

2017 - 2018

MIDDLE SCHOOL

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

BOARD APPROVED – 8/31/2017

SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION

Evergreen Avenue and Cedar Street
Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES

2017 - 2018

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The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools are committed to providing an equal opportunity for all students and employees, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, place of residence, social or economic condition, or handicap/disability in all school programs and vocational education opportunities. Consistent with the intent of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (racial/ethnic equity), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (non-discrimination on the basis of handicap/disability), the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools afford all students and employees equal opportunity.

The Mission of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools is to educate every student to become a confident and caring life-long learner who can communicate and contribute positively to the rapidly changing world. The district, in cooperation with the community, will provide an academic environment which values excellence, initiative and diversity.

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood curriculum is designed to offer every student in our district an excellent comprehensive education. This Program of Studies booklet provides an overview of the various curriculum components in each of the subject areas at the middle school level.

Review and revision of curriculum areas are conducted on a five-year cycle by committees of professional staff and parents. In order to meet state standards and keep pace with the changing needs of students in our increasingly interdependent world, curriculum revisions have emphasized use of content to solve problems, higher-level thinking processes, and technology applications which foster and enhance learning. Through this systematic approach to curriculum renewal, the district also incorporates into our program the most current state and federal guidelines, findings from research of professional organizations and universities, and best approaches of informed practice.

If you have questions about any of the programs we offer, please contact your child's teacher. If further clarification is needed, building principals and subject supervisors will be pleased to assist you. Be sure to watch Channel 34 and attend Educational Forums and Board of Education meetings to learn more about our schools and programs. We encourage your involvement.

Sincerely,



Dr. Joan V. Mast
Asst. Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction
& Technology

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to our middle schools! The Scotch Plains-Fanwood middle school program is based upon the concept that each child should be provided with learning opportunities commensurate with his/her abilities and talents. It is the belief of the middle school staffs that each child should develop the basic skills and acquire the broad, general understanding and the knowledge that are necessary for effective citizenship.

We recognize the importance in fulfilling the above ideals and the need for cooperation between the home and school. It is by this close cooperation that both the home and school can reinforce each other in helping students to understand and assimilate the basic values of our democratic society.

This Program of Studies has been prepared especially for the parents and students of our middle schools. In this booklet, we have included important information about the curriculum and the operation of our schools. This publication should be examined carefully before program selections are made. Should you have questions, please confer with your counselor. Parent conferences concerning individual programs may be arranged by contacting the Counseling Office.

Dr. Kevin Holloway, Principal
Terrill Middle School
Main Office: 322-5215
Counseling Office: 322-5215
Prompt 5

Dr. Jocelyn Dumaresq, Principal
Park Middle School
Main Office: 322-4445
Counseling Office: 322-4445
Prompt 6

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

SIXTH GRADE:

<u>Required Subjects</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Times per Week</u>
Language Arts	Year	5
Writing Workshop	Year	5
Mathematics	Year	5
Earth Science	Year	5
Social Studies	Year	5
* Physical Education/Health	Year	5
Math Explorations	Year	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle
Art	18 weeks	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle
General Music	18 weeks	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle
World Language: Select from	Year	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle
French		
Italian		
Spanish		
S.T.A.R.	Year	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle

<u>Elective Subject</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Times per week</u>
*** Band	Year	Meets twice during a 6-Day Cycle
*** Chorus	Year	Meets twice during a 6-Day Cycle
Instrumental Techniques	Year	1
** Gifted/Talented Program (QUEST)		

* Students enrolled in band or chorus will attend physical education three times per week. All other students will attend physical education five times per week.

** For eligible students per district established criteria.

*** Band students interested in taking chorus also will be scheduled for chorus class one day of each week in lieu of an exploratory class or S.T.A.R.

NOTE:Grade 6 uses a team format involving mathematics, science, social studies, writing workshop and language arts. All 6th grade students will participate in the S.T.A.R.

