

# ***ORCHARD PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL***

## ***CURRICULUM HANDBOOK***



. . . To Explore the Unfamiliar  
To Discover the Possible  
To Grow in Knowledge Together  
As We Navigate into the Future . . .

Prepared 1998  
Revised 2008  
Updated 2017



## Dear Parents,

The curriculum handbook was developed to give parents of our Middle School students an overview of the subjects covered in grades 6-8. It was designed by a committee of teachers, teacher aides, parents, and an administrator.

We recommend that you keep this guide handy throughout the years (it's also online) to keep you informed of the material your child is learning. Please also check your child's Agenda and ask your child to tell you what is happening in each class.

The first section of this handbook outlines unique features within our schedule. Following that, you will find courses listed alphabetically, each with a brief description of the course curriculum.

Please keep in mind that courses at the Orchard Park Middle School are not considered as isolated subjects. They are often taught in an integrated instructional program.

We hope this guide is helpful. Please feel free to call or email your child's teachers, guidance counselor, or administrator at any time if you have questions or concerns regarding your child's instructional program.

Sincerely,

The Handbook Committee



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## **PHILOSOPHY OF THE ORCHARD PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Our Middle School is designed to assist students with their transition from elementary to high school, child to young adult, and from dependent to independent learner.

Our school should be responsive to the specific needs of these students.

Our school should provide students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function in society.

Our school must continually commit itself to the development of the total child; including democratic values and positive self-image.

The Middle School is . . .

A place to experience a feeling of belonging.

A bridge between elementary school and high school.

A place where subjects meet the special needs of young people.

A chance to explore new subjects.

A chance to learn more about oneself.

A chance to work on long range assignments.

A chance for independent study.

An opportunity to see what can be done with new freedoms.

An opportunity to work in small and large groups.

An opportunity to face problems and accept responsibility for personal actions.



In addition, we expect our students to:

1. Listen and follow directions the first time, without continually having them repeated.
2. Study subjects each night even if there is no written assignment.
3. Complete homework, projects and long range assignments on time.
4. Make up all work which was missed due to absence.
5. Develop good work skills:
  - Write legibly and in complete sentences.
  - Use correct writing, spelling, etc. in all classes.
  - Maintain orderly notes, notebooks, and lockers, so books and information can be located easily.
6. Follow specific classroom rules established by base and satellite teachers.



# **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS**

The most important job you have as an adolescent is to do the best you can in school. The skills you learn in school are the same skills that will help you create a full and rewarding adult life.

To work to your highest potential, the Orchard Park Middle School teachers expect you to do the following:

1. Come to school well-rested and alert every day.
2. Listen to the teacher and to the learning going on among fellow students in the classroom.
3. Participate in classroom discussions by sharing your experiences, observations, opinions, and ideas.
4. Ask questions when you do not understand what is being taught.
5. Ask the teacher for extra help when you need it.
6. Work continually to the best of your ability. If you are not satisfied with your grades, talk to your teacher about what you can do to improve them.
7. Work productively in study hall. If you have completed your homework for the next day, you can work on a long-term project, read a book, review for an upcoming test, go to the library, or work with another teacher.
8. Make up all of the work you have missed when you are absent from a class, regardless of the reason for the absence. You are responsible for finding out what material was covered in each class you missed.
9. Complete your homework assignments neatly and on time. Do work of which you can be proud.



10. If you do not have homework that is due the next day, spend about an hour in the evening reviewing material covered in class, preparing long-term assignments, or reading.
11. Budget your time for a long-term project. Work on the project a little every day or every other day.
12. Limit your amount of “screen time” - watching television and/or engaged with electronic devices.
13. Take time each day to share with your parents what you are working on at school.





## **WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO HELP THEIR CHILDREN REACH THEIR ACADEMIC POTENTIAL**

What parents do at home strongly affects their children's performance at school. Here are some things parents can do to help their children. \*

1. Let your children know that working to achieve their fullest potential in school is their most important job.
2. Let your children know that what they do in school is important to you.
3. Set achievement goals with your children and review them each marking period.
4. Take time each day to talk to your children about what they are doing in school.
5. See that your children are well-rested, have eaten a good breakfast, and come to school on time. An average adolescent needs 8-10 hours of sleep each night. \*\*
6. Be sure that your children complete their homework each day.
  - Make an effort to check your children's Student Agenda daily.
  - Provide a positive climate for doing homework. Consider setting up specific time and place for completing work.
  - Help your children budget their time on short and long-term projects.
  - If they do not have homework that is due the next day, encourage them to work on long-term assignments or to review material covered in class.



- On school days, limit the amount of television viewing and time online.
- Make sure your children have a reasonable number of after-school activities that don't stretch them – and you – too thin.

