ADMISSIONS DATES 2020/2021

**Small Group Tours:**
Tours of the building can be scheduled by emailing admissions@billingsmiddleschool.org

**Open Houses:**
Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our Open House will be a virtual event this year! Our website launches November 13th at 7:00 PM. Email admissions@billingsmiddleschool.org to register!

**Application Deadline:**
January 14th, 2021

**Financial Aid Deadlines:**
February 4th, 2021

**Visit Days:**
January 19th and January 28th, time TBD
AT A GLANCE

- Billings is co-ed and serves 90-100 Students in grades 6-8.
- Our average class size is 15.
- 1 in 3 Billings families receives tuition assistance.
- Billings awards more than $530,000 annually in need-based financial aid.
- 1/3 of our students are from families of color.
- Students come from over 30 public and private schools throughout Seattle, the eastside, and other surrounding communities.
- Billings offers three-year integrated programs in global studies, applied math, visual arts, performing arts, and outdoor learning.
- Billings offers classes specifically focused on issues of ethics and equity.
- 90% of our alums report that they were admitted to their 1st or 2nd choice high school.
- Billings Middle School is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.
WHO WE ARE

Mission
Billings Middle School is a dynamic academic community intentionally designed to stretch, support, and inspire early adolescent learners. At Billings, each student develops a rigor of intellect and creativity, powerful ways to communicate and collaborate, confidence and self-knowing, and an openness to the possibilities of new information and systems of thought.

Vision
Our students become global citizens inspired to promote a socially just, sustainable world. Our faculty embodies a professional model of collegiality and innovation, and contributes to the understanding and development of best practices for early adolescent teaching. Our school plays an integral role in the life of our students, faculty, families and community so that our network of lifelong learners may share a common point of origin and a growth mindset that propels and sustains them.

Core Values
Individuality, inclusivity, exploration, intellectual challenge, social justice, integrity, creativity, collaboration, and fun!

Diversity & Equity Statement
Billings Middle School is committed to achieving and sustaining a diverse student body, staff, and Board of Trustees, with particular attention given to underrepresented populations; nurturing a community wide culture of radical inclusivity; and fostering a purposeful curriculum emphasizing social justice and equity. We pursue this endeavor with deliberate intent and actions.

We Define…
Our Diversity to include: Race, gender, identity, ethnicity, age, culture, national origin, religious belief, physical ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, political conviction, and learning differences.
Our Equity as: Ensuring fair treatment and equal access to education, employment, and opportunity for all members of our community.

Our Underrepresented Populations as: Those populations that are the most underrepresented in independent schools, on college campuses, and in positions of leadership.

Our Radical Inclusivity as: A stance. It is the commitment to not just tolerating, but to seeking out, inviting, and welcoming the presence of others, especially those who are different from us, and who challenge us. It is the commitment to asserting a welcome to the underrepresented and finding a way to bring them to the center. It is the belief that there is room enough for everyone to join our community, and that our community is better for it. Radical inclusivity is not just offering up the seat next to you, but getting up and offering yours while you go find a chair to pull up.

Billings Middle School is committed to nurturing an inclusive culture. We strive to create a transformative educational and professional environment where all members feel welcomed, supported, and valued for their contributions to the community, and are encouraged to confront their personal, academic, and institutional bias and belief systems. Billings fosters a purposeful curriculum emphasizing social justice and equity, and aimed at preparing students for active citizenship in a diverse and interconnected world. We believe that a diverse community contributes not only to students’ social and emotional development, but also to their potential for academic excellence.

*Billings Middle School is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Federal Tax ID: 91-1107067.*

*Donations to Billings Middle School are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this gift. Billings Middle School admits students of any religion, race, color, sexual orientation, and national or ethnic origin. Billings Middle School is registered as a Charitable Organization with the Washington Secretary of State.*
Three years can be transformative.

Early adolescence is pivotal in human development. Brain development, including cognitive and social-emotional functioning, is happening at an intense and rapid pace during early adolescence, so much so that it rivals brain development during toddlerhood.

The neurological changes are dramatic. How a child will respond to stress, manage their impulses, empathize with others, reason, and think for the rest of their lives is being hardwired during this crucial time.

We believe this time should be recognized for what it is — a truly pivotal moment in a child’s development.

At Billings we are exclusively focused on the middle school child. Our faculty specializes in teaching that strangely wonderful being that is the middle school student. Middle school is not simply a transition from elementary to high school; it is a special journey in and of itself.
At Billings, students have the ability to grow, take social risks, and try out their new and growing ability to think critically and abstractly in a safe environment that is devoted to them – and without the added pressure or scrutiny of much older students.

