

Dixie Middle School Earth Science

Course Disclosure 2025-2026

Mr. Durrant (Room 332)

Course Introduction

The underlying theme for Earth Science is systems. In this course, we will discuss the five major systems that make up the system of the Earth. They include: Astronomy (the Exosphere), Geosphere, Atmosphere, Hydrosphere, and Biosphere. Another major topic is the relationship between the Earth Systems and humans. We will approach these topics from the view of observable evidence and scientific inquiry. Ultimately, we will look at science as a way of knowing, a process of gaining knowledge and understanding of the natural world around us. Earth, physical, space, and life science content are integrated into the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on the interconnections among Earth's systems and how changes in the parts affect the system as a whole.

The topics and concepts of this course are not difficult, and many of you have already been introduced to most of them. The challenges of the course will include participation in class activities, discussions and learning to use your time wisely in class.

Order of Topics and Essential Standards of the State Core

1. **Basic Science:** students will explain how science and engineering practices and processes function to answer questions and solve problems.
2. **Astronomy:** Students will be able to demonstrate that the same forces that formed our universe and solar system are still at work today.
3. **Geosphere:** Students will be able to describe convection as the movement of heat in a fluid caused by differences in density created by variations in temperature.
4. **Atmosphere and Hydrosphere:** Students will be able to describe the relationship between light wave frequency and light wave energy.
5. **Humans and Natural Resources:** Students will be able to describe systems in terms of matter cycles and energy flows.

Expectations

The Earth Science teachers expect Dixie Middle students to take **responsibility** for their own education. You are ultimately responsible for the grade you earn in Earth Science. As your teachers, we are committed to preparing meaningful lessons designed to help you learn the curriculum and to help remediate learning when needed. We expect the students to use these lessons to learn the important concepts of the class. Use your class time wisely. Like the old saying goes, "You will likely get out of it what you put into it." (It is very similar to the law of conservation of mass that you learned about last year in your science class.) *You may not work in a lab setting until you have signed the lab safety contract.* In general, you are expected to show **respect** to your classmates and teacher by following the Work Ethics Guidelines. They are:

1. Arrive on time; be ready to work.
2. Come prepared with all necessary materials.
3. Turn in clean, legible assignments on time.
4. Avoid disrupting the teaching and learning environment, including compliance to the dress code.
5. Follow teacher instructions and use electronics for academics only.

Contact Information:

Mr. Durrant: paul.durrant@washk12.org

Dixie Middle School Phone: 435-628-0441

Behavior violations will be handled progressively as follows: warning and log entry, parent notification, lunch detention, office referral, and temporary or permanent removal from class (according to DMS Handbook policy and teacher discretion). Students who are engaged in learning and helping those around them learn rarely violate the work ethics guidelines. Simply put, just be a positive, contributing member of the class.

Food in the Classroom

Please don't bring food or beverages into the classroom. The room is carpeted, and spills create messes that will need to be cleaned up by the perpetrator (with the help of a custodian in most cases). Bringing water in a container with a screw-on lid is acceptable and encouraged.

Class Time and Hall Passes

Class time is a premium in this class. Instructional and practice minutes are valuable, and students who use this time wisely will rarely need to take work home to complete. Dixie Middle School will use the SmartPass app to track hall passes during school time. Students will use this, in conjunction with the teacher's permission, to leave the classroom. The teacher may also give permission for students to leave the classroom without using the app under special circumstances.

Cheating

Cheating cheats you out of your own education. Contrary to the beliefs of some, copying work from another student and taking pictures of others' work is **NOT group work**; it is cheating and is **disrespectful** to oneself, one's peers, and to the teacher. It does not help you learn; it only teaches you to be lazy and will not help you with the assessments. As stated in the DMS Handbook, students caught cheating during an assessment may receive a zero. The student may retake the assessment, and the score will be averaged with the zero score. The averaged score will go into the gradebook. Alternatively, students may receive half of their cheated score.

Grading

My biggest concern and priority are that students learn as a result of participating in this class. However, students will also receive a letter grade at the end of each term. The grading scale for this class is the traditional + and - grading scale implemented by Washington County School District. At least 70 percent of the term grade will be determined by assessments (tests and quizzes). All assignments are related to essential standards and assessments. The purpose of the assignments is to help students prepare for assessments by practicing and becoming familiar with key concepts from each unit.