7. Encourage your children to read each day.

8. A vacation not scheduled on the school calendar is an illegal absence.

Illegal absences may put your child at academic risk. It is your responsibility as a parent to make sure your children make up all missed assignments for any absence.

9. Contact your children's teachers if there are any concerns regarding their progress. Attend parent-teacher conferences.

\*This list was generated by a committee consisting of parents, teachers, school-related personnel, and an administrator. Information was taken from a publication by Richard P. Mills, NYS Commissioner of Education, Lawrence Steinberg, Dept. of Education, and Diana Townsend-Butterworth, Educational Consultant.

\*\*This information was obtained from Dr. Kohrman, Sleep Specialist, Sleep Disorders Children's Hospital of Buffalo.



## **ACADEMIC STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION**

### **QUARTERLY COURSES**

Some courses meet every day for one quarter of the school year (ten weeks).

In sixth grade the quarterly courses are art, life and career skills, computers, and technology. General music is every other day for ten weeks.

In seventh grade the quarterly courses are art, life and career skills, health, and technology. In eighth grade quarterly courses are art, health, life & careers, and computers.

### **SEMESTER COURSES**

Some courses are taught for one half of the school year, a semester. In these courses, the student takes this subject every other day for one semester. Semester courses are 20 weeks in length.

In sixth grade the Library and Information Skills course is a semester course.

In seventh there are no semester courses.

In eighth grade there are no semester courses; however, technology is taught every other day for the entire school year.

### **FULL YEAR COURSES**

Students take these courses for the entire school year. Base classes are full year courses that meet on both cycle days (every day). Other courses (physical education, band and orchestra, for example) are full year courses which meet only on one cycle day (every other day).



## **REPORT CARDS**

Pupil progress reports (report cards) are completed and made available on the Parent Portal quarterly. Specific dates for the close of marking periods will be listed on the online and in the Parent Portal.

At Orchard Park Middle School, grades of 65-100 are passing. A grade mark of “INC” means that a student has not completed the required work. If a student fails to make up the work within a reasonable time the incomplete may become a failing grade.

To qualify for the *high* honor roll a student must have an average of 97-100. A student will make the honor roll with an average of 90-96. The merit roll requires an average of 85-89.

## **INTERIM REPORTS**

Interim reports may be written five weeks before marks close and will be available via the Parent Portal. The purpose is to communicate with parents, letting them know how their student is doing in school.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PROMOTION**

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Student promotions are based on viewing the total program goals, taking into account such things as skills, grades, effort, maturity and ability to work independently. The decision to not promote means repeating the grade. Parents will be notified when possible non-promotion is being considered.

**7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade:** In general, a student is promoted to the next grade if at least three of their core subjects (English, Social Studies, Math, Science) are passed.



## **NEW YORK STATE ASSESSMENTS**

New York State requires all students in grades 6-8 to take comprehensive content-area assessments in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. Eighth grade students also take a comprehensive state assessment in Science. These assessments are used to determine how well the students at OPMS are meeting the standards set forth by the state, as implemented through locally-developed curriculum.

## **FINAL EXAMS**

All students at OPMS take annual comprehensive final exams in Mathematics, ELA, Science, and Social Studies. Eighth grade students enrolled in French or Spanish will also take a Foreign Language Proficiency exam. Passing this assessment and the two-year course will provide a student with one credit toward high school graduation prior to leaving the Middle School.

## **BASES**

The Middle School houses students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Each grade is divided into "bases." This base structure provides autonomy, security, and a "sense of family" to an otherwise very large building.

In grade 6, the base classes are Math, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts and Reading. The satellite classes are Technology, Life and Career Skills, General Music, Art, Library and Information Skills, Computer, and Physical Education. Some students may also take band, orchestra, chorus, remedial classes or resource room.

In grade 7, the base classes are math, science, social studies, English, and foreign language. The satellite classes are health, life and career skills, art, technology, physical education, and some form of music — band, orchestra, chorus, or general music. Some students also may take remedial classes or resource room. For selected students, acceleration in math is offered.



In grade 8, the base classes are math, science, social studies, English, and foreign language. The satellite classes are health, computers, life and career skills, art, technology, and physical education. Some students pursue classes in band, orchestra, or chorus, or remedial classes or resource room. For selected students, acceleration is offered in art, Latin, Algebra I, earth science, technology, and career & financial management. Honors English is offered on each 8th grade base.