Further, even when a middle school student has an outstanding experience, they still often want the ability to reinvent themselves when they enter high school!

**HAVING TO REAPPLY FOR HIGH SCHOOL, UGH.**

We understand that applying to middle school can be grueling. The prospect of doing it again for high school in three years can be daunting. Here is what is different:

- First, the student will have grown cognitively and socially in three years. They will take much more responsibility for the application process than they were able to as an elementary school student.

- Second, they will have to go through a similar application process with even more weight of responsibility in four years when they apply to colleges. Applying to high school is really good practice.

- Third, our staff and faculty take a very active role in high school counseling. You are not alone and will find our experience with the process extremely helpful.

- Finally, 90% of our alums report that they were admitted to their first or second choice high school.
“The most important take-aways? Well, I’m in graduate school and I’m still applying what I learned at Billings. I learned to know myself as a learner, to work with teachers, and to advocate for myself. I learned what it means to be known, and sometimes people go through life without understanding that. I learned how to work in any kind of group with all kinds of people – when I got to high school I found kids who had already been at the school for 4 years and they knew one way to learn, one system, and they always partnered with the same people. At Billings I learned how to work with everyone and to understand others’ strengths. And I learned that school can be fun and learning can be fun. What a gift, right?” - Alumna Ryan G. 2010
Billings offers a rich curriculum designed to engage students in rigorous, multi-faceted ways, guided by four main concepts below:

1. DESIGNING A DEVELOPMENTALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM

Curriculum design is based on key questions about the intellectual and emotional maturity of each individual and their peers. The structure of our school day, our calendar, and our trips equally reflect our understanding of growth cycles. Our expectations of students are high because we know that in our environment they grow self-aware and gain the confidence to risk truly complex thought.

2. TEACHING INDEPENDENT, CRITICAL THINKING IN A CULTURE OF PUBLIC MINDEDNESS

We believe that the development of one’s identity is intricately linked to an emerging sense of humanity and ethics. We always ask the questions: "What is the application of what we are learning?" and "What is our impact?". It is our goal to go beyond "service learning" to the point of integration – a place where students intuitively consider power, perspective, bias, access, and sustainability as they carry out the work of their lives.

3. CREATING POWERFUL STUDENT ADVOCATES

Advocacy is comprised of three elements: self-understanding, confidence, and engagement. From the moment they arrive at Billings, we challenge students to reflect on their identity and approach to learning. As they progress through Billings, students become more confident and able to advocate for their beliefs and needs.

4. MODELING LIFELONG LEARNING AND MENTORSHIP

Teachers at Billings are characterized by their patience, sense of humor, and most of all, by an exceptional commitment to individual students. Our teachers openly seek learning through research, discussion, and travel, with a unique level of support from the school. As one recent graduate said, "Hardly anyone leaves Billings without a mentor, or without knowing how to get one!"
COURSE FRAMEWORK

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<tr>
<th>6th Grade</th>
<th>7th Grade</th>
<th>8th Grade</th>
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<td><strong>STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering &amp; Math)</strong></td>
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<td>Science (<em>Earth &amp; Space Science, Physical Biology</em>)</td>
<td>Science (<em>Earth &amp; Life Sciences with a Washington State focus</em>)</td>
<td>Science (<em>Introduction to Chemistry &amp; Physics</em>)</td>
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<td>Math</td>
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<td>Spanish</td>
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<td>Arts (<em>Foundations in Visual Arts, Drama, Vocal Music</em>)</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>8th Grade Project</td>
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<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Arts Electives: Drama, Vocals, Visual Arts</td>
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<td>Arts Electives: Drama, Vocals, Visual Arts</td>
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OTHER ACADEMIC PROGRAMS:

Study Skills & Study Halls: We teach study skills across the curriculum and also in formal Study Skills classes (6th grade) and Study Hall (all grades).

Physical Education: We offer physical education through a variety of fun avenues including running, climbing, dancing, and sports.

Expeditionary Education Program: Expeditionary learning is connected with content across the curriculum. All grades participate in multiple overnight trips in addition to field trips and neighborhood excursions.

Clubs & Committees: Students have the opportunity to lead or participate in diverse clubs and committees after school.
“I am glad that we chose a middle school for our son. He changed so much over those three years. The school we would have chosen when he was entering 6th grade would not have worked for the person he became. His growth was far greater than I could have predicted.” Alum Parent Patti P. (Colin 2008)
EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

When we teach in places as astonishing as the Olympic Coast, or climb up towering basalt columns after discussing their formation, we frame learning in a way that is powerfully alive. When middle school students stretch themselves in completely new environments and terrain, they create their own identities, built upon personal stories of experience that last their entire lives. When we integrate the study of science and cultures into active research and field study, we model a lifestyle filled with personal responsibility and inquiry.
“The mountains are calling, and I must go, and I will work on while I can, studying incessantly.”

