



Adel-DeSoto-Minburn
Dallas Center-Grimes
Johnston
Saydel
Urbandale
Waukee
Waukee Northwest

(515)727- 6301

MWA Information Handbook
2023-2024

This book is a student information book, intended to share information with MWA students and families. It is not a handbook. Please refer to home districts handbooks and board policies for additional information.

Meet the Staff

Mike Moran, Director; moranm1@urbandaleschools.com

Mike Moran is in his 7th year as the Director of Metro West for the 2023-24 school year. Mike joined the Metro West team after teaching, coaching, and being an administrator in the Newton Community School District for the past 13 years. He started his teaching career in South Dakota and Minnesota as an English Teacher with a specialization in Literature and Writing, while also serving as the varsity head coach in boys basketball and boys and girls track and field. Mike moved into an administrative role at Newton High School and was Assistant Principal at Berg Elementary and Newton High School before being named the Head Principal at West Academy High School in Newton. Mike is passionate about every student's success and believes that Metro West will be a fantastic place to have a positive impact on young adults.

Mackenzie Engelhardt, Social Studies Instructor; engelhardtm@urbandaleschools.com

I am excited to be working at Metro West Academy and help make an impact on my students and the community. My goal is to bring the social sciences to life for my students by finding topics that interest them and relate to their everyday life. Metro West Academy gives students the opportunity to be an active participant in their learning.

Austin Hudson, Math Instructor; hudsona@urbandaleschools.com

It is a privilege to teach math at Metro West Academy. I firmly believe that every student has the potential to make positive impacts on the community and in their personal lives through the critical thinking and problem solving skills they develop through their math classes. By finding ways to connect their interests to mathematics, they find a greater interest in their learning. Students thrive at Metro West is a place where many students get the feeling of academic competence for the first time.

Jim Happe, Science Instructor; happej@urbandaleschools.com

I teach science and health at Metro West Academy. I have chosen to work at an alternative high school because of the rewards I receive from seeing a student who has given up on the idea of graduating from high school turn themselves around and earn a diploma. This setting allows the teachers to explore different ways to get students interested in the subject area being taught. The students then begin to show an interest in learning, gain self-confidence, and succeed. There is no greater reward than seeing this success.

Todd Maschino, Physical Education Teacher; maschinot@urbandaleschools.com

I am excited and grateful to have the opportunity to work at Metro West Academy. I have spent the last 25 years teaching and coaching at Spencer High School. I feel all students have the potential to become lifelong learners. In our Physical Education program, students will

experience lifelong activities that they can continue to use when they are done with High School. I look forward to making connections with the students and community.

Marissa Olson, Associate; olsonm@urbandaleschools.com

Jhonna Keller, Counselor; kellerj@urbandaleschools.com

As your counselor, it is an honor to have the opportunity to help guide you on your educational journey. I am here to support you, not only academically, but also personally, as you navigate the challenges and triumphs of your high school years. My role as your counselor is to be an advocate and source of encouragement through this phase of your schooling. I firmly believe each student possesses unique talents, strengths, and aspirations, and my goal is to help you recognize and harness those qualities to create a fulfilling and successful future.

Judi Prohaska, Resource Instructor; prohaskaj@urbandaleschools.com

It is my hope that the students can come here and feel “at home” in order to gain an education. I hope that gaining their diplomas will ignite a fire within the students to follow their dreams with a “can do” attitude. I choose to work in this setting because it is what I believe in – smaller settings, smaller schools. I hope the students will be given opportunities that will relate to their lives and help them meet with success outside of school.

Tracy D’Alessandro, English Instructor; dalessandrot@urbandaleschools.com

I teach here because I believe all students deserve the right to learn in their own way. As a nontraditional learner myself, I understand that there is a need for the nontraditional classroom. My expectations are to lead my students in a direction where they want to be successful in and out of the classroom.

Jamie Evans, Building Secretary; evansj@urbandaleschools.com

I enjoy working with a team of people whose goals are to help students achieve their highest potential. Making connections with students and our partner district representatives is one of my favorite parts of the job.

Mission, Vision, Core Values

Mission

Metro West Academy is a student-centered environment committed to creating positive change leading to social, emotional, and academic success for high school graduation and beyond.

Vision

Envision a place where

- Everyone is respected.

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- Everyone is welcomed into a safe and healthy environment.
- Teachers are facilitators of learning and work with students to demonstrate knowledge of standards.
- Every challenge is met with a positive solution.
- Risks are taken in order to achieve dreams.

Core Values

Respectful

- We accept and respect each student and staff member as an individual.

Student Centered

- We focus on students' individual needs: emotional, mental, and academic.

Resourceful

- We focus on individual skills, abilities, accomplishments, and goals.
- We engage in outside-the-box thinking and acting in order for individuals to meet with success.

Problem Solvers

- We find solutions for creating positive change.

Strong Relationships

- We build strong relationships through demonstrating respect, establishing connections, assuring everyone feels a sense of belonging, and creating a safe environment.

