high school. The pacing is accelerated in HISD Advanced classes so that students will be prepared to take high school courses in eighth grade. Teachers receive on-going professional development to ensure successful implementation of this College Board program.

Gifted and Talented (G/T): HISD Advanced instruction with differentiation for more depth, complexity and pacing is the G/T curriculum. Students who meet district criteria for G/T identification receive HISD Advanced/G/T instruction in homogeneous classroom settings. HISD Advanced curriculum for G/T students is designed to provide these students more opportunities to demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity.

PE/ Athletics

It is strongly recommended that physical education (PE) be scheduled for two semesters each school year, in grades 6, 7, & 8. To comply with this state PE requirement (four semesters in grades 6-8), West Briar schedules all sixth-grade students into a full year of PE. A student who takes Middle School Dance may meet the PE requirement and/or Fine Arts requirement.

Students should choose one PE credit course (PE, Athletics, or Dance) according to whether they meet the description requirements listed below. (**Note- students will be placed in PE if no selection is made and coaches/teachers have not made the recommendation per tryouts.*)

Physical Education (PE) (6th – 8th Grade)

Students not trying out for any sport listed under Athletics should select physical education, even if they are planning to try out for cross country, track, boys' soccer, or any non-UIL sport. Sixth grade students do not participate in UIL sports teams, however they can try-out and join campus club teams. Those team requirements practice before or after school.

Athletics (7th– 8th Grade)

Athletics is the class period for students who are playing a UIL sport and are on a West Briar Athletic team. Students planning to try out or who make the below teams should sign-up for Athletics:

- Girls- volleyball, basketball, soccer
- Boys- football, basketball, baseball

Dance Year 1-3 (6th – 8th Grade)

Dance Year 1 is a full year course. The students entering this course must be starting the dance program for the first time at West Briar Middle School with little to no prior dance experience. Students can be in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. **This course can be a PE substitute OR a Fine Arts Elective.** Students will be introduced to the world of dance through dance fundamentals, concepts, and techniques at the beginner level. Students will demonstrate their learning through dance genres and styles such as the dance elements (Laban Movement), ballet, modern, jazz, etc., and will learn the initial process of student choreography. Students will have the opportunity to participate in dance workshops throughout the year such as West African dance, hip hop, and others during the school year in class. Dance Year 1 is a preparatory class that

will prepare students for auditions to Dance Company and/or Dance Year 2. Dance Year 2 is a prerequisite for Dance Year 3 and a preparatory class for seventh graders that will prepare for dance auditions for the Dance Company.

Dance Ensemble (6th – 8th Grade)

Girls- Dance Company & Boys- B'Boys Dance Crew

Dance ensemble is a yearlong course for members of the B'Boys Dance Crew (boys) and Dance Company (girls). For the girls Dance Company, auditions are held by West Briar Dance teachers. This course is designed for performance-based curriculum and requires students to pay for their dance wear needed for their performances. Performances consist of HISD Middle School Dance Festival, dance competitions, HISD Dance Montage-Emerging Student Choreography, and many others. Students in Dance Ensemble will have mandatory performances, workshops, and rehearsals throughout the entire school year.

Electives – 6th Grade

Elective Wheel (6th Grade)

Students sample fine arts, technology, and foreign language in a six-week curriculum. Throughout the year, with the beginning of each new grading cycle, students rotate through a series of our Fine Arts electives. This allows sixth-grade students to be exposed to a variety of Fine Arts to then select yearlong courses in the 7th and 8th grades.

Sixth grade students can choose to be in Choir, Band or Orchestra (see descriptions below) for the entire year rather than the Elective Wheel. **Please note: Enrolling in these courses, is a full-year commitment and schedule changes will not be made after the fifteenth day of school.**

Beginning Girls' Choir (6th Grade)

Choir participants will have the opportunity to perform numerous times throughout the school year, on campus, as well as in the community. The choir will focus on mastering sight-singing, correct vocal production, tonal blend, and overall musicality as an ensemble as well as individually. Participation in choir will give students the opportunity to improve their vocal skills and advance to a higher choir in 7th grade. The choir will end the school year with a choir trip and competition.

Beginning Orchestra (6th Grade)

This class is for any student interested in learning how to play an orchestra instrument for the first time. Beginning Orchestra is a pre-requisite for Intermediate or Advanced Orchestra. Instruction is offered for violin, viola, cello, and bass. The beginning orchestra participates in concerts throughout the year, which are held in the evening time. The students will learn how to hold the instruments, properly pluck the strings, learn different notes and rhythms, and finally learn how to use the bow. Information about how to obtain an instrument will be provided by the director at the instrument selection interview.