— John Muir
WHERE WE GO

The major expeditionary education events and experiences for each class are listed below. There are numerous other times throughout the year when students go on field trips. We are regularly out and about in our neighborhood, making use of parks, exploring the city, and partnering with local businesses.

6th Grade
- Fall Overnight Camping Trip, Dash Point State Park
- Winter Snowshoeing Day Trips, Cascades
- Spring 3-day End of Year Class Trip, Olympic Peninsula

7th Grade
- Fall 3-day Camping Trip, Yakima
- Winter Snowshoeing Day Trips, Cascades
- Spring 3-day Camping Trip, Central WA
- Spring 5-day Backpacking Trip, Olympic Coast

8th Grade
- Fall 3-day Leadership Retreat, North Cascades
- Winter Snowshoeing Day Trips, Cascades
- Winter 3-day Snow Camping Trip, Cascades
- Spring 3-day Graduation Trip, Leavenworth

“We’re in a tent, sleeping in a tent together for a week straight. We had to cook together, cross slippery rocks together... To go through that and to work with different people, some who are not necessarily your friends and who are very different from you is really hard. I’m going to use that for the rest of my life, honestly.” Alum Student Nicole W., Class of 2011
As students get closer to adulthood, schools often become more isolating and impersonal. The Billings Advisory Program offers a structure to meet each student’s developmental needs.

**KEY COMPONENTS OF ADVISORY:**

1). Advisory ensures that each student is known well at school by at least one adult who will act as that student’s advocate.

2). Advisory guarantees that every student belongs to a peer group.

3). Advisory helps every student find ways to be successful in school.

4). Advisory promotes coordination between home and school.
OUR THREE-YEAR ADVISORY CURRICULUM:

- Helps students identify their strengths, needs, and areas for growth
- Teaches advocacy and assists students in communicating their needs to others
- Recognizes and appreciates differences
- Encourages students to “see” others, by giving them tools for understanding and negotiating social-emotional dynamics
- Supports students in organization and management of their workload
- Coordinates communication between families, teachers, learning specialists, tutors, and administrators
- Nurtures the small group and the class as a tight-knit and effective learning cohort

GRADE-LEVEL ADVISORY GOALS:

6th Grade: Transition, micro community, service, leadership, foundational study skills.

7th Grade: Identity formation, micro and macro community, service, leadership, scaffolded independence and self-management.

8th Grade: Micro and macro community, service, leadership, independence and responsibility.
ATHLETICS

We believe that being active builds all kinds of great habits and skills, helps students learn, and develops teamwork — and besides, it's really fun! Middle school is a time of exploration and discovery, and the Billings Athletics program always emphasizes trying new activities and good sportsmanship. We also help students develop athletic skills in their sport so they can continue to progress through middle school and beyond.

CURRENT SPORTS OFFERED:

Fall
- Girls Volleyball
- Co-Ed Cross Country
- Co-Ed Flag Football
- Co-ed Soccer

Winter
- Girls Basketball
- Boys Basketball
- Boys & Girls Rock-Climbing

Spring
- Co-ed Ultimate Frisbee
- Co-ed Tennis
- Co-ed Track & Field
CLUBS

Each trimester, Billings faculty and community members lead hands-on after-school clubs and workshops. These clubs and workshops are an excellent opportunity for students to explore, tinker, create, play, and enrich the Billings and Green Lake communities. Past after-school clubs have included:

- Co-Ed Morning Bouldering
- Community Service Workshop
- Commando Science
- Slacklining
- Lego Robotics
- Knitting
- Kendama
- Movie Making
- Story Lab
- Rocketry
- Poetry
- Dance
- Dungeon School
- And many more!

Billings also regularly offers Summer Leadership experiences, which are optional cross-grade enrichment opportunities.
ARTS PROGRAM

The Arts Program at Billings inspires students of varied learning styles and personalities to discover, develop and refine the artist within. Billings art classes teach students how to interpret and create works of art with a deeper understanding of style, sound, history, socio-cultural impact and meaning.

Sixth graders take both visual and performing arts classes all year as part of the weekly schedule. Seventh and eighth graders choose from a variety of electives.

In the Visual Arts Program, students learn how to express themselves through various media and to interpret works of art with a deeper understanding. Billings performing arts classes are no-cut, opt-in experiences for students that allow risk-taking in a safe environment. Students build confidence, strengthen collaboration skills, and navigate performance anxiety -- all skills that benefit them in academic classes at Billings and beyond middle school.
6th Grade

- Meet twice weekly in visual arts and twice weekly in performing arts for the school year.