Cancellation Policy/Emergency School Closings

MWA will follow Urbandale Community School District late starts, early dismissals and cancellations due to weather conditions or closures/amendments to schedule. If Urbandale announces a late start, morning MWA students will not have classes. If Urbandale announces an early dismissal, afternoon MWA students will not have classes.

School cancellation announcements are made on local television stations. Remember to listen for Urbandale cancellations this year. Sign up for email announcements on the KCCI TV web page. Days will be made up at the end of the school year for all cancellations due to weather according to Urbandale CSD Board Policy.

Admission Procedures

Students are referred by their home high schools. Once referred, the student and parent/guardian must complete an intake interview. For the 2023-24 school year intake interviews will be done in person at Metro West Academy. The counselor at MWA will ask questions to determine why a student wants to attend MWA and to discover the student's needs. The MWA mission, vision, core values and expectations will be reviewed with the student and

parent during the intake interview. At these meetings the student will also be asked to make a commitment to his/her success at MWA.

Credits and Grading

Metro West uses the following grading scale:

- A: 100 – 90
- B: 89 – 80
- C: 79 – 70

Students have the opportunity to earn credits as groups or through independent study. To attain credit, students must complete assignments, maintain a grade of a C- or above, and/or have at least an 80% attendance in the course. If a student earns below a C-, he/she will be given the opportunity to raise his/her grade. No credit will be given for work below the C range. If a student does not maintain 80% attendance in the course, he/she will be given the opportunity to make up time to raise his/her attendance to 80 percent. Due to student individuality, credit may be earned at the discretion of the teacher, which may vary from these guidelines based on individual needs.

Daily Schedule

A.M. Classes

8:40 – 11:40 A.M.

11:40- 12:00 PM MTSS time

12:00 - 12:30 Staff Lunch

P.M. Classes

12:30 - 3:30 P.M.

Attendance/Absences & Punctuality

Regular and punctual patterns of attendance will be expected of each student enrolled at MWA. Students should strive to maintain a good attendance record because there is a direct correlation between attendance and academic success in school. Students must maintain an attendance rate of 80% or above in order to stay enrolled at Metro West Academy. Parents must contact the school administrative assistant if their student will be arriving more than 15 minutes late to school. Students arriving later than 15 minutes without parental contact will be expected to meet with the principal upon arrival and may be asked to work from home that day. Absences will be marked as unexcused unless a doctor's note is brought or an excused absence from a legal obligation. Refer to your district's attendance contract for specific details.

Reporting an absence: When a student must be absent from school, a parent/guardian must:

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1. Phone MWA office (515-727-6301) before the student's regularly scheduled start time of the day the student is absent. Voicemail will take messages between the hours of 3:45 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. OR parents can email the building secretary.
2. The parent/guardian should give the following information when calling:
Student's name, Person calling, Date of absence, Reason for the absence

Dress Guidelines, Backpacks, and Purses Policy

1. Students are expected to dress and groom themselves in a way that is not offensive or distracting to students and/or staff.
2. Students or parents questioning the appropriateness of a particular item of dress should contact a school administrator before the item is worn to school.
3. Students may not wear clothing or other items which promote the use of alcohol, drugs, or other illegal activities.
4. Backpacks or purses of any sort will **not** be allowed at Metro West as all books and study materials are in electronic form or physically kept in each respective classroom with the exception of a pair of earbuds that are required to be brought by the student and the student's home district issued technology device. Students do not need to have backpacks or purses with them for any academic purpose so they will not be used at Metro West for any students. If students bring backpacks or purses to Metro West they may be checked in for the day at the main office and hang on the hooks provided and picked up at the end of the academic day. Student's will not have access to those items throughout the day. Each partner district's current handbook will be referred to at the discretion of specific circumstances.

Code of Conduct

MWA is an alternative program shared by six districts including Adel-DeSoto-Minburn, Dallas Center-Grimes, Johnston, Saydel, Urbandale, and Waukee/Waukee Northwest. Behaviors that are prohibited by these districts are also prohibited by MWA. Please refer to your home school's handbook for additional information.

For additional information regarding school district and school board policies please refer to the student's home high school and district.

Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol Strictly Prohibited

No drugs or alcohol are allowed at Metro West Academy or any events.
No smoking or use of smokeless tobacco products will be permitted in MWA or on its grounds. No smoking or use of smokeless tobacco products will be permitted in MWA vehicles at any time, regardless of the location of the vehicles. This includes e-cigarettes and vape-pens. Notices to this effect will be displayed in all buildings and vehicles. This is state law, and students can be ticketed by law enforcement if they violate the law.

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Leaving School Grounds

MWA is a closed campus. Students may not leave the campus once they arrive at school. If a student leaves campus without permission, the student's parent/guardian will be called and the student may be asked to leave campus for the remainder of the day and/or the following school day.