All Beginning Orchestra students must attend an instrument selection interview where the director guides students in selecting the instrument that is best for them. These meetings will take place in May.

Beginning Band (6th Grade)

This course is offered to any student interested in learning to play a band instrument for the first time. Beginning band is a prerequisite for upper-level band classes. Students will perform 2-3 concerts and 1-2 competitions during the school year. Beginning Band is divided into like-instrument classes meeting throughout the day. Instruments taught in band are flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, euphonium, tuba and percussion. **All Beginning Band students must attend an instrument selection interview where the directors guide students in selecting the instrument that is best for them. These meetings will take place in May.** The number of students playing a particular instrument is determined by the band directors. Information on how to obtain an instrument will be provided to parents at the selection interview. More information is available at <https://westbriarband.com/>.

Boys' Concert Choir (6th Grade)

Boy's Concert Choir is an ensemble open to all grade levels. Students will be performing concerts at West Briar as well as in and around the community. Class time will focus on correct vocal technique, sight-reading, and preparing for concerts. 7th and 8th grade students will have the opportunity to audition for the Region 23 Honor Choir. All members will take part in a spring show as well as an annual choir trip and competition.

MATHCOUNTS® Competition Program (6th Grade)

This year-long class is a national middle school coaching and competitive mathematics program that promotes mathematics achievement through a series of fun and engaging "bee" style contest. The creation of this course is contingent upon student requests and campus staffing.

General Elective Classes – 7th/ 8th Grade

**All below Fine Arts Electives are Full Year*

Spanish for Spanish Speakers (7th Grade)

Native-Spanish-speaking students, who demonstrate fluency in Spanish oral language, will study Spanish formally in an academic setting in the same way that native-English-speaking students study English language arts. All students receive one year of high school credit for this course. 7th grade students will proceed to AP Spanish Language in their 8th grade year.

Prerequisite: Students must score at the Met Grade-Level on their 6th grade STAAR Reading test.

The Texas Middle School Program for AP® Spanish Language (8th Grade)

Native-Spanish-speaking students have the opportunity to use their first language in speaking and writing at an advanced level comparable to 4th or 5th year studies for a non-native speaker. All students receive four years of high school credit upon the successful completion of this course and receiving a grade of 3 or higher on the AP Spanish Language Exam.

Prerequisite: Students must successfully complete the Spanish for Spanish Speakers course as a 7th grader.

Spanish 7 (7th Grade)

Students will learn basic greetings, grammar structures, verb conjugation, and will learn to communicate in Spanish. Students will learn culture and geography about all of the Spanish-speaking countries from around the world. Students working toward a high school foreign language credit must take Spanish 7 and then Spanish IA/IB in the 8th grade.

Prerequisite: Students must score at the Met Grade-Level on their 6th grade STAAR Reading test.

Spanish 1A/B (HS Credit Course) (8th Grade)

Spanish 1A/B students will learn basic communication and reading skills in Spanish. As well as learning conjugation, verb tenses and important grammar structures of the language, the students will also learn culture, geography, and festivities from all of the Spanish-speaking countries. Quizzes, tests, projects, and oral quizzes will be used to assess students. Students will take a final exam at the completion of each semester as part of the requirement for earning the high school credit. The final exam will count as one-fourth of the semester grade.

Prerequisite: 7th Grade Spanish – Full Year

MATHCOUNTS® Competition Program (7th - 8th Grade)

This year-long class is a national middle school coaching and competitive mathematics program that promotes mathematics achievement through a series of fun and engaging "bee" style contest.

Fine Arts Elective Classes* – 7th/ 8th Grades

**All below Fine Arts Electives are Full Year*

Art I (7th – 8th Grade)

This class is designed to explore the elements and principles of design through 2 and 3 dimensional assignments that are based upon themes and subject's artist typically use in their art. Major art styles and discoveries from history will be integrated within the curriculum. Students will explore drawing, painting, mixed media, printmaking, and some 3-dimensional design through sculpture and ceramics.

No Pre-requisite.

Art II (8th Grade)

Students must have a desire to continue exploring more complex themes and ideas while learning new techniques and processes.

Pre-requisite- Completion of Art I

Art 1A/1B (HS Credit Course**) (8th Grade)

This class is a ****High school credit course** and students will earn two semesters of high school credit. Students will continue use of drawing, painting, mixed media, printmaking, and some 3-dimensional design through sculpture and ceramics. This course is more rigorous than an Art II course as it is for high school credit. Only serious art students should enroll.

Pre-requisite: Completion of Art I or Art II and prepared for academic rigor of a HS Credit course.

Theatre Arts I (7th – 8th Grade)

This is the beginning level for a general exploration of performance, stage movement, improvisation, and theatre history.

No pre-requisite.

Theater Arts II (7th Grade)

This is an intermediate level class. Students become acquainted with several selected areas of theater including presentation and technical work. Students gain advanced knowledge and appreciation of the theater. Public and in-class performance are a central feature of this class. Students are assessed on reproduction tasks and through in-class and public performances.

Prerequisite: Theatre Arts I and Teacher approval.

Advanced Theatre Arts (8th Grade)

This course is designed for the student who has developed a genuine desire to continue to study theatre and possibly audition for theatre at the high school level. Performance requirements (Ex: UIL One Act Play), attending live theatre productions, and attending student funded field trips will be part of the course curriculum.

Prerequisite: Theater Arts I or II and Teacher approval through Audition.

Beginning Band (7th - 8th Grade)

This course is offered to any student interested in learning to play a band instrument for the first time. Beginning band is a prerequisite for upper-level band classes. Students will perform 2-3 concerts and 1-2 competitions during the school year. Beginning Band is divided into like-instrument classes meeting throughout the day. Instruments taught in band are flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, euphonium, tuba and percussion. The number of students playing a particular instrument is determined by the band directors. Information on how to obtain an instrument will be provided to parents at the selection interview. More information is available at www.westbriarband.com.

All Beginning Band students must attend an instrument selection interview where the directors guide students in selecting the instrument that is best for them. These meetings will take place in May.

Intermediate Band (7th – 8th Grade)

The Intermediate Band is the third band at West Briar and is the next level above Beginning Band. Student in this group have at least one year band experience and have auditioned for the directors. Intermediate Band students are expected to participate in all scheduled performances and competitions.

Advanced Band (7th – 8th Grade)

Symphonic Band is the top band at West Briar. Students in this group have at least one year band experience and have auditioned for the directors. Symphonic Band students are expected to participate in all scheduled performances and competitions. Symphonic Band performs more often and performs music of greater difficulty than the other band classes. In addition to their band class, Symphonic Band students are expected to attend practice at least once a week before or after school.

Beginning Orchestra (7th – 8th Grade)

This class is for any student interested in learning how to play an orchestra instrument for the first time. Beginning Orchestra is a pre-requisite for Intermediate or Advanced Orchestra. Instruction is offered for violin, viola, cello, and bass. The beginning orchestra participates in concerts throughout the year, which are held in the evening time. The students will learn how to hold the instruments, properly pluck the strings, learn different notes and rhythms, and finally learn how to use the bow. Information about how to obtain an instrument will be provided by the director at the instrument selection interview.

All Beginning Orchestra students must attend an instrument selection interview where the director guides students in selecting the instrument that is best for them. These meetings will take place in May.

Intermediate Orchestra (7th – 8th Grade)

Intermediate Orchestra is the second level of orchestra at West Briar. Students must have at least one year of orchestra experience and have auditioned for the director. Class participants will review skills and concepts learned in Beginning Orchestra and develop a more advanced skill set of finger patterns, rhythm patterns, and bowing patterns. Basic ensemble skills are taught as well. Performances are scheduled outside of the school day and participation in evening performances is mandatory.

Advanced Orchestra (7th – 8th Grade)

Advanced Orchestra is the top level of orchestra at West Briar. Students must have at least one year of orchestra experience and have auditioned for the director. Advanced Orchestra participates in the performances scheduled throughout the year, as well as in the UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest and other competitions.

Boys' Concert Choir (7th – 8th Grade)

Boy's Concert Choir is an ensemble open to all grade levels. Students will be performing concerts at West Briar as well as in and around the community. Class time will focus on correct vocal technique, sight-reading, and preparing for concerts. 7th and 8th grade students will have the opportunity to audition for the Region 23 Honor Choir. All members will take part in a spring show as well as an annual choir trip and competition.

Girls' Concert Choir (7th – 8th Grade)

Concert Choir is a performance ensemble open to 7th & 8th grade ladies interested in learning the fundamentals of vocal production. They will be performing concerts at West Briar as well as in and around our community. This is an excellent class for those ladies who have little to no background in choral singing or sight-reading. Class time will focus on correct vocal technique, sight-reading, and preparing for concerts. Members of Girls' Concert Choir will perform all types of music ranging from renaissance to gospel, to pop music. Students will have the opportunity to participate in the Region 23 Solo & Ensemble festival and the Region 23 Choir auditions. These students will also take part in the annual choir trip and contest at Fiesta Texas in San Antonio.

West Briar Select Singers (7th – 8th Grade)

"Select Singers" is an audition only ensemble for advanced singers and sight-readers. It is open to ladies in 7th & 8th grade with teacher approval. These students will be performing concerts at West Briar as well as in and around the community. In addition to these performances, the Select Singers will be required to participate individually in the Region 23 Solo & Ensemble festival and compete in the Region 23 Choir auditions. Select Singers will also perform as an ensemble at UIL Concert and Sight-Reading contests in early spring. Select Singers is the premiere singing ensemble at West Briar and will be the primary performance connection to the community. These singers will move at a pace faster than the Girls' Concert Choir and will work on more advanced music.

Prerequisite: Teacher approval/audition only.

Dance Year I (Beginning Dance) (7th– 8th Grade)

Dance Year 1 is a full year course. The students entering this course must be starting the dance program for the first time at West Briar Middle with little to no prior dance experience. Students can be in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. This course can be a PE substitute as well. Students will be introduced to the world of dance through dance fundamentals, concepts, and techniques at the beginner level. Students will demonstrate their learning through dance genres and styles such as the dance elements (Laban Movement), ballet, modern, jazz, i.e., and will learn the initial process of student choreography. Students will have the opportunity to participate in dance workshops throughout the year such as West African dance, hip hop, and others during the school year in class. Dance Year 1 is a preparatory class that will prepare students for auditions to Dance Company and/or Dance Year 2.

Dance Year 2 (7th– 8th Grade)

Dance Year 2 is a full year course and can be a PE substitute. Students entering this course must have taken Dance Year 1 and have approval from Ms. L. Demny and Mrs. C. Drexler. Students in this course must be in seventh and eighth grade. Students in Dance Year 2 will explore dance concepts, technique, and fundamentals at an intermediate level and at a faster pace. Students will be furthering their dance education in the following dance genres and styles such as dance elements (Laban Movement), ballet, jazz, modern, i.e., and continuing their knowledge in student choreography. Students will have the opportunity to participate in dance workshops throughout the year such as West African dance, hip hop, and others during the school year in class. Dance Year 2 is a performing class meaning students will perform in the Fall and Spring Dance Concert that will be worth two major test grades. Dance Year 2 is a prerequisite for Dance Year 3 and a preparatory class for seventh graders that will prepare for dance auditions for the Dance Company.

Dance Year 3 (8th Grade)

Dance Year 3 is a full year course, PE substitute, and for eighth grade only. Students entering this course must have taken Dance Year 1 and Dance Year 2 with approval from Ms. L. Demny and Mrs. C. Drexler. Students in Dance Year 3 will apply and analyze dance concepts, techniques, and choreography at an advancing level. Students will apply their dance education through various skills in the dance elements (Laban Movement), ballet, jazz, modern, i.e., and learning more in-depth fundamentals of student choreography. Students will have the opportunity to participate in dance workshops throughout the year such as West African dance, hip hop, and others during the school year in class and/or after school. Dance Year 3 is a performing class meaning students will perform in the Fall and Spring Dance Concert that will be worth two major test grades. Dance Year 3 can prepare eighth grade dance students wanting to enter dance at the high school level.

Technology Elective Classes**Technology Applications (7th – 8th Grade)**

Technology Applications is centered on the use of Web 2.0 tools. Web 2.0 tools focus on users created content instead of surfing the internet. It's more like what the internet can do for me as a creator, collaborator, an active participant, rather than a passive viewer of what is out there on the web. Web 2.0 tools include: video and audio podcasts, wikis & blogs, audio & video editing, movie production and presentation tools, copyright laws, electronic research, internet safety & animations.

Media Team (7th – 8th Grade)

The Media Team (Yearbook) class at West Briar MS is for students who strive to achieve to be the best and who are willing to work as a team to unlock their fullest potential. Grades are largely based on effort and usage of basic principles and fundamentals emphasized in the instruction and introduction for each assignment. Students learn: to work in a safe and team-oriented learning environment; to support each other's ideas and encourage creativity and experimentation; basic and advanced yearbook skills, plus many business & computer skills; writing, basic photography, layout design, creativity, interviews, and selling techniques. Yearbook students should be willing to set goals and challenge themselves to exceed expectations.

Principles of Information Technology (HS Credit Course) (8th Grade)

Students develop computer literacy skills to adapt to emerging technologies used in the global marketplace. Students implement personal and interpersonal skills to prepare for a rapidly evolving workplace environment. Students enhance reading, writing, computing, communication, and reasoning skills and apply them to the information technology environment.

Prerequisites- Students should be ready to participate in an advanced level/high school credit course and have Met Standard on Reading STAAR.

FINAL NOTE: ALL ELECTIVE COURSE OFFERINGS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON STUDENT DEMAND AND/OR STAFFING/ BUDGET CONSTRAINTS.