- 6th graders have opportunities and are encouraged to participate in the school's Performing Arts and Visual Arts Festivals.

- 6th graders are invited to participate in the school’s annual musical production.

7th & 8th Grade

- Art is an elective on the trimester schedule with at least four selections to choose from each term including electives in vocals, drama, instrumental music, and visual arts.

- 7th and 8th graders are the leaders in the school’s musical production. Past productions include: Grease, Little Shop of Horrors, Blues Brothers, The Muppet Movie, Jungle Book, The Wizard of Oz and more.

- All students are invited to participate in the school’s Arts Festivals, both performing and visual, with the vocals class performing at Open Houses, special events and 8th Grade graduation each year.

Recent Arts electives have included:

2-D Design  |  Printmaking  |  Sculpture  |  Ceramics  |  Vocal Ensemble
Set Design  |  Digital Arts  |  Photography  |  Animation
ADMISSIONS FAQS

What makes a "Billingsy" kid?
Great question! We hear this one a lot. The truth is, Billings supports a wide range of learners with diverse interests, learning styles, strengths, and personalities. We deeply value our diverse community and the unique perspective all of our students bring. That said, we find that kids do particularly well at Billings if they care about social justice issues, enjoy spending time in the outdoors, and thrive in a hands-on learning environment. If you'd like to schedule a phone consultation with an Admissions Representative to see if Billings might be a good fit for your child, please contact us!

Do you offer financial aid?
Yup! Billings awards more than $530,000 annually in need-based financial aid. 27% of our families receive tuition assistance. To learn more about affordability and our plateau tuition model, please visit our Tuition & Financial Aid page.

Why should I consider a co-ed school for my daughter?
Billings intentionally chooses a model of co-education at the middle school level, both to reflect the diversity of our world and the challenges that may accompany it, but also to provide real opportunities to grow together, side-by side. Small class sizes and our individual advisory program allow students to develop strong relationships with teachers and mentors, providing them the guidance to navigate the social and emotional challenges that can arise between boys and girls both in and out of the classroom.

My kid isn't outdoorsy. Can they still go to Billings?
Students at Billings go on several trips every semester during their time at Billings and they are a required part of our program. That said, we never expect students to be experienced in the outdoors before arriving at school. Students gain solid outdoor skills throughout their journey and are supported by an experienced faculty when challenges arise. We offer an extensive gear lending library so that families don't need to spend any money on outdoor gear. Some students come to Billings with extensive outdoor skills and experience, some come with absolutely none! Don't worry - the only requirement here is an open mind! And remember, our tuition is all-inclusive, so there are no extra fees for our trips.
I love Billings, but I don't want to have to apply for high school in 3 years.

We hear you. Applying to middle school can be grueling. The prospect of doing it again for high school in three years is daunting.

Here is what is different:

- Our staff and faculty take a very active role in high school counseling. You are not alone and will find our experience with the process extremely helpful.
- Students leave Billings very prepared for high school. They are admitted to all of the great high schools in the area, public and private.
- Your student will have grown cognitively and socially in 3 years. Your student will take on much more responsibility in the process.
- Your student will have to do this again, with even more weight of responsibility, in four years when they apply to colleges. Applying for high school is really good practice.

Finally, here is what one alumni parent has to say:

"I am glad that we chose a middle school for our son. He changed so much over those 3 years. The school we would have chosen when he was entering 6th grade would not have worked for the person he became. His growth was far greater than I could have predicted."

- Patti P., Alumni Parent (Colin, 2008)

We couldn't agree more. Middle school is transformative. The schools you are considering for high school today might not be consistent with what your child needs in 3 years. Even if you do end up at a 6-12 school, we encourage you to reassess at the end of 8th grade to make sure your child is still in the right learning environment.

My kid is high achieving. I'm worried they won't be challenged.

Due to our small class size, we are able to differentiate in each and every single subject area. At Billings we meet every student where they are at to provide them the rigor they need at any level. We also believe in making our curriculum interesting, relevant, and hands-on. Students have many opportunities to delve into subject matter that excites them. We're confident that our curriculum and teaching faculty can support even the most academically bright students. If you have specific concerns, please feel free to reach out to us and schedule a personalized consultation.

My kid has learning differences. Will they thrive at Billings?

At Billings, we value having a diversity of learners in all of our classrooms and are happy to accommodate students with mild learning differences. Since we are not a specialty school, we encourage you to connect with us for a phone consultation so we can see if Billings might be a good fit for your student. We are also happy to connect prospective families with our Learning Specialist, Greg Smith.
CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, please visit our website: www.billingsmiddleschool.org

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Business Hours:
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

School Hours:
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM