

# BROOKS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Home of the Eagles



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## Extracurricular Activities at Brooks

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### What After-School Activities Are Available?

Brooks offers a wide range of extracurricular activities for students to explore their interests and get involved.

👉 [Click here](#) to view the current list of activities.

We anticipate similar offerings for the 2025–26 school year.

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### How Will Students and Parents Be Notified?

Details on how and when to join extracurricular activities are shared through multiple channels:

- **Student announcements** on the Brooks website, Canvas, and *Middle Matters*
- **Morning announcements** over the intercom
- **Flyers** posted around the school
- **Direct outreach** from coaches and sponsors

Students are always welcome to reach out directly to sponsors or coaches with questions.

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### **What's the Enrollment Process?**

Enrollment varies depending on the activity.

- **All students participating in a school sport** must have a **physical on file** that is less than **one year old**.
- Enrollment instructions, applications, or tryout details are communicated at least **two weeks prior** to the start of each activity.
- Information will be shared in [Middle Matters](#) and posted throughout the school building.

## HOW MANY EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ARE TOO MUCH?

Finding the Right Balance for Your Student

We encourage all 6th-grade students to join at least one extracurricular activity.



### How Many Extracurricular Activities Are Too Much?

#### Finding the Right Balance for Your Student

There's no one-size-fits-all answer. The right number of extracurricular activities depends on your student's personality, needs, and the time commitment of each activity.

#### Consider Your Student:

- Do they enjoy being busy, or do they need downtime to recharge?
- Do they adapt well to new environments, or do they need more structure and consistency?

#### Consider the Time Commitment:

- **High-commitment activities** (daily practices or rehearsals) may make it harder to manage homework and other responsibilities.
- **Lower-commitment activities** (meeting once or twice a week) can be easier to balance with schoolwork.

Work with your student to decide what feels manageable and enjoyable—not overwhelming.

**We encourage all 6th-grade students to join at least one extracurricular activity.**

Getting involved is a great way to make new friends, connect with teachers, and feel part of the Brooks community.

Here is a clear, direct, and well-organized webpage version with section dividers for your content:

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## **Extracurricular Participation FAQs**

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### **When Are Extracurricular Activities Held?**

Schedules vary by activity. Each coach or sponsor sets their own meeting times.

Here are a few examples:

- **BRAVO Theater** – After school
- **Boys' Basketball** – Mix of before and after school practices
- **Choir and Band Groups** – Often meet in the morning

Specific schedules will be shared by each activity leader once programs begin.

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### **Can Students Join 6th Grade Jazz Band Without Being in Band?**

No.

To participate in 6th Grade Jazz Band, students must be enrolled in a **full-year music elective**—Band, Chorus, or Orchestra.

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## **When Does VEX Robotics Registration Begin?**

Registration for the **competitive VEX Robotics team** starts at the beginning of the school year.

- After registration closes, students will attend a **mandatory robotics mini-camp**.
- The **competitive team** will be selected from mini-camp participants.
- The team will consist of approximately **16–20 students**.

Students who are not selected may have the opportunity to participate in a **non-competitive, in-house robotics program**.

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## **When Does Cross Country Begin?**

Cross Country practices typically start the **Monday before the first week of school**.

- Open to **6th, 7th, and 8th graders**
- This is a **no-cut sport**, but space is limited to the first **100 runners** who:
  - Submit **all required forms** to coaches
  - Have a **current physical on file**
  - Attend the **first practice**

More details will be shared over the summer.

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## **Canvas, Homework, and Grades at Brooks**

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## What is Canvas?

**Canvas** is our Learning Management System (LMS).  
It serves as a centralized platform where:

- Teachers post assignments, resources, and announcements
- Students complete and submit work
- Families stay informed about classroom activities

Canvas helps streamline communication between school and home.

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## Where Can We Find Assignment and Homework Information?

- All students are assigned a **Chromebook** to access Canvas.
- Teachers post **daily classwork and homework** on Canvas.
- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to register for a **Canvas Observer Account**.  
 Instructions will be sent in **September** after Chromebooks are distributed.

### Need help?

Students or families can contact the teacher directly via Canvas or email for clarification on any assignments.

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## How Much Homework Should We Expect?

A general guideline is:

**10 minutes of homework per grade level** → ~60 minutes per night for 6th grade.

However, homework amounts may vary based on:

- The student's work habits and speed
- Class projects or assessments
- School calendar (natural variation week to week)

 Teachers work as a team to coordinate assignments and tests to avoid overload.

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## **Where Should We Check Grades?**

**PowerSchool** is the official platform for checking grades.

- **Canvas** shows assignments and may display draft or auto-graded scores
- **PowerSchool** reflects the **official grades** for all assignments, projects, and tests

 Students and parents should always refer to **PowerSchool** for up-to-date grading information.

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## **Organization & Transition Support for Students**

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### **Do Students Learn Organizational Skills at Brooks?**

Yes!

**Organization is a key focus** for all 6th-grade students, especially during their transition to middle school. Teachers provide direct instruction and guidance in the following areas:

- Using **Canvas as a digital planner**
- Tracking daily assignments on their **Chromebooks**
- Breaking down projects with **interim deadlines**
- Utilizing **study guides** and review tools

 These skills are embedded into classroom routines to help students stay on top of their work and build academic confidence.

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### **How Can Families Reinforce These Skills at Home?**

- Encourage your child to **review PowerSchool regularly** to check for missing assignments and assessment scores
- Help them build routines to **track progress and plan for improvement**
- Support their growth by encouraging **self-advocacy** and **independent problem-solving**

 [Click here](#) to access a student-friendly **Planning Document** that can be used while reviewing grades in PowerSchool.

Building these habits early lays the foundation for long-term academic success.