Videos

Clips from videos will be shown on occasion in the classroom. It is possible that some titles have a PG-13 rating. However, the selected scenes are appropriate for middle school aged students. Each clip is applicable to the state core curriculum and incorporates concepts, reasoning, and/or vocabulary from the core. If this is a concern, please email Mr. Durrant to arrange an alternative.

Contact Information:

Mr. Durrant: paul.durrant@washk12.org

Dixie Middle School Phone: 435-628-0441

Assessment and the Remediation Policy

Students will have the opportunity to remediate on quizzes for which they have received a low score. Quiz remediation is in the form of a quiz fix and will allow students to learn or clarify concepts and fix incorrect answers on quizzes. Students will receive up to half credit for each fixed answer. The quiz fix must be submitted within one week of the original quiz. Students should complete all learning opportunities related to the quiz concepts before completing the quiz fix. The quiz fix is mandatory for students scoring less than 60% on any quiz, but students scoring higher than 60% may do the quiz fix if desired. Also, retakes on unit tests will not be offered as these are summative tests. Only students scoring less than 60% may complete the quiz fix to bring the test score to proficiency. Students not reaching proficiency on essential standards will attend Targeted Learning Time (TLT) before lunch. Any student may also request to be added to the TLT list at any time to receive additional help, clarification, or time to make up assignments or quizzes.

Attendance and Late Work

According to district policy, students will be allowed to turn in assignments they have missed due to an excused absence. In these cases, late work must be completed in a timely manner (usually one or two class periods after the absence). Students are expected to collect missing work after or during an absence as all assignments are linked on Canvas (If the absence is planned, get the work beforehand). The class agenda page on Canvas (or its equivalent) will be helpful for students who are absent. *According to DMS Handbook policy, submitted late work unrelated to absence may not be accepted or could be subject to penalty of the teacher's discretion.* Completing assignments by their due dates is just one of the ways students can learn **respect** and **responsibility** in relation to their own education. Except in rare circumstances, students may not turn in assignments from the first half of the term after the midterm date. That is a hard deadline. The end of the term is also a hard deadline. All tardies and trancies will be handled as per the DMS Handbook policies and teacher discretion.

Using Canvas

Students should review the Canvas Essentials form (supplied to students during class and available on Canvas) to help them utilize Canvas in accessing assignments and background information relative to class topics, assignments, assessments, and discussions. *(In many cases, this is the equivalent to using a textbook.)* Students should become proficient at using Canvas as this is an important part of taking **responsibility** for their own education.

Extra Credit

Because this is a proficiency-based course, there will be **no extra credit given which is unrelated to the core**. Students may remediate by fixing unit quizzes and redoing or completing additional assignments to increase performance on unit tests. Additionally, students may occasionally use a note card on quizzes if they have no zeroes on any assignments. A supplemental assignment may possibly be offered at the end of each term or semester.

Contact Information:

Mr. Durrant: paul.durrant@washk12.org

Dixie Middle School Phone: 435-628-0441

Class Materials

Students should bring the following materials to class with them:

- Binder (three-ring or other)
- Notebook paper
- Pen or pencil
- Reading book

There will also be classroom materials that students will use regularly. Please treat these items **respectfully** by using them appropriately and sharing as necessary.

Cell Phones

The district cell phone policy will be enforced. Some of the highlights include: students do not have their phone on their person. They may use their phone outside, before and after school. As a reminder, *do not use or wear earbuds in the classroom except in conjunction with class assignments which require audio or video on the Chromebook*. Devices will be confiscated and may be picked up either after school or after class from the vice principal or the teacher. Progressive discipline will be followed according to the DMS Handbook and/or teacher discretion.

Course Work

Concepts of the core curriculum will be experienced through the following avenues:

Warm-ups	Group and individual	Guest Speakers
Homework	assignments and projects	Tests and Quizzes
Note taking	Class Discussions	Video clips
Problem solving activities	Lab investigations	

There will also be a special emphasis on Science and Engineering Practices (SEP's), Cross Cutting Concepts (CCC's), and Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCI's).

We will take the Earth Science Benchmark Test twice during the school year, once in the fall and once in the spring. This will allow students to compare scores and evaluate their learning over the duration of this course. Students opting out of the end-of-year state test will be required to take an alternative assessment. *Students achieving a 3 or 4 score on the end of year test (or the alternative) will be given the option to use this score on the end of year cumulative test or the end of year project.*

Students should read the Lab Safety Contract and this Course Disclosure with their parents/guardians and submit the appropriate assignments for them in Canvas. We will be having a quiz on this later.

You may access the school handbook in the student section on the school website (dmseagle.org) or by clicking [HERE](#).