### **CYCLE DAYS**

The Middle School follows the concept of "cycle" days, in which some classes such as physical education meet every other day. The first day of school begins a "cycle one" day. The second day is a "cycle two" day. The third day is a "cycle one" day, etc. The cycle system runs continuously throughout the entire school year. If a Friday happens to be a "cycle one" day, then the next school day, Monday, is a "cycle two" day. If school is closed due to weather or some other unscheduled event, cycle days resume as if the day actually occurred. For example, if Monday is a cycle one day and school is closed Tuesday (cycle two), then Wednesday would be a cycle one day.



# ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

## ART

The art program is designed to provide students of all skill levels an opportunity to experience success through the variety of projects that are presented. It is the goal of the art department that all students acquire a greater understanding and appreciation of art and its importance within our society.

Major content areas focus on problem solving, technical skills, elements and principles of design, exploration of art history, creativity, and communication. Students will work with a variety of materials to create hands-on engaging projects.

The program focuses on understanding, making and valuing art. All students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades have art every day for 10 weeks.

## COMPUTER

Computer instruction includes teaching specific computer skills in separate computer classes as well as integrating computer skills into each of the curriculum areas. Students gain general knowledge of computers including terminology, how to navigate through the Windows OS environment, saving, printing, and exposure to various types of software. When students leave the Middle School, they are encouraged to select additional computer electives at the High School.

In sixth grade, students receive 10 weeks of keyboarding instruction. Students learn to type without looking at the keys, using correct touch-typing and posture. While the focus is primarily on accuracy, students strive for a minimum speed of 12 words per minute. Students also practice word processing skills by typing reports, essays and letters. Additional software is also explored during the ten week program.



In the eighth grade computer literacy course, the focus is on using the computer as a tool. In this ten-week course, practical applications such as word-processing, spreadsheets, internet, and presentation software are explored.

## **ENGLISH**

Development of the English Language Arts takes its cue from the underlying philosophy of middle level education. The program provides a bridge between the solid foundation in literacy development of our students' elementary school experience, and that of the more rigorous and complex explorations of language that take place at the high school level and beyond.

The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade English Language Arts follow a progressive program of skills development designed to help students express, interpret, and extend their knowledge through a wide range of learning experiences. At each grade level, students study exemplary literature, including a variety of genres - novels, plays, numerous short stories, poetry, and nonfiction.

At the sixth grade level, students become involved in the process of writing. They gain experience with different writing genres. They practice the conventions of grammar, language mechanics, usage, sentence structure, and spelling within the context of the writing process. Through guided instruction and independent reading, sixth graders explore a variety of children's literature. They improve vocabulary and comprehension as they learn to acquire, interpret, and critically evaluate information. Another important element of the sixth grade English Language Arts curriculum is the development of effective speaking and listening skills.

In seventh grade, emphasis is placed on extending students' understanding of the literary elements of theme, setting, character, and plot development. Students gain independence in reading through classroom book "shares", Reader's Workshop, whole-class book studies, library media center book talks, and





regular periods of sustained silent reading (SSR). Functional writing may take the form of responses to literature, reports, journaling, letters, research, and a variety of essays. Students also gain experience in creative writing, such as narrative and descriptive prose and poetry. There is an introduction to resource skills development (paraphrasing and source citation) and specific attention is paid to supporting analytical claims with textual evidence. Speaking and listening skills are developed through discussions, oral reports, following directions, and cooperative interaction with peers and adults.

English 8 continues an integrated program designed to help students express, interpret, and extend their knowledge through connections among the language arts. The core curriculum includes one novel, one play, several short stories and pieces of nonfiction, poetry, and a variety of teacher-directed literature experiences.

Composition development is provided through genre study, literature responses, and interdisciplinary and thematic units. Composition is also used to incorporate computer skills and research methods. Grammar, spelling, and vocabulary are taught in the context of reading and writing activities. Extensive opportunities for listening and speaking development are also provided across the curriculum.

## **FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

Second language learning is an integral part of the student's total learning experience and provides a basis for interdisciplinary activity.

In the foreign language classroom, students develop skills in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. They learn vocabulary and grammatical structures that will enable them to communicate in everyday situations in French- or Spanish-speaking countries. They acquire knowledge of the target culture and develop awareness of the existence of cultures other than their own.



At OPMS, the seventh and eighth grade foreign language program follows a curriculum based on the New York State Syllabus for Modern Languages. The two-year program focuses on developing proficiency in the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students can comprehend basic statements and questions. They can initiate and participate in basic conversations. They can understand the essential content of simple readings for the purpose of providing and obtaining information. Students can write paragraphs based on thematic topics. They also understand certain aspects of the culture of the target language.

