



# MURDOCK MIDDLE SCHOOL

*Where Students Come First!*

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August 14, 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year!

All of us at Murdock Middle School are committed to our students' success. This year, we're building upon our work last year making some improvements in the classroom in line with our vision that every individual, upon leaving MMS, is equipped with the skills, knowledge, and habits necessary to persevere and realize their unique potential.

Specifically, we're going to continue to focus on:

- Spending more time working on projects. We know that projects drive student engagement and we also know that working on projects helps students understand how what they're learning in school applies to the world around them.
- Fostering lifelong learning habits like curiosity, self-awareness and resilience by giving students more choices in how they learn. That means that in addition to what their teachers will teach them, they'll have access to a range of learning resources online so that they can go ahead if they're ready or spend more time studying if they need to.
- Even stronger teacher-student relationships by launching a mentoring program. Every student is going to be assigned to a mentor/teacher at school. They'll then meet with their mentor 1:1 on a weekly basis to set goals, make plans to reach those goals, and reflect on what they've learned.

## **Our Commitment to You**

We truly value each and every one of you as partners in your student's education, and we want to make sure you understand:

- What's going on in our classrooms
- How to engage with us and provide feedback
- The many ways you can support your student at home

This year we are going to launch a monthly newsletter that we will send directly to you. Please look out for the first edition coming August 26<sup>th</sup> to your email. If you don't see the email, please notify Lisa Paulitzky at [lpaulitzky@winchendonk12.org](mailto:lpaulitzky@winchendonk12.org).

We also plan to make more frequent updates on our website [www.winchendonk12.org/o/mms](http://www.winchendonk12.org/o/mms) and social media accounts at:

Facebook: @MurdockMiddleSchool

Instagram: murdockmiddle

Twitter: @Murdock\_Middle

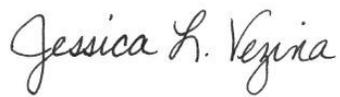
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### **Next Steps - We Need You**

We would love to see as many of you as possible in school the first few weeks of the quarter. Not only do we want you to see the classrooms in action, but we want to understand the questions you have so we can address them early on in the year. Change is never easy and we think it's critical that you're with us in this journey. If you would like to come in for a tour and observe our classrooms, please let me know a date and time that is convenient for you. Beyond classroom visits, we are hosting our Open House on Thursday, September 12 from 6:00-7:30 that will give you the opportunity to tour the school, meet with you students' teachers, and learn more about all that MMS has to offer!

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and please let us know if you have any questions. We are excited for the school year to begin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica L. Vezina".

Jessica L. Vezina  
Principal

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## Our Middle School Model – grades 6-8

### Mission

It is our mission to enlighten, motivate, and educate all who pass through our doors. We will provide a safe environment that promotes an appreciation of diversity and preparedness for the future.

### Vision

Every individual, upon leaving MMS, is equipped with the skills, knowledge, and habits necessary to persevere and realize their unique potential.

At Murdock Middle School, we work to lay the foundation for academic success by providing an innovative, personalized approach focused on both academic knowledge as well as the individual habits and skills every scholar will need to be **prepared for high school and beyond**.

Our middle schools' academic experience is driven by the Personalized Learning Model – a structure for learning designed to provide an individualized experience. It provides students with both the time they need to be academically successful as well as the support they need to get there.

At MMS, we implement personalized learning with the use of one-to-one **Chromebooks assigned to every student**, a self-paced personalized learning platform, and a team of dedicated teachers and staff who provide the content expertise and **supportive environment** necessary for success in this rigorous program.  
Personalized Learning Plan

Each Murdock Middle School student has access to a Personalized Learning Platform **allowing students to visibly see the progress they make** on their required coursework. Through a partnership with Summit Learning, our students use an online system which tracks individual progress through lessons, core content areas, and projects. This tool is also a great resource for families and teachers to see how a scholar is doing, where they are getting stuck, and where they are having success.

All of our teachers are also mentors who **proactively help scholars develop interpersonal skills**, build community, and resolve conflict.

This is **an important tool** because:

1. Data from student progress is used to determine what they have mastered as well as what habits and skills they are developing that will help prepare them to be independent learners and ultimately skilled professionals.
2. Providing our students with a visual tool, empowers them to take initiative and seek available resources as they need.
3. Personalized Learning suits project-based learning very well. It allows for opportunities to dig deep into meaningful projects with real world applications, peer collaboration, and hands on learning.

**The skills our students learn through personalized learning are applicable to the real world.** Our approach also encourages scholars to respect themselves and their community while teaching them to hold themselves and each other accountable for their actions. Additionally, students work to repair, restore, and reconcile when they are unsuccessful in upholding a community value or expectation.

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