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### **What If My Student Struggles with the Transition to Middle School?**

It's completely normal for students to need time adjusting to new routines, expectations, and environments.

Here are some steps you can take:

- **Talk regularly with your student** about how they're feeling

- **Encourage them to speak with a trusted teacher or staff member**
- Reach out to their **homeroom teacher or grade-level counselor** if concerns persist
- Help them practice **time management and organizational routines** at home

 We are here to partner with you and support your student every step of the way.

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## **Supporting a Smooth Transition to Middle School**

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### **What Should You Do if Your Student Is Struggling?**

Transitioning to middle school is a big change. New routines, academic expectations, and social environments can feel overwhelming. If your student is having a tough time, don't worry—**support is available**.

Here's what you can do:

- **Enroll them in the Middle School Connection program** (details below)
  - **Reach out to their SOAR teacher or Student Success Coach** to talk through challenges
  - **Attend Welcome Night** to meet staff and become familiar with the school setting
  - **Maintain open communication at home** to help them express any concerns
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A three-day orientation program designed to ease the transition into middle school.

**All incoming 6th graders are welcome and encouraged to attend.**

 **Location:** Brooks Middle School

 **Dates:** August 12–14, 2025

 **Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

 **Cost:** Free

 **Transportation:** Provided for students with a bus route

 **Lunch:** Free lunch will be served daily

 **Sign-Up Deadline:** May 30, 2025

 **Need- Additional Assistance:** Angie Cataldo, MSC Coordinator at [acataldo@op97.org](mailto:acataldo@op97.org)

 **Chromebook Distribution:**

Students will turn in their iPads and receive their Chromebooks during the program.

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### **Can't Attend Middle School Connection?**

If your student is unable to attend the Middle School Connection program:

- **They can pick up their Chromebook at Welcome Night**

 **Date:** Wednesday, August 14, 2024

 **Time:** 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

- If they are experiencing challenges adjusting, please contact their **WIN teacher** or **Student Success Coach** to discuss support options.

**Rising 6th Graders - Dates to Mark on your Calendars**

**GWENDOLYN BROOKS MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**RISING 6TH GRADE**

**ORIENTATION EVENTS 2025**

**MAY 12-13**  
**Student Led Panels @ Elementary Schools** (during the school day)  
 5/12 -Lincoln & Hatch, 5/13 - Whittier & Holmes

**MAY 14**  
**Family Orientation Night**  
 (on Zoom only)  
 5/14 from 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

**MAY 15**  
**Student Led Building Tours for Families** (in-person @Brooks)  
 5/15 from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

**MAY 23**  
**Coffee with Capuder**  
 (meet the principal @Brooks)  
 5/23 from 8:00 am - 8:50 am

**AUG 12-14**  
**Middle School Connection**  
 (intro to the middle school experience)  
 8/12 - 8/14 3 day summer program @Brooks

**AUG 14**  
**Locker Set Up Day** (practice your combination & store your supplies)  
 8/14 from 1:30 pm - 6:00 pm @ Brooks

For more information visit  
[www.op97.org/brooks](http://www.op97.org/brooks)



### Brooks Student Panel Visit to Feeder Schools

Monday, May 12th, 2025

- Lincoln - 9:30 - 10:15 am
- Hatch - 10:30 - 11:15 am

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

- Whittier 9:30 am - 10:15 am
- Holmes 10:30 - 11:15 am

### Parent/Guardian Orientation: For Parents and Guardians of Rising 6th Grade Students 🦅

**VIRTUAL:** Wednesday, May 14 at 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

A Zoom link will be provided as we approach the event date.

### **Student-Led Brooks Building Tours for Students and Families (in-person at Brooks)**

You and your student can tour Brooks Middle School with a current student or tour self-guided. Thursday, May 15 at 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

### **Coffee with Capuder (in-person at Brooks)**

Wednesday, May 23 at 8:00 am-8:50 am

### **Middle School Connections (Hosted At Brooks)**

Tuesday, August 12, 2025 - Thursday, August 14, 2025 from 9:15 am -12:30 pm

### **Locker Set-up Day**

Thursday, August 14, 2025 1:30 pm- 6:00 pm

## **PTO Communication**

### **Join the PTO for the 2025-26 School Year!**

Planning is underway for next year's PTO initiatives and events, and we can't accomplish our goals without your enthusiastic support - our parent and guardian community!

There are many opportunities to share your time and talent and connect with families within our Brooks community. From board positions to event chairs to committee members - pick your passion and join us to make Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School the best!

Please take a look at the [PTO Roles and Responsibilities](#) and sign up today! Thanks in advance! If you have any questions, email us at [gwendolynbrooksppto@gmail.com](mailto:gwendolynbrooksppto@gmail.com).

# Brooks PTO

## Who Are We

PTO Meetings allow parents/guardians to get involved with the school community. Our group comprises Brooks' parents/guardians, teachers, and staff committed to enhancing the educational experience for all students.

## Please Consider a Donation to the PTO

Take the Brooks PTO Parent/Guardian Pledge

Your commitment to our school community is invaluable. By taking the Parent Pledge and [contributing to the PTO](#), you're directly investing in the success and enrichment of our children's education.

By embracing this new initiative, we can expand our capacity to serve even more effectively. Your support enables us to provide extra resources, programs, and activities that enhance each student's learning experience.

Together, let's foster a thriving environment for our students to flourish. We aim to have 200 families make a \$25 (or more) pledge. [Join us in making a difference today!](#)

Please note that the Brooks PTO is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, and a donation receipt for tax or matching purposes will be provided.

## Connect with the PTO

Follow us on Facebook at [@gwendolynbrooksppto](#). Watch for information in the Middle Matters Newsletter. Email us at

[gwendolynbrooksppto@gmail.com](mailto:gwendolynbrooksppto@gmail.com).