All OPMS foreign language students take a local Proficiency Examination in French or Spanish at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

In New York State, students enrolled in grades eight or earlier are granted one unit of high school credit by **successfully completing two units of study in a language other than English and passing a locally developed test** (both of which are aligned to the *Checkpoint A* learning standards for Languages Other Than English (LOTE), which has been approved for high school credit by the school district superintendent). This foreign language credit is one of the NYS graduation requirements. Students will then have the opportunity to continue their French/Spanish study in the corresponding level II course at the high school.

Students who do not pass the proficiency exam and/or the course must take and pass a Level I foreign language course at the high school.



## **ACCELERATED COURSE IN 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE LATIN**

Recommendations for this course begin the second semester of 7<sup>th</sup> grade. A matrix is developed with point values in the following areas: grade scale based on overall average in French/Spanish at the time of the recommendation, foreign language teacher recommendation, grade scale based on overall average in base classes at the time of the recommendation, and an overall base recommendation. The criteria for the point values include attendance, high grades in all subjects, a strong work ethic, motivation, and a level of maturity that indicates an interest and commitment to the subject. A letter is sent home at the beginning of July to students who qualify for the program and a parent needs to send the request back indicating if their child will take the course.

## **HEALTH**

The health curriculum is designed to encourage students to gain and use knowledge in making appropriate and healthful decisions, develop positive health habits, prevent disease, and improve their quality of life. Within the comprehensive health program, key skills allow students to: develop positive social behaviors such as self-discipline, self-awareness, critical thinking skills, effective communication, and self-directed learning; develop awareness of the role of health in the lives of individuals, families, and the community; nurture the development of attitudes that place a high value on optimal health; and develop a strong commitment to lead healthy drug-free lives.



## The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Health Curriculum covers topics such as:

### Wellness

- the 7 Dimensions
  - physical
  - social
  - mental
  - emotional
  - occupational
  - spirit
  - environmental

### Licit and Illicit Drugs

- current trends
- prevention
- addiction
- effects on the brain and body
- effects on society
- media and cultural influences

### Human Growth and Development

- adolescence and puberty
- decision making
- teen pregnancy
- abstinence

### Healthful Lifestyles

- Diseases including HIV

### Illicit Drugs

Due to the dynamic nature of health trends and information, curriculum may be changed or revised to allow content to be current.



## **LIFE AND CAREER SKILLS**

Life & Career Skills is taught at all three grade levels. This course includes a variety of hands-on activities preparing students to become responsible family and community members, educated consumers and future professionals. In 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, classes meet for one quarter (about 10 weeks).

Sixth Grade Business Lunches are held on select Fridays during student lunch periods. Local business professionals volunteer to give a “show and tell” about their careers so that students may learn about the real work world.

### **Sixth Grade**

#### Career Exploration

- Students begin a *Personal Career Portfolio*, create a *Me T-shirt* project to practice public speaking, and prepare a job resume on the computer.
- Students explore careers by completing either a job journal, job shadow, career interview or a business lunch form.
- During some marking periods, an optional after-school field trip to a daycare center will take place.

#### Food and Nutrition

- Through teacher demonstrations and student labs, students learn basic cooking skills, kitchen safety and nutrition information.
- Students work in cooperative teams to make recipes such as play dough, quesadillas, fruit smoothies and more.
- Students keep a food diary, research “super” healthy foods, and learn how to reduce sugar, salt, and fat in cooking.
- Students discuss vegetarian diet, lactose intolerance, food allergies, and eating disorders.
- Students learn how to set a table and are encouraged to make class recipes at home for extra credit.

#### Clothing

- Learn skills for sewing on a button



## **Seventh Grade**

### Career Exploration

- Students learn about themselves as they continue their *Personal Career Portfolio*.
- Students complete a Personality Profiler, Job Application practice, Interviewing Strategies, and a business card based on a future career choice.
- Students conduct library research on a famous entrepreneur and use visual aids and public speaking skills to present their information to the class.

### Food and Nutrition

- Simple, healthy meal preparation is the focus, and nutrition and kitchen safety are stressed. After observing a demonstration, students work in groups to prepare a variety of recipes, and are encouraged to try them at home.
- Students participate in “Kid Biz”, a class-operated business. They may apply and interview for a variety of middle- and upper-management positions.

## **Eighth Grade**

### Career Exploration

- *Personal Career Portfolio* is completed, and engage in self-assessment of career interests, computer exploration of careers, and a research project on careers, skills, and knowledge needed in college and the workplace.

### Food and Nutrition

- Food Safety: present rules for food preparation and sanitation; food poisoning research project
- Fruit and Vegetable Research Project: explore a selected fruit or vegetable.

