

THOMAS VIADUCT MIDDLE SCHOOL

A true 21st century learning facility, Thomas Viaduct Middle School (TVMS) is a vibrant educational environment that heralds a new era for middle school education in Howard County. TVMS has a capacity for 662 students and serves Grades 6–8.

CONNECT • COLLABORATE • CREATE

Three TVMS “touchstones” infuse every aspect of this innovative learning environment and involve every member of the school community.

Connect – Students and teachers will discover their natural strengths and interests. Classroom projects will connect learning activities with the larger world through advanced technology. Families will be invited to take an active role in learning activities and school events.

Collaborate – Students will regularly work on learning projects in small groups to solve problems and practice life and work skills. Teams of teachers will create cross-content lessons and share resources. Families will be invited to take an active role in school events and instructional planning, and collaborate with educators to foster each child’s success.

Create – Classrooms will be creative learning environments where art, music, and technology are infused throughout all subject areas. Each child will have opportunities to excel in the classroom through creative projects that tap into individual strengths and interests. Families will be encouraged to explore enrichment resources and share how learning relates to the outside world, both at home and at school.

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

Four innovative Signature programs will engage every TVMS student in learning and inspire their personal growth. These initiatives offer excellent potential to enhance teaching and learning at middle schools throughout the county.

World Language Instruction

Research shows that learning a world language gives children a boost in intellectual growth and academic achievement. Students learn to think more flexibly, sharpen their listening and memory skills, and appreciate other cultures as they learn a new language.

TVMS students will have access to French and Spanish language instruction in Grades 7-8. In 2015-2016, instruction will span Grades 6-8. Online textbooks and resources will allow students to extend language learning beyond the school day. Students will collaborate with others around the globe on real-world projects that relate to the target culture.

Career Exploration through Naviance

The path to college and career readiness begins with self-discovery. Naviance is a web-based program that lets students learn about their strengths and reflect on their interests. These assessments provide action steps for students to apply in school, career, and life.

Each student will identify their three strongest emerging talents to help them gain insight and ways to use them in the classroom and in life.

Naviance allows students to discover and explore many career fields, and gain first hand insight from professionals active in areas of interest. The program is fun and engaging for students to use.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

BYOD allows students and staff to use personal smart phones and tablets to connect to the Internet for instructional activities. BYOD enhances learning, personal productivity, collaboration, and access to instructional resources, and promotes responsible digital citizenship. Thomas Viaduct will be the first HCPSS middle school to implement BYOD, following the success of a pilot BYOD program in several high schools last year.

Teachers will plan lessons that take advantage of mobile technology and incorporate online resources and communication. They will collaborate online with other teachers to share lesson plans and instructional resources. When needed, devices will be provided for use by any student who does not have access to a personal device.

AP Vertical Articulation

Vertical articulation prepares middle school students with the knowledge and skills that enable high levels of participation and achievement in rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) coursework in high school. AP participation prepares students for success in college, and has been associated with higher levels of academic achievement.

Vertical articulation rests on two key expectations: that all students can perform at rigorous academic levels, and that they begin as early as possible to

build the skills, knowledge, and sound learning habits that are associated with academic achievement in high school and college.

Each TVMS student will take part, with appropriate instructional support, in learning experiences that provide advanced skills, concepts, and habits of mind. Examples include timed writing prompts in English; document-based questions in social studies; real-world problem solving, data analysis, and interpretation in mathematics and science; and other learning activities that have traditionally been embedded in gifted and talented classes.

Building Highlights:

- Focus on day-lighting and views from all spaces
- Interior layout provides secure access; exterior spaces designed with safety in mind
- Grade level classrooms arranged in distinct areas with easy access to technology, arts, world language, and other specialized learning spaces
- Five science laboratories
- Outdoor learning opportunities
- “Green” design conserves energy and natural resources and provides a healthy learning environment:
 - Geothermal field; large rainwater harvesting system
 - Polished concrete flooring
 - Eligible for US Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification
 - Within Oxford Square community, a Howard County Green Neighborhood