



Highly Capable Services

LaVenture Middle School



Program Overview

Mount Vernon School District's Highly Capable (HC) program for middle school students is based at LaVenture. Students who qualify through the district screening process get advanced coursework designed to challenge and extend their thinking.

We also believe strongly in helping HC students build connections across the school — with peers, clubs, and activities outside the HC program.

Course Options

Students who qualify for HC in reading may take Advanced ELA and Advanced Science. Students who qualify for HC in math may take core math or an advanced math class, and may also take Advanced Science. Students who are in our Dual Language Program and who also qualify for highly capable services will only have opportunities to take advanced Math classes (see below).

Advanced classes offered at LaVenture currently include:

- 6th-grade core math with built-in opportunities for extra challenges
- 7th/8th-grade core math with extra challenge, OR 7th/8th-grade advanced math
- Advanced Language Arts
- Advanced Science

Mount Vernon School District Advanced Math Pathways

5th Grade Entry	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Voyager Program (Jefferson)	Math 7A	Algebra (HS Credit Course)	Geometry (HS Credit Course)
Highly Capable Math qualifiers (non-Voyager)	Math 6	Math 7 or 7A	Math 8 or Algebra

Note: Continued placement in advanced math is based on STAR Math scores, Smarter Balanced scores, grades, and teacher recommendations.

Curriculum Highlights: The examples below show current units and projects for each course. Specific content may change.

Advanced English Language Arts: Students read complex texts, complete in-depth research, and create multimedia projects. They build critical thinking skills and develop their own voice as writers and speakers. Example units and projects include:

Take Control (HMH) — Film critique using WeVideo Game On (HMH) — Book Club: The Crossover & Ghost The Power of One — Extended project Horror Story — Extended project	Inside the Mind of a Monster: Exploring Myth, Meaning, and Design No Risk, No Reward — Group Research Project: Rising Waters; Visual Metaphor for Life Terrifying Times — Comparison Speech
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Students also take part in Genius Hour independent research, challenge texts, podcasts, multimedia projects, and performance read alouds/poetry slams.

Accelerated Science: Advanced Science moves faster and covers more content than standard Science. Students spend more time in labs, write regularly about their learning, and answer open-ended questions. Example projects include:

- Food is Made of Molecules Lab — Identifying starch molecules in different foods
- Dog Genes Art Project Extension — Using Punnett squares to explore dominant gene expression
- Designing a Hot or Cold Pack Lab — Using an iterative design process to improve prototypes with real data

Frequently asked questions:

Q: Who should I contact if my child isn't being challenged in a class? Start with your child's teacher. We believe direct, open communication between teachers and families is the best first step for student success.

Q: My child was in the Voyager program at Jefferson. Will middle school HC feel different? Yes — and that's intentional. At LaVenture, HC classes are part of the regular school day alongside a wider group of peers. Your child will still receive advanced content, but middle school is also designed to support social growth and broader connections.

Q: My child was just identified for HC. How do I know they're ready? The district screening process is designed to identify students who are ready for this level of challenge. Teachers support all students during the transition. If questions come up, your child's teacher and counselor are your first points of contact.

Q: What if my child is struggling in an advanced class — can they move? Yes. Schedule changes can happen, and we never want a student to feel excessive stress from advanced coursework. Reach out to the teacher and counselor early so we can problem-solve together.

Q: Will my HC student still have time for electives, clubs, and just being a kid? Absolutely. We are intentional about not over-programming students. Middle school is a critical time socially and emotionally, and we want HC students to be fully part of school life — not just their academic coursework.

Q: Does my child ever leave the HC program? A student may exit HC services if they:

- Graduate or leave the district
- Choose to opt out of services
- Move between school years
- No longer qualify based on test results
- Choose to pause services for the current year only
- Have services that are no longer available due to state law changes

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