### Parenting (if time allows)

- Explore intellectual development of children focusing on importance of play



## **MATH**

Students learn to value mathematics by realizing its existence in all facets of life and becoming confident in their ability to solve problems through successful use of communication and reason. The Middle School math program seeks to accommodate the wide variety of differences in the developmental process by providing flexibility in instruction and grouping. The concepts are reinforced and extended throughout the year at each grade level

### **Grade 6**

***Ratios and Proportional Relationships:*** Understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems.

***The Number System:*** Apply and extend previous understandings of numbers to the system of rational numbers. Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division to divide fractions by fractions. Compute fluently with multi digit numbers and find common factors and multiples.

***Expressions and Equations:*** Apply and extend previous understandings of arithmetic to algebraic expressions. Reason about and solve one variable equations and inequalities. Represent and analyze quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables.

***Geometry:*** Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume.

***Statistics and Probability:*** Develop understanding of statistical variability. Summarize and describe distributions.

### **Grade 7**

***Ratios and Proportional Relationships:*** Analyze proportional relationships and use them to solve real-world and mathematical problems.

***The Number System:*** Apply and extend previous understandings of operations with fractions to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers.



**Expressions and Equations:** Use properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions. Solve real-life and mathematical problems using numerical and algebraic expressions and equations.

**Statistics and Probability:** Use random sampling to draw inferences about a population. Investigate chance processes and develop, use, and evaluate probability models. Draw informal comparative inferences about two populations.

**Geometry:** Solve real-life and mathematical problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume. Draw, construct and describe geometrical figures and describe the relationships between them.

## Grade 8

**Expressions and Equations:** Work with radicals and integer exponents. Understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations. Analyze and solve linear equations and pairs of simultaneous linear equations.

**Functions:** Define, evaluate, and compare functions. Use functions to model relationships between quantities.

**Geometry:** Understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem. Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software. Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres.

**The Number System:** Know that there are numbers that are not rational, and approximate them by rational numbers.

**Statistics and Probability:** Investigate patterns of association in bivariate data.





## ACCELERATED MATH COURSES

**Accelerated Math 7:** The curriculum from grade 7 and the grade 8 topics covered under Expressions and Equations and The Number System.

Selection for this course takes place at the end of grade 6. The first requirement is a student has to have an overall average of 95 in Math 6. A matrix is created with point values from the final Math 6 average, the grade 6 math teacher and the grade 6 base teachers. The criteria for the point values include attendance, high grades in all subjects, a strong work ethic, and a level of maturity that indicates a dedication and commitment to the subject. A letter is sent home at the beginning of July to students who qualify for the program, and a parent needs to send the request back indicating if their child will take the course.

**Algebra I:** The students in Accelerated Math 7 will continue in this course as long as they are successful in the Accelerated Math 7 course. Students in the Math 7 course may have an opportunity to accelerate into Algebra I. The Math 7 teachers will evaluate their students by looking for those students who demonstrate the ability, work ethic and maturity to take on an accelerated course. Students will be selected at the end of third quarter and will have to take a three week course in the summer to make up the work they missed from the Accelerated Math 7 course.



# **MUSIC**

## **General Information**

All music classes and performing ensembles meet during the school day, every other day, and receive a report card grade. STUDENTS IN PERFORMING GROUPS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND ALL SCHEDULED PERFORMANCES. In addition to music classes that meet during the day, the music department offers many after-school ensembles. Drum Ensemble is open to all students in grades 6-8. Students in good standing in the instrumental and choral day programs are eligible to participate in Jazz Ensemble, Jazz Lab, Chamber Orchestra, Fiddle Club, or one of our Select Choirs. Participation in some of these ensembles is determined by audition.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade General Music**

General Music is a continuation of the elementary music classes. Students continue their mastery of reading and writing music, composing, listening to music, and singing. Students develop a vocabulary of musical terms to assist their critical listening skills and play many instruments.

## **6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band**

Students who enjoy playing band instruments are encouraged to participate in Band in the Middle School. Students in all bands have a band rehearsal every other day and a group lesson once every six school days. Students work on tone, technique, sight-reading, knowledge of their instrument, and written musical concepts. Band grades are made up of band participation, lesson assignments, individual practice, written assignments and concert attendance. All Band members are encouraged to take private lessons. Please feel free to contact the band directors for private teacher recommendations or if you would like assistance regarding instrument purchases. All Band members are invited to participate in the Middle School Marching Band for the Memorial Day Parade. Band members may also audition for **Jazz Ensemble or participate in Jazz Lab.**