Personal Property/Electronic Devices/Cell Phones

Cell phones are not allowed in class and need to be placed in a YONDR Pouch. The only rare exception to this policy is with their instructor's permission or if it is listed in a 504 plan. Students may be allowed to use electronic devices with headphones in the classroom for instructional purposes when the instructor allows them to unlock their pouches and access their devices. The device will need to be returned to the YONDR Pouch and locked before going to their next class. Misuse of electronic devices and cell phones will result in the parent/guardian being notified and they may be confiscated and the student will be suspended for a minimum of one day. Destruction, defacing, and disabling of YONDR pouches will result in consequences including cost of replacement (\$10) and turning in their phone to the principal for a minimum of 1 week.

MWA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Internet/Computer Policy

Students will receive a school issued technology device from their home school and will be required to bring that device charged to school everyday for their education. If they do not bring it charged everyday, they will not be able to participate in class. Non school issued technology devices will not be allowed.

All of the District's automated systems, including electronic mail, Internet access and electronic storage systems, are District property. **The District has the right to access, review, copy, modify, and delete any information transmitted through or stored in the system, including e-mail messages, web postings, and other online communications.** However, Internet access records of students shall be subject to the student records policy, and the District will not disclose such access records without complying with the District's student records policy.

Technology is a vital part of the District's curriculum and Internet access is available to staff members and students in the District. Appropriate and equitable use of the Internet will allow staff members and students to access resources unavailable through other means. With access to materials from all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Because information appears, disappears, and changes constantly on the global network, it is not possible to control what students and staff may access. The District believes that the valuable information and

interaction available on the Internet far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational objectives of the District.

Individual staff electronic mail addresses will be issued to staff members. District business shall be conducted on the District's electronic mail address and not through personal electronic accounts of the staff members. Staff members may access personal electronic mail accounts only during personal time from District computers and such access must comply with this policy.

If a student has a personal electronic mail address, the student may access such personal account only with permission of the supervising teacher. Students are to be under staff supervision while on the Internet and are to be monitored to ensure that the students are not accessing inappropriate sites that have visual depictions that include obscenity, child pornography or are harmful to minors. The District will utilize technology protection measures to protect students from inappropriate access.

The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the user. These rules are provided so that staff and students are aware of the responsibilities they must undertake when accessing the District's network resources. Staff members and students are required to make efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of the network resources. If a District user violates any of these provisions, his or her account may be terminated and further discipline may be imposed, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from school.

Acceptable Use. The purpose of the District's Internet access is to support research and education consistent with District goals and objectives by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. The use of a staff or student account must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of the District. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network; however, students remain subject to the District's general rules governing legal and ethical behavior when using such resources on District property or at District activities.

The creation, access, or transmission of any material in violation of any federal or state law, regulation or District policy is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: material protected by copyright, trademark, license, or other trade secret laws, and items which are or may be reasonably considered to be defamatory, obscene, pornographic, lewd, profane, indecent, discriminatory, harassing, or otherwise disturbing or harmful to others, including to minors. Use of network resources for commercial activities, product advertisement, political lobbying, and/or other activities in violation of federal or state ethics and campaign disclosure laws is also prohibited. Only properly licensed software authorized by the District may be loaded onto the District's system, and no programs or files shall be downloaded from the Internet without prior permission of the District.

The Internet is available to all students within the District through teacher access. The number of available terminals and the demands for each terminal may limit the amount of time available for

each student. To reduce unnecessary system traffic, users may use real time conference features, such as chat/Internet relay chat only as approved by the supervising staff member.

Privilege. The use of the Internet and network resources is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in a suspension or cancellation of those privileges or other disciplinary action. The principal or superintendent will deem what is inappropriate use in accordance with this policy and will take appropriate action. The principal, superintendent, or a system administrator may suspend or close an account at any time. Notification of any suspension or cancellation of an account will be given in writing to the user within two weeks of the action. Staff whose accounts are denied, suspended, or revoked may appeal such action using the staff complaint procedure. Students whose accounts are denied, suspended, or revoked may appeal such action using the student complaint procedure.

Network Etiquette (Netiquette). Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Be polite.** Do not use abusive or offensive language in messages sent to others. Sign all messages and acknowledge receipt of a document or file.
2. **Use appropriate language.** Do not swear, use vulgarities, profanity, lewd remarks, or any other inappropriate language. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
3. **Do not release personal information.** Do not reveal personal addresses or phone numbers or other personal information or that of other students or colleagues except in accordance with law. Apply the same privacy, ethical, and educational considerations utilized in other forms of communication.
4. **Note that email, web postings (including blogs, Facebook/Myspace pages, etc.), and other online communications are not private.** People who operate the system and other school personnel do have access to all information transmitted through or stored in the District's system. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities or activities in violation of District policies may be reported to the proper authorities or used against students in school disciplinary proceedings.
5. **Respect other users.** Do not use the District's network in such a way that would disrupt the use of the network by other users, or would waste system resources. Remain on the system long enough to get needed information, then exit the system. Delete unwanted messages immediately. Do not send unsolicited e-mail messages (including spam) and do not use the District's network as a way to harass, bully or intimidate others. Such behavior will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.
6. **Protect property rights of others.** Respect all copyright and license agreements. Cite all quotes, references and sources.
6. **Compliance with Laws.** Under no circumstances may any user engage in any activity that is illegal under local, state, federal, or international laws, or that is prohibited by District policies or rules.

