
To Parents:

Early adolescents, ages ten to fourteen, are passing through a very sensitive, very critical period in their lives. The physical, sexual, mental, social and emotional changes that take place are greater now than at any other time.

Our school program recognizes the unique needs of this age level and the importance of helping students understand these changes. It also prepares them for the changing world of the future. It focuses on teaching them "how to learn" and fosters the development of skills they can use throughout their lives.

This brochure contains a brief description of each of the subjects your child will study in Grade 8. It has been designed to provide you with a general overview of the content and skills which are taught, as well as other pertinent information. Methodology will, of course, vary according to each teacher's ideas about the needs of the class.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Through a comprehensive literacy program, students use strategic actions to think within, about, and beyond, the texts they are reading in a variety of genres. Literature study includes short stories, poetry, drama, nonfiction and novels. Students learn literary techniques, figurative language and critical analysis skills through reading, writing and discussion. Writing for various audiences and multiple purposes is an integral component of the balanced literacy program. In writer's workshop, students write in a variety of genres, incorporating the proper use of grammar, mechanics, spelling and word study. Through narrative, poetry and expository writing students acquire a depth and breadth of knowledge about the world in which they live.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Eighth graders will be working out of two textbooks, Civics in America and History Alive! The United States, as they study the overarching themes of democracy. The year is divided into three sections:

- I. We the People...
(The Constitution of the United States)

II. With Liberty and Justice...

(Law, Economics, and the Bill of Rights)

III. For All...

(A Nation of Immigrants and Social Justice)

MATHEMATICS

The goal of the math curriculum at grade 8 is to help foster an understanding of important concepts, skills, and procedures. Students further develop reasoning and problems solving skills in the following strands: Number Sense and Operations, Patterns, Relations, and Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, Data Analysis, Statistics and Probability. Classroom teachers emphasize inquiry and discovery of mathematical ideas through the investigation of well structured problems. Students explore these problems individually, in small groups, and as a whole class. *The Connected Math Project 2 (CMP2)*, used at the Middle School, is a program which spirals content and skills from Grade 6 through Grade 8. *CMP2* is organized around a select number of mathematical topics, each of which is studied in depth in order to provide students with a broad mathematical experience.

SCIENCE

The science/technology engineering utilizes a standards based hands on curriculum designed to get students excited about science and engineering. In grade 8 curriculum consists of several units including weather, properties of matter, chemistry, human body systems and physics. The focus of the curriculum is on developing critical thinking skills that will be applied in order to solve practical problems. .

EXPLORE PROGRAM

The Explore classes work in collaboration with all middle school disciplines to enhance students' academic learning, social, emotional and cognitive development.

TECHNOLOGY/ENGINEERING EDUCATION

The Technology /Engineering program is an inquiry based program that utilizes physics, the Engineering Design Process, computer aided design and

mechanical technologies as outlined in the Science/Technology Engineering Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks to educate and problem solve in a hands on environment. Students are introduced to the design process using CAD software called Pro-Engineer. Students learn the main features of the software and experience the benefits of using a computer based design model in rendering solutions to complex problems. When acceptable mastery of the software has been established through both formal and informal assessment, students design and assemble computer based models that are then rendered in an engineering drawing and manufactured in the technology lab. Students construct prototypes of designed solutions in the lab using: hammers, nails, glue, band saws, disk sanders, hand saws and a drill press.

LIFE SKILLS

This program is part of a collaborative interdisciplinary approach to covering the MA Health Frameworks. Each school year, starting in 5th grade and continuing through the end of the student's 8th grade year, health content standard material is covered by way of different mediums. All programs directly align with the MA Health Frameworks. Moreover, the Life Skills program, within the frameworks of the MA Comprehensive Health Curriculum and our school's philosophy, seeks to provide a balance between the expression of individuality, a responsible concern for the rights and needs of others, and the opportunity to examine, monitor and improve their level of wellness.

ART

Students in grades six, seven and eight continue to develop their skills and knowledge base of the elements and principles of design. Instruction includes broad based studio art activities that use a variety of media. Art History, the development of aesthetics, critical and analytical thinking skills plus the implementation of technology are all integrated aspects of this curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education at the middle school level provides unique contributions toward child development that includes the development and maintenance of physical fitness and knowledge of human movement which will result in a lifetime of participation in healthy habits and physical activity.

MUSIC

Long regarded as a means of improving students' academic abilities without drill and practice in a specific academic area (mathematic skills, in particular, are shown to benefit), the middle school instrumental music curriculum offers students the opportunity to continue the development of those music skills and knowledge first introduced in Grade 5. Grades 6 through 8 students participating in the Nock Instrumental Music Program attend a band rehearsal and a group instrument lesson, by grade level, once during every rotation of the 5-block Explore schedule. A band rehearsal is also held every Monday during the Explore block. Auditions for the after school Jazz Band program are held each spring and are open to all students in grades six and seven currently participating in the instrumental music program. All middle school performing groups participate in both the Winter and Spring Concerts.

For further information

www.childrensmusicworkshop.com/advocacy or Google "music education advocacy".

LIBRARY

The Middle School Library is an active learning center. Students have access to technology and the Internet in an educationally supervised setting. The collection in the school library provides a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view. The library program places a strong emphasis on the development of information literacy skills and standards necessary to promote life long learning. The library program provides instruction, collaboration and leadership to the school and community.

ADMINISTRATION

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Grade 8
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