### 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra

Students who enjoy playing string instruments are encouraged to participate in Orchestra in the Middle School. Students in all orchestras have an orchestra rehearsal every other day and a group lesson once every six school days. Students work on tone, technique, sight-reading, knowledge of orchestral music, and music theory. Orchestra grades are made up of orchestra participation, lesson and written assignments, individual practice, and concert attendance. All Orchestra members are encouraged to take private lessons. Please feel free to contact the orchestra directors for private teacher recommendations or if you would like assistance regarding instrument purchases. Orchestra members may also audition for **Chamber Orchestra or participate in Fiddle Club.**

### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus

Students who enjoy singing are encouraged to participate in 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus. Members of Band and Orchestra may **also** take Chorus. Chorus classes meet every other day. Students learn to read music, sing in several languages, experience a variety of musical styles, and sing with good tone, resonance, and range. Concert attendance is required of all Chorus members. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus members may also audition for one of our **Select Choirs.**

### 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus

Students who enjoy singing are encouraged to participate in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade chorus. Chorus classes meet every other day. Students in band and orchestra may **ALSO** take chorus. Students study correct vocal production, musical notation, a variety of musical styles, and music from other cultures and languages. Knowledge is demonstrated through singing and written activities. Concert attendance is required of all chorus members. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Chorus members may also audition for one of our **Select Choirs.**



## **7<sup>th</sup> Grade General Music**

Students who are not taking band, chorus or orchestra continue their study of music in General Music. Students listen to a wide variety of music, sing, play instruments, compose music, study musical theatre, music history and composers, and African and Caribbean drumming and culture. Grades are based on performance and written activities, and keeping a comprehensive notebook.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

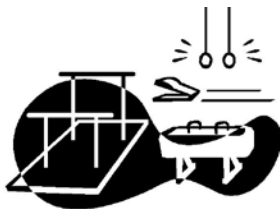
Our physical education classes explore a comprehensive developmental program focused on the education of the whole person. Activities and opportunities are provided for all students to achieve the knowledge, skills, and values that will develop and enhance their sense of well-being and maximize the quality of their life. The following goals are strived for in each class:

- To increase the participant's sense of personal confidence.
- To increase mutual support within the class.
- To develop an increased level of flexibility, agility, coordination, balance and strength (muscular fitness).
- To develop an increased level of cardio-respiratory efficiency (endurance fitness).
- To develop an increased joy in one's physical self and being with others.
- To develop personal living skills (positive risk taking, safety consciousness, respecting others, implementing initiative, balancing the group dynamics of leadership and cooperation).



Physical education classes meet every other day for the entire school year. Students receive grades every quarter. Interim reports, if warranted, will be available on the Parent Portal at the conclusion of the first and third quarters. A five or ten week plan is followed with the intention of achieving the above goals in the following activity areas:

- Swimming
- Fitness/weight training
- Sport-Related Activities (basketball, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, volleyball, floor hockey, touch football, softball, team handball, table tennis, speedball, “stixball”, and badminton.)\*
- Project Adventure (group initiative, games, trust activities, high & low elements ropes course work).



\*The specific sport-related activities available to each class are determined by scheduling parameters.

## **SCIENCE**

The science curriculum is designed to help students better understand the world in which we live, using various methods such as hands-on investigations, cooperative group work, and classroom discussion.

Based on efforts of the State Education Department around the science core curriculum, Orchard Park Middle School is taking an integrated approach to teaching science in an effort to better align local curriculum with the New York State standards and the core curriculum guide. Topics in Life, Earth, and Physical Science will be covered in grades 6, 7 and 8. (Additional changes will likely be made over the coming years.)



**Sixth Grade includes topic such as:**

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- incubation and embryology
- water properties
- simple machines
- meteorology
- the cell
- pond life

**Seventh Grade includes topic such as:**

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- atoms and molecules
- nature of life
- properties of matter
- periodic table
- geology
- genetics

**Eighth Grade includes topics such as:**

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- physical and chemical changes
- energy, force and motion
- life changes through time
- diversity of life
- astronomy

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

Social studies provides students with knowledge of the world both past and present. The following units will be studied:

**Grade Six:**

- Map skills
- Religions
- Mesopotamia
- Ancient China
- Ancient Greece
- Ancient Civilizations
- Early Humans
- Ancient Egypt
- Ancient Rome
- Middle Ages

**Grade Seven:**

Students will implement a variety of skills and techniques throughout the seventh grade curriculum:

- basic cartography (reading and writing coordinates) - note taking
- research of primary and secondary sources -written reports
- group and individual project work
- multimedia (newspapers, network news, internet, video productions)



The following units will be studied in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade:

- Geography
- First Americans
- Exploration and Colonization -The American Revolution
- US and New York State Governments
- Federalist Period
- Development and Expansion of the United States

## **Grade Eight**

Social studies skills will be reviewed and refined:

- viewing, listening, observing, and thinking skills
- graph and chart interpretation
- political cartoon analysis
- library media center research skills
- reading comprehension
- map reading
- computer usage and research skills
- essay writing

The following units will be studied:

- Manifest Destiny 1803-1850s-
- Pre-Civil War
- Reconstruction Era 1865-1877
- Industry
- WW I 1914-1918 (US 1917)
- Great Depression 1929-1939-
- Cold War Unit
- Decade of the 1950s
- Decade of the 1960s
- Decade of the 1970s
- Decade of the 1980s
- Decade of the 1990s
- Constitution
- The Civil War
- Immigration
- Progressive Era-
- Roaring 20s
- WW II 1939-1945 (US 1941)
- 1945-1950s



## **TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING EDUCATION**

In a world that has grown increasingly more dependent on technology, our mission is to advance each child's technological literacy and capabilities by nurturing understanding of technology and engineering.

Students experience the practical application of STEM (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, and **M**ath) education through "hands-on, minds-on" activities. Project-based learning helps students develop practical skills with a variety of technological tools and processes. Listed below are units and projects that each course may include:

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Technology: 10 week course**

- **Electricity and Electronics:** Students study electricity and electronics by assembling several circuits with a kit. They also create a working LED flashlight by making a circuit board, assembling the circuit, soldering the components and making a protective housing or container for the flashlight.
- **Robotics:** Students learn about and work with a programmable robotic system. They complete a variety of tasks using a computer, software, microcontroller, servomotors and sound/light/ultrasonic sensors.
- **Engineering Design Process:** Students use the engineering design process to make a CO<sub>2</sub> powered vehicle to compete in both a class race and a design competition. They do research, brainstorm solutions, follow design constraints, make two-view orthographic technical drawings, use tools and machines to fabricate the vehicle and gather data (using a wind tunnel, triple beam balance and a ramp) to predict race results.





## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Technology: 10 week course

- **Plastic Innovation and Manufacturing:** Study of plastic material and innovation. Students design and create a product formed, from acrylic plastic, using heat, tools, and machines.
- **Package Development:** Create a package design on paper that will sell your product idea to consumers.
- **Engineering and Design:** Design a 2-dimensional drawing on foam board that will be cut and assembled into a 3-dimensional cask. The cask will contain and protect a raw egg during a 3-story crash test on concrete.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Technology: 20 week course

- **Communications:**
  - **Digital Photography:** Students use digital cameras to practice and learn about basic shot types and camera angles. They are also introduced to camera safety and responsibility.
  - **Digital Video:** Students learn about video as a communication tool by planning, producing and editing both live and animated video productions.
  - **Engineering Design:** Students design, build and test bridge and tower structures in order to learn about the engineering process. They also see how some engineering design challenges are met throughout the world with an internet tour.
- **Manufacturing:**
  - **Technical Drawing/Computer Aided Design:** Study and practice of technical drawing including sketching and computer modeling.
  - **CNC Machining:** Students learn about CNC technology and use a sandblaster, CNC router, vinyl cutter, and 3D printer to design and create several projects.
  - **Machine Safety:** Throughout the entire course, students will learn and practice how to properly and safely use necessary tools and machines.



## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Advanced Technology Education**

Grade: 8 - 20 weeks: 1/2 Unit

Offering: year long

**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade Technology and teacher recommendation.

With an emphasis on integrating STEM (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, and **M**ath) education, Advanced Technology focuses on exploring different aspects of Technology, including Alternative Energy, Manufacturing, Communications, Transportation, and Engineering Design. By learning through authentic, “hands-on, minds-on” activities, students develop practical skills using a variety of technological tools and processes. Listed below are some of the possible activities:

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Advanced Technology: 20 week course**

- **Simple Machines**
  - Trebuchet
- **Communication**
  - Promotional School Video
- **Construction**
  - Geodesic Domes
- **Transportation**
  - Ground Effect Vehicle
  - Water Rocket
  - Solar Powered Vehicle
- **Problem Solving**
  - Product Development
- **Manufacturing**
  - CNC Programming/Machining
  - Vinyl Cutting
  - Airbrushing/Sandblasting
- **Alternative Energy**
  - Wind Turbines
  - Solar Cells



## **ACCELERATED PROGRAMS**

Accelerated programs may be offered to eighth graders in art, Latin, Algebra I, earth science, technology, and career & financial management. There is also English 8 Honors and accelerated Math at seventh grade. The criteria for these courses include excellent attendance, high grades in ALL subjects, a strong work ethic, a level of maturity that indicates a dedication and commitment to the subject, and teacher and base recommendations.