Reliability. The District makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the service it is providing. The District will not be responsible for any damages that students or other persons may suffer. This includes damages due to loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mistaken deliveries, or service interruptions, whether caused by the District's own negligence or staff or student errors or omissions. The District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

Security. Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If staff or students identify a security problem with the District's Internet or network resources, they must notify a teacher, principal or the system administrator. Students should not demonstrate the problem to other users. In addition, staff and students should take all necessary steps to prevent unauthorized access to their accounts, and may not use another individual's account. Any attempt to log on to the Internet as a system administrator is prohibited. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the District's Internet and network resources.

Vandalism. Vandalism by a staff member or student will result in cancellation of a staff member's or student's network privileges and may be grounds for other disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as any malicious act or attempt to harm, modify, or destroy the computer property or data of the District or another user, the Internet or network resources of the District, or any other technologies used in the District.

This includes, but is not limited to, participation in hacking or the uploading or creation of computer viruses and other malicious programs.

Restricted Material. Users shall not intentionally create, access, download, or disseminate any text file, picture, or other material that includes material which is defamatory, harassing, discriminatory, obscene, pornographic, libelous, indecent, vulgar, profane, lewd, harmful to others, including minors, or which advertises any product or service not permitted to minors by law, or which is otherwise prohibited by this policy. This includes insulting or fighting words, the very expression of which injures or harasses others, and material that presents a clear and present likelihood that either because of its content or the manner of distribution will cause a material and substantial disruption of the proper and orderly operation of the school activities or will cause the commission of unlawful acts or the violation of school regulations. If a user encounters such restricted material, the user should immediately terminate contact with the material and notify District personnel.

Unauthorized Costs. Users shall not access any service or site via the Internet that has a cost involved without prior consent of the District. Users accessing such a service without prior consent will have access suspended and will be responsible for all costs.

Account Information. The District will require all users to notify the system administrator of all changes in account information. Currently, there are no user fees for use of the Internet.

Monitoring. The District may monitor the use of District equipment, systems, and network resources at any time, with or without notice to users.

Harassment and Bullying. In accordance with Iowa law, the District's policy against harassment and bullying applies to electronic communications such as e-mail messages, Internet-based communications, cell phones, and electronic text messaging while on District property, at District activities or District sponsored events. Staff and students shall not engage in harassing or bullying behavior via any electronic means, including those means that may not necessarily be a part of the District communications network system.

Internet Safety. To the extent required by federal law, the District shall monitor the online activities of minor students and use technology protection measures to protect against their access of inappropriate material online, including sites that contain obscenity, child pornography, or are otherwise harmful to minors. The District shall also educate staff and students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber-bullying awareness and response. This District education does not and should not take the place of, but shall supplement, the education parents provide their children at home about the importance of Internet and other online safety measures.

Training. The District will provide training for staff and age-appropriate training for students. The training will be designed to promote the District's commitment to:

1. the standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in this policy.
2. Student safety with regard to-
 - a. safety on the Internet
 - b. appropriate behavior while online, on social networking websites, and in chat rooms.
 - c. cyber bullying awareness and response.
3. Compliance with the E-rate requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Student Use of Personal Communication Devices. The District prohibits student use of personal communication devices such as cellular telephones, smart devices, and PDAs for purposes not directly related to established educational programming. This prohibition applies during the school day and while participating in school activities, whether those activities are in the District or elsewhere. If a student has a question regarding the use of a communication device, including but not limited to whether the use of that device is prohibited by this policy, the student should contact the principal before using the device. The prohibition of these devices is required to prevent unnecessary disruption of the educational process.

Policy Maintenance. In compliance with federal law, a copy of this policy will be maintained showing the date and action of adoption for at least five (5) years beyond the termination of funding under the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) or E-Rate.

Date of Revision: April 15, 2013

Legal References: Children's Internet Protection Act, ___ U.S.C. §1701 et seq.; 256.11, 279.8, 280.3, 280.14, Code of Iowa; 281 I.A.C. 12.5(10)

Guests

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Parents, families and former students are always welcome to visit Metro West Academy for approved visits and/or appointments with the director or teachers before or after the school day. For safety reasons, guests who come without permission or prior notice may not be allowed to enter the school if it would cause a disruption to the academic day. Visitors will be required to submit a valid driver's license or passport to the Raptor system. This system is designed to keep students safe while checking a database of registered offenders. Guests who visit Metro West must follow our Visitor Policy and make sure that they try to conclude their visit to Metro West within 30 minutes.

Graduation

Students attending MWA are working towards the graduation requirements of their home school and earn their diplomas from their home high schools. Therefore, they may participate in all senior and graduation activities at their home high schools if eligible. For additional information on graduation requirements and activities, please contact your home high school. Each year Metro West also has its own graduation celebration and awards all graduating seniors a medallion and program completion certificate.

Community Learning and Field Trips

Metro West Academy emphasizes real world content and experiences. We perform two days of community service throughout the year. We promote teachers taking students for real world opportunities and volunteerism. Transportation for these events from school is provided by bus or school vehicle driven by a staff member. Students driving to and from field trips are not allowed.

Student-Centered Learning

There is the opportunity for student choice to demonstrate standard mastery. Students may choose from a variety of methods to do so including research papers, presentations, formative assessments, and project work. Student-centered learning gives every student the opportunity to be successful and utilize their abilities and aptitudes toward topics of interest within the standardized curriculum.

Transportation

Each district provides transportation to and from MWA. For more information on transportation, students should contact their home district. Violations on school transportation will hold consequences set forth by the home school district. It is their transportation and handbook policies that will be followed. Metro West is in support of consequences that are set by partner districts and their transportation departments.

Medical Conditions

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MWA does not have a nurse on campus. If possible, student medication should be given at home. If it is necessary for a student to take medication at school, parents must complete an Authorization to Administer Medication to Student form. All medications must be dropped off by the parent in its original container with the prescription label, or manufacturer's label, clearly visible.

Courses Offered

ENGLISH

English I (9th Grade): This course introduces students to foundational skills in reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking. Through a variety of literary genres—including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama—students will explore key themes and develop strategies for analyzing texts. Emphasis will be placed on clear and effective writing, grammar and vocabulary development, and active participation in discussions and presentations. Students will build essential literacy skills to prepare for future high school coursework and lifelong learning.

English II (Language and Literature): This course deepens students' understanding of language and literature through the study of diverse texts from around the world. Students will analyze novels, short stories, poetry, plays, and nonfiction to explore literary elements, author's purpose, and thematic connections. Writing instruction will focus on analytical, narrative, and persuasive compositions, with continued development of grammar, vocabulary, and research skills. Through reading, writing, discussion, and presentation, students will strengthen their ability to think critically and communicate effectively.

English III (American Literature and Writing): This course explores the rich and diverse voices of American literature, from early texts to contemporary works. Students will read a variety of genres—including novels, essays, poetry, and speeches—to examine how literature reflects and shapes the American experience. Writing instruction emphasizes analytical, narrative, and research-based compositions, with a focus on developing a clear voice and strong argumentative skills. Through critical reading, thoughtful discussion, and structured writing practice, students will refine their ability to interpret texts and express ideas with clarity and purpose.

English II/World History: This course combines the study of world literature and global history to provide students with a deeper understanding of human experience across time and cultures. Students will explore historical events and movements while reading related literary texts from around the world, drawing connections between the past and the present. Emphasis will be placed on critical reading, analytical writing, research, and discussion. Students will develop skills in historical inquiry and literary analysis while engaging with themes such as conflict, power, identity, and cultural change. Successful completion of this course may earn both English and World History credit.

English III/American History: This integrated course examines the development of the United States through its literature and historical events. Students will explore key periods in American history alongside influential literary works that reflect the nation's changing identity, values, and struggles. Through the study of speeches, essays, fiction, and poetry, students will analyze how writers have responded to and influenced American history. Writing instruction will focus on analytical, narrative, and argumentative pieces, with an emphasis on historical context and textual evidence. This course encourages critical thinking, effective communication, and a deeper understanding of the American experience. Students may earn both English and History credit upon successful completion.

Composition I: This course is designed to strengthen students' writing skills across a variety of academic and real-world contexts. Students will engage in the writing process—planning, drafting, revising, and editing—to produce clear, well-organized, and purposeful compositions. Emphasis will be placed on informative, argumentative, narrative, and research-based writing, as well as the development of voice, style, and grammar. Students will analyze mentor texts, conduct independent research, and participate in peer workshops to refine their craft. This course prepares students for college-level writing and effective communication beyond the classroom.

Composition II: Composition II is an advanced writing course that builds on the foundational skills developed in earlier composition classes. Students will refine their ability to craft well-structured, thoughtful, and compelling texts across a range of genres, with a strong emphasis on research, rhetorical analysis, and argumentative writing. Through close reading of mentor texts, in-depth research projects, and frequent writing workshops, students will deepen their understanding of audience, purpose, and style. This course prepares students for the demands of college-level writing and emphasizes critical thinking, source integration, and revision as key components of the writing process.

Creative Writing: This course invites students to explore and develop their unique writing voices through a variety of creative genres, including poetry, short fiction, creative nonfiction, and dramatic writing. Students will study the craft of writing through mentor texts, writing exercises, peer workshops, and revision strategies. Emphasis will be placed on imaginative expression, literary techniques, and the writing process—from brainstorming to publication. Through regular practice and feedback, students will build confidence as writers and develop a portfolio that showcases their growth, creativity, and personal style.