## **MODIFIED SATELLITE CLASSES**

We know that all children learn and develop at their own pace, and one of our roles as educators is to place students in the best possible educational setting based upon individual learning styles. With input from OPMS parents and staff, a modified satellite program has been created to enhance our programs to meet the needs of all of our students. The areas addressed by this modification include art, computer, health, life and career skills, and technology. While the depth and breadth of the topics may vary, the curriculum for each of these classes is designed to provide students with essential information and skills in an environment that will foster growth and success in one or more of the areas identified above.

- 6<sup>th</sup> grade modified satellites: art, life and career skills, computers, and technology
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade modified satellites: art, life and career skills, technology, and health
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade modified satellites: art, life and career skills, computers, and health

Students are invited into these classes based on teacher and counselor recommendations.



## **LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER (LMC)**

Our library offers a wide variety of resources for students. Students can visit the library independently during study halls, before or after school, or with their classes. The library has a carefully selected collection of over 13,000 books for student use. Our fiction collection has a wide variety of authors and genres. Our non-fiction collection contains many subject-specific reference books and a large biography section. The library is a center of activity for technical learning and contains a growing Makerspace for independent learning. The school librarians are available for homework and project help or for personalized book selection. There are multiple laptop, iPad, and Chromebook carts that can be reserved.



## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION**

In New York State, the Committee on Special Education has the legal responsibility to identify, classify, and provide appropriate resources and services to children with disabilities. In addition to the District Committee on Special Education, each school has its own sub-committee.

### **PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Presently the Middle School serves students with disabilities in one of four types of special education programs:

1. Special Class
2. Resource Room
3. Co-Teaching
4. Consultant Teacher

### **SPECIAL CLASS**

Special classes in the Middle School generally have students spend most or all of the instructional day in the special class. Depending on the child's individual needs, students may be "mainstreamed" with non-disabled children in those classes which they can participate.

### **RESOURCE ROOM**

The resource room is designed for those disabled students who do not require a special education environment as restrictive as a special class. The Middle School resource rooms usually have students spend one period a day in a resource room receiving remediation and instruction modified to their individual needs.

### **CO-TEACHING**

Integrated co-teaching provides specially designed instruction and academic instruction to a group of students with disabilities along with nondisabled students. The instruction is shared by a special education teacher and a general education teacher, who collaborate on lessons, assessments, and classroom management.



## **CONSULTANT TEACHER**

Consultant Teacher (CT) Service is the least restrictive special education service. Students with this service are monitored closely and receive support either directly or indirectly from a special education teacher.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **COUNSELING CENTER**

The Middle School Counseling Center (209-6233) is committed to working with students, teachers and parents through counseling, coordinating and consulting services. The counselor assigned may follow that student through sixth, seventh and eighth grade.

Student schedules, report cards, interim reports, standardized tests, parent conferences and student registration are coordinated through the Counseling Center. Counselors consult with students, parents and teachers on issues related to school success, performance, and transitioning from one grade to another.

Counseling groups and individual sessions are offered to help students in a variety of situations as needed. If necessary, the counseling center will link a student or family to an appropriate service provider.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

Consultation services are available to teachers whose concern for students may involve behavior management, learning styles, peer interaction, etc. Similar supports are provided to parents who may have questions regarding parenting techniques. Psycho-educational assessments are conducted as a component of an interdisciplinary team evaluation approach. This approach assists in identifying a child's learning strengths and weaknesses and social/ emotional status. A holistic approach is employed to determine the most appropriate interventions and support of individual children.



## **SOCIAL WORK SERVICES**

The social worker at the Middle School currently offers individual counseling to students who have been identified by a principal, teacher, parent or self- referral. Counseling goals are established and consultation with school staff and parents is maintained so that a student's total life picture is recognized.

Students are also seen in groups around specific issues: i.e. self-esteem, social skills, separation and divorce, stress management, etc. The social worker acts as a liaison between home, school and outside agencies where the student may be receiving services.

In the area of special education, the social worker acts as a liaison, advocate and/or counselor for the student, parent and/or staff person to best facilitate communication and understanding of needs

## **SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

### **Academic Intervention Services (AIS)**

The Middle School offers AIS in the areas of English and math. AIS placement is determined by classroom performance, teacher recommendations, and/or parental requests, and by New York State test scores. The focus is to provide additional instruction that supplements the general curriculum. AIS also serves to provide support services in order to address barriers that may prevent improved academic performance.

### **Academic Achievement Program (AAP)**

This program is designed to assist students in grade seven who may not be meeting academic standards. Teacher aides will work with AAP students and may accompany them to class to provide structure and support. Before and after school help is also a component of the Academic Achievement Program.