Stories Matter: Diversity Through Short Stories: This course explores the power of storytelling as a means of understanding diverse perspectives, cultures, and identities. Centered around a global collection of short stories, students will engage with voices from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Through reading, discussion, and written analysis, students will examine how authors use narrative to reflect lived experiences, challenge stereotypes, and build empathy. Emphasis will be placed on literary analysis, thematic exploration, and critical thinking.

Science Fiction and Dark Tales - Future and Fears Through Literature: This literature course explores the boundaries of human imagination. Future and Fears invites students to analyze science fiction and dark tales from a range of cultures and time periods, examining how authors use speculative and eerie storytelling to reflect on society, technology, morality, and the human psyche. From dystopian futures to haunting mysteries, students will explore themes of identity, control, fear, and the unknown. Through critical reading, discussion, and analytical and creative writing, students will investigate how these genres challenge assumptions and shine a light on what it means to be human.

Survey of Poetry: This course offers students an in-depth exploration of poetry across cultures, time periods, and styles. Students will read, analyze, and respond to a diverse range of poems—from classical to contemporary—with an emphasis on understanding poetic form, figurative language, and thematic depth. Through close reading, discussion, and written analysis, students will examine how poets use language to express emotion, challenge ideas, and reflect on the human experience. Students will also have opportunities to write and workshop original poetry, applying techniques learned through study. This course encourages both critical thinking and creative expression while fostering a deeper appreciation for the art of poetry.

Communications: This course introduces students to the elements of human communication and the essential skills needed for effective public speaking. Students will explore how communication functions in various contexts—interpersonal, group, and public—while developing strategies for clear and confident expression. Emphasis will be placed on speech organization, audience awareness, vocal delivery, nonverbal communication, and listening skills. Students will prepare and present a variety of speeches, including informative, persuasive, and demonstrative. The course also examines the role of communication in shaping relationships, identity, and influence, helping students become more thoughtful, capable communicators in both academic and real-world settings.

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Advisory

This course is an educational opportunity providing additional support to help students develop positive self-concepts and find success. This course focuses on Social and Emotional Learning, specifically assisting students with self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Work Experience

Work experience is a cooperative arrangement between student, school, and employer. Work Experience allows a student to develop employability and 21st century skills by learning and demonstrating the attributes needed to gain and maintain employment.

The student will:

- Communicate and work productively with others
- Adapt to various roles and responsibilities
- Work Effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities
- Demonstrate appropriate risk-taking
- Demonstrate leadership skills, integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility while collaborating to achieve common goals
- Demonstrate initiative and self-direction through high achievement and life-long learning while exploring the ways individual talents and skills can be used personally and professionally
- Demonstrate productivity and accountability in meeting high expectations

For every 135 hours a student works, they will earn a credit up to 6 electives total. Students may not get fired, and must give two-weeks notice before leaving their place of employment. (“cash or under the table” employment and working for relatives will not be allowed when earning work experience credits).

Contract Physical Education

In extenuating circumstances, students in grades 9–12 may participate in programs other than the regular physical education instructional program and still receive credit to meet graduation requirements. This must be approved by their home district and they must sign off to earn credit.

The student must submit a Contract Program proposal that gives a general outline of activities. The student must meet the following requirements:

- Students must participate in the activity 2.5 hours per week.
- Activities could include:
 - Physical fitness activities that increase cardiovascular endurance.
 - Muscular strength and flexibility.
 - Sports and games.
 - Tumbling and gymnastics.

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- Rhythms and dance.
- Water safety/Instructor/Lifesaving
- Leisure and lifetime activities
- Students must keep a log of the activity that includes the amount of time spent on the activity each week. Logs can be found on the high school page of their home district's website.
- Students must meet with the school administrator or staff designee. During the meeting, students will discuss their proposal explaining what activities they will participate in to successfully complete the contract. In order to be valid the contract must be signed by the student, a parent, the designated teacher, and an administrator all agreeing to its terms.

MATHEMATICS

Consumer Math I (1 credit)

This class is designed to develop and sharpen arithmetic skills through exposure to a wide range of everyday uses for mathematics. This course focuses on the math involved with personal finances with an emphasis on bank accounts, credit cards, taxes, and loans.

Standards Covered:

SS-FL.9-12.13, SS-FL.9-12.14, SS-FL.9-12.15, SS-FL.9-12.18, SS-FL.9-12.19, SS-FL.9-12.20, SS-FL.9-12.21, SS-FL.9-12.22, SS-FL.9-12.24

Consumer Math II (1 credit)

This class is designed to further develop students' arithmetic skills through exposure to a wide range of everyday uses for mathematics. This course focuses on the math involved with investments with an emphasis on stocks, mutual funds, bonds, and planning for the future.

Standards Covered:

SS-FL.9-12.16, SS-FL.9-12.17, SS-FL.9-12.18, SS-FL.9-12.19, SS-FL.9-12.20, SS-FL.9-12.23

Algebra I (2 credits)

This class is designed to prepare students for further study of mathematics. We use the real number system and investigate its properties, which apply to algebraic concepts and skills.

Standards Covered:

HSA-CED.A.1, HSA-CED.A.2, HSA-CED.A.3, HSA-CED.A.4, HSA-REI.A.1, HSA-REI.B.3, HSA-REI.B.4, HSA-REI.D.10, HSA-REI.D.11, HSA-REI.D.12, HSA-SSE.A.1, HSA-SSE.A.2, HSF-IF.A.1, HSF-IF.A.2, HSF-IF.A.3, HSF-IF.B.4, HSF-IF.B.5, HSF-IF.B.6, HSS-ID.C.7, HSS-ID.C.8, HSS-ID.C.9

Geometry (2 credits)

This class is designed to provide insight into the properties of geometry and mathematical proofs, which will provide a good foundation for students who may want to take advanced courses. Most of the work is with two-dimensional figures with the idea that students can transfer these properties to their three-dimensional world.

Standards Covered:

HSG-CO.B.6, HSG-CO.B.7, HSG-CO.B.8, HSG-CO.C.9, HSG-CO.C.10, HSG-CO.C.11, HSG-GPE.B.4,

HSG-GPE.B.5, HSG-GPE.B.6, HSG-GPE.B.7, HSG-MG.A.1, HSG-MG.A.2, HSG-MG.A.3, HSG-SRT.A.1, HSG-SRT.A.2, HSG-SRT.A.3, HSG-SRT.B.4, HSG-SRT.C.6, HSG-SRT.C.7, HSG-SRT.C.8

Algebra II (2 credits)

This class is designed to study the properties and applications of algebraic, logarithmic, and exponential functions and series and sequences. It should provide valuable background for those entering technical fields and serve as a useful course for other college-bound students.

Standards covered:

HSA-APR.A.1, HSA-APR.B.2, HSA-APR.B.3, HSA-CED.A.2, HSA-CED.A.4, HSA-REI.A.1, HSA-REI.A.2, HSA-SSE.B.3, HSA-SSE.B.4, HSF-BF.A.1, HSF-BF.A.2, HSF-IF.B.4, HSF-IF.B.5, HSN-RN.A.1, HSN-RN.A.2, HSS-IC.B.4, HSS-IC.B.5

Pre-Calculus (2 credits)

This class is designed to study the properties and applications of algebraic, logarithmic, exponential, rational, and trigonometric functions as well as matrices. It should provide valuable background for those entering math fields and serve as a useful course for other college-bound students.

Standards covered:

DMACC learning targets

Intro to Probability and Statistics (1 credit)

This Intro to Probability and Statistics course presents a comprehensive exploration of key principles including conditional probability and rules of probability, the use of probability to evaluate outcomes of decisions, and data interpretation in statistics. The course also imparts understanding of statistical experiments and sampling distributions.

Standards Covered:

HSS-CP.A.2, HSS-CP.A.3, HSS-CP.A.4, HSS-CP.B.6, HSS-CP.B.8, HSS-CP.B.9, HSS-ID.A.1, HSS-ID.A.2, HSS-ID.B.5

Financial Literacy (1 credit)

This financial literacy course evaluates career choices and the impact of taxes on income, encourages the development of personal savings and spending plans, and underscores borrowers' rights and responsibilities. It also imparts strategies for debt management, the use of investment tools, the value of insurance, and the evaluation of short-term savings instruments.

Standards Covered:

SS-FL.9-12.14, SS-FL.9-12.15, SS-FL.9-12.16, SS-FL.9-12.17, SS-FL.9-12.19, SS-FL.9-12.20, SS-FL.9-12.21, SS-FL.9-12.22, SS-FL.9-12.23

Advanced Consumer Math: Tax Basics (1 credit)

This course initiates with an introduction to taxes, then explores the fundamentals of W-4 and W-2 forms. It further delves into practicalities of filing taxes from both the perspectives of a

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dependent and an independent individual. The course culminates with reflective discussions on the broader implications and understanding of taxes.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

General Physical Education and Elective Physical Education

Students will learn about their personal fitness levels and how to improve to meet their own goals as well as making healthy nutritional decisions. Students will also learn how to demonstrate proper etiquette while engaging in team sports, teamwork and cooperation and demonstrate good sportsmanship. Students will have a better understanding of the components of fitness and how to apply those components to their daily lives over a lifetime.

- **Use a variety of basic and advanced movement forms.**
- **Apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.**
- **Participate regularly in physical activity.**
- **Achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.**
- **Demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior while respecting differences among people in physical activity settings.**

Personal Fitness:

Students will develop individual fitness goals and plans and individual nutritional goals and plans for the length of course. Students will document their activities and log their nutritional intake using online resources. Students will progress monitor the results of their work and how it impacts their overall health and fitness level. Students will learn the benefits of proper dietary intake and proper levels of exercise in order to maintain better fitness and better general health as they enter adulthood.

- **Use a variety of basic and advanced movement forms.**
- **Apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.**
- **Participate regularly in physical activity.**
- **Achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.**
- **Demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior while respecting differences among people in physical activity settings.**

Students must meet the CPR certification requirement for graduation per their home district.

SCIENCE

General Science(Physical)

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Introduces the students to the physical world and prepares them for more advanced science courses. Physical Science is an inquiry based course. Topics covered are: Dimensional Analysis, Measuring, Matter, the Atom, the Periodic Table, Chemical Bonds, Chemical Reactions, Gas Laws. Motion, Forces, Fluids and Simple Machines. Students may show their understanding of these topics with research papers, slide shows/PowerPoint presentations, posters, physical experiments or other methods approved by the instructor.

General Science(Earth)

Students in Earth Science will earn credit based on the ability to demonstrate their knowledge about Earth/Space systems.

Classes are project based and a series of videos/comments are also required. Generally five projects are required for a credit however the depth of the projects may determine the number of projects needed for credit.

Biology/Life Science

This is a general introductory biology course for the students. Topics that will be studied include: cells, genetics and heredity, botany, zoology, ecosystems, microorganisms, basic anatomy and physiology.

Biotechnology

This course is designed to give students a comprehensive introduction to the scientific concepts and laboratory research techniques currently used in the field of biotechnology. Students attain knowledge about the field of biotechnology and deeper understanding of the biological concepts used.

Advanced General Science

Advanced general science provides a wonderful opportunity for students to continue their high school science career with exciting topics to explore deeper. Students will explore deeper concepts in life science, physical science and earth science.

Anatomy and Physiology

Anatomy and physiology is a course that will enable students to develop an understanding of the relationships between the structures and functions of the human body.

Environmental Science

High school environmental science lessons cover a broad scope of topics including ecology, the biosphere, land, forests and soil, water, energy and resources, and societies and policy. Some of the goals of the course include: Understanding how systems in the natural world are interconnected.

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SOCIAL STUDIES

American Government: American Government is a one-semester course required for graduation. Students study the overview of the development of the U.S. Government, political beliefs, and the three branches of government. The focus is on the national government, with additional information of state and local politics, civic duty and responsibility.

World Issues: Wide range of current worldwide and national issues. Important issues or events are traced back to their historical roots. Assists students in becoming more informed world citizens by becoming familiar with important people, places, and events in the world. Students will be able to hold opinions based on facts and deeper understanding.

U.S. History: American History is a two-semester course required for graduation. In this class, students are asked to examine movements in America, both past and present, which have shaped the American point of view. Students will study periods of American History from post Reconstruction (1877) to the present day.

World Studies-Ancient: One-semester course with semester one focusing on the development of civilization from the earliest man. Emphasis is placed on human achievement, arts, and science from the Neolithic Period through the Middle Ages.

World Studies-Renaissance to Present: Focuses on the political development of modern European nations from 1600 to present. Emphasis is placed on political and social movements that include nationalism, imperialism, industrialism, and effects of war.

Economics: One-semester course that provides an introduction to the basic principles of macroeconomics and microeconomics. These theories are highlighted in relation to the U.S. economy. Finance is studied with respect to how the U.S. fits globally into world economies. Lastly, personal finance topics are emphasized in order to help students prepare for the future.

Psychology: One-semester course is a general survey of the important concepts in psychology. It includes topics such as the history of psychology, the biological foundations of behavior, learning, memory, problem solving, sensation, and perception, states of consciousness, motivation, emotions, personality, intelligence, and abnormal behavior.

Sociology: Students explore the concepts and theories necessary to understand the social world. Topics include sociology as a science, the nature of large and small scale groups, social stratification, social change, race, ethnicity, and gender relations.

RESOURCE

Resource/Instructional Methods:

Course description: Students work on specific goal area(s) and classes to earn credit. Credit is determined by attendance and effort in work completion. Supplementary Services in the Special Education Setting are defined as direct specially designed instruction provided to an individual student with a disability or a group of students with disabilities by a certified special education teacher to provide supplementary instruction that cannot otherwise be provided during the student's regular instruction time. These services are provided in an individual or small group setting for a portion of the day and supplement the instruction provided in the general education classroom through Consulting Teacher Services, Co-teaching Services, or Supplementary Services in the General Education Setting. The specially designed instruction provided in these settings is in addition to the instruction provided in the general education classroom.

Students may receive different services at multiple points along the continuum based on the IEP. The district will provide access to this continuum for all eligible individuals based on their IEP. Services may be provided within the district or through contractual agreement with other districts and/or agencies.

*****For additional information on school policies, see your home school district's handbook.**

Educational Equity Statement

No student enrolled in the Urbandale Community School District shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in the District's programs on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, religion, marital status (for program), ethnic background, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age (for employment) or socio-economic background (for program). The policy of the District shall be to provide educational programs and opportunities for students as needed on the basis of individual interests, values, abilities and potential. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact the district office at 11152 Aurora Ave, Urbandale, IA or call 515.457.5000. The district's Equity Coordinator is Ms. Stephanie Davis, daviss@urbandaleschools.com.