SEVENTH GRADE:

<u>Required Subjects</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Times per Week</u>
Language Arts	Year	5
Writing Workshop	Year	5
Mathematics	Year	5
Life Science	Year	5
U.S. History	Year	5
World Language	Year	5
French		
Italian		
Spanish		
* Physical Education/Health	Year	5
Industrial Technology Education	18 weeks	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle
Math Explorations	Year	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle
S.T.A.R.	18 weeks	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle

**
**

<u>Elective Subject</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Times per week</u>
*** Band	Year	Meets twice in a 6-Day Cycle
*** Chorus	Year	Meets twice in a 6-Day Cycle
Jazz Band		Before school
Instrumental Techniques	Year	1
** Gifted/Talented Program (QUEST)		

- * Students enrolled in band or chorus will attend physical education three times per week. All other students will attend physical education five times per week.
- ** For eligible students per district established criteria.
- *** Band students interested in taking chorus also will be scheduled for chorus class one day of each week in lieu of an exploratory class or S.T.A.R.

NOTE: Grade 7 uses a team format involving mathematics, science, social studies, writing workshop and language arts. All 7th grade students will participate in the S.T.A.R. program.

EIGHTH GRADE:

<u>Required Subjects</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Times per Week</u>
Language Arts	Year	5
Writing Workshop	Year	5
Mathematics	Year	5
Physical Science	Year	5
World Cultures	Year	5
* Physical Education/Health	Year	5
World Language	Year	5
French		
Italian		
Spanish		
Art	18 weeks	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle
Math Explorations	Year	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle
S.T.A.R.	18 weeks	Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle

<u>Elective Subject</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Times per week</u>
*** Band	Year	Meets twice in a 6-Day Cycle
*** Chorus	Year	Meets twice in a 6-Day Cycle
Jazz Band	Year	Before school
Instrumental Techniques	Year	1
** Gifted/Talented Program (QUEST)		
* Students enrolled in band or chorus will attend physical education two times per 6-Day Cycle. All other students will attend physical education six times per 6-Day Cycle.		
** For eligible students per district established criteria.		
*** Band students interested in taking chorus also will be scheduled for chorus class one day of each week in lieu of an exploratory class or S.T.A.R.		

NOTE: Grade 8 uses a team format involving mathematics, science, social studies, writing workshop and language arts. All 8th grade students will participate in the S.T.A.R. program.

ART

The art program in the middle school is designed to give each student experience with a variety of skills, techniques and materials and should enable the student to organize these materials and his/her ideas into personal creative expression. Ultimately, this should result in self-realization and personal growth.

The art program is designed to develop in the student a sense of community; that is, sharing materials, working together, and respecting others and their work. It will not be restricted to the classroom but will be taught in its application to the legacy of man, to the contemporary environment, and to future career opportunities. Art is a required course of study for all 6th and 8th grade students.

INTRODUCTION TO ART

GRADE 6 18 weeks. . Meets every 3 days on a 6-day cycle

The 6th grade program is designed as an introductory course to color, theory, composition, and two- and three-dimensional design while exploring different media. Students will work with a wide variety of techniques and materials such as painting, drawing and three-dimensional media. Art history and contemporary art as well as art careers will be examined.

At this level, the emphasis is on organization of materials, techniques, and ideas, care and respect of materials, a development of a sense of community, and the development of imagination and creative problem solving.

GRADE 8 18 weeks. . Meets every 3 days on a 6-day cycle

The 8th grade program is designed to support and encourage greater student self-reflection and personal expression using the skills and techniques acquired throughout their prior years in art. Students will use a wide variety of materials (both 2D and 3D) and techniques to best create artwork that is personally meaningful and valuable to their world.

BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM FOR 6th, 7th and 8th GRADE STUDENTS

Basic Skills support for reading, writing and mathematics is provided to sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students through content area language arts and math classes in conjunction with Writing Workshop and Math Explorations. Students are identified as needing support based on their performance on district benchmarks and ongoing assessments.

The instructors monitor the progress of the students. An ISIP (Individual Student Improvement Plan) is developed for each student and serves as the instructional guide for the student. Pre- and post-test information is collected on the students and used to assess student gains.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

The language arts program at the middle school is designed to develop, reinforce, and refine essential skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in alignment with the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. The standards suggest that students who are college and career ready should demonstrate independence; build strong content knowledge; respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose and discipline; comprehend as well as critique; value evidence; use technology and digital media strategically and capably; and come to understand other perspectives and cultures. To address these expectations in an authentic and meaningful way, the two middle school courses (Language Arts and Writing Workshop) are connected using six essential concepts: awareness, change, ethics, identity, perspective, and power. These concepts are integrated into the program through exposure to a variety of fictional and information texts and writing genres.

The Language Arts course aims to develop critical readers, writers, and thinkers. Students are exposed to a variety of genres: drama, poetry, and contemporary and traditional texts in fiction and nonfiction. Classroom instruction emphasizes literature discussion, meaningful written response to literature, vocabulary development, and application of reading strategies. As part of Language Arts students participate in independent reading in order to foster a love of reading and encourage life-long learning.

The Writing Workshop course aims to develop both technical and creative writers. Students will explore argumentative, informational, and narrative genres in a workshop format. By definition, a writing workshop is a student-centered model of instruction, designed to meet the needs of each individual writer through brief mini-lessons, peer and teacher conferencing, and use of portfolios in a developmentally appropriate manner. Classroom instruction emphasizes the writing process; reflection; and grammar, usage, and mechanics application in writing.

Media Center instruction is another integral part of the Language Arts and Writing Workshop curriculum. Students employ their technology skills as they discover the vast array of information available to them in a variety of mediums. Lessons may be planned cooperatively by the media specialist and the classroom teacher and are generally developed in conjunction with classroom activities.

Presently there are two levels of instructional grouping in the grade eight language arts program. Level one (Honors) is designed for those students whose reading and writing skills exceed the expectations of a traditional eighth grade language arts program. Level one moves at an accelerated pace, provides less in class support, and expects students to have more complex analytical skills.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Children who register in our district and do not speak English as their primary language are tested by a certified English Language Learning instructor to determine their level of English proficiency. State criteria are used to determine eligibility for assistance in language acquisition. All services for middle school students are provided in Park Middle School; therefore, any student who falls below the cut-off score determined by the state is automatically transferred to Park for his/her total instructional program. Direct instruction in English is provided by a certified English Language Learning teacher for a minimum of 40 minutes per student per day. The E.L.L. teacher also serves as a resource person for the entire staff and provides materials and suggestions to classroom teachers who have non-English speaking students in their classes.

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

(QUEST – Question, Understand, Explore, Seek, Think)

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public School System is committed to providing learning opportunities to stimulate all children while simultaneously meeting the unique needs of the academically talented student.

All students are re-evaluated in Grades 6, 7 and 8 for possible inclusion in the gifted and talented program using multiple criteria. The criteria include a teacher checklist, a cognitive ability test, standardized tests.

The pull-out program is conducted within the student's own school. Students meet by grade level on a rotating schedule.

The QUEST Program is committed to providing a curriculum that emphasizes the use of thinking skills through independent and group activities. These activities will prepare our learners for meaningful participation in both the classroom and community by valuing their individuality, recognizing their skills, and instilling in them an appreciation of their ability to contribute to society.

Additionally, students participate in experiences with identified students from both middle schools and with students in similar programs from surrounding communities.

COUNSELING SERVICES

The middle school counseling program serves as a most vital link in the total educational process. The program is based on the following objectives:

- Transition/Orientation Program
- Safe School Programs
- Crisis Intervention
- Problem Solving
- Individual Counseling
- Small Group Counseling
- Classroom Developmental Counseling
- Parent/Family Involvement
- Consultation/Collaboration with School Staff, Parents, Mental Health Professionals, and Community

The counselor assists the students in the transition from the elementary to the middle school through activities, classroom presentations, and visits. This is continued as an orientation program in the middle school through classroom developmental counseling activities and small group as well as individual counseling.

The developmental counseling program is delivered in a classroom setting with specific themes, such as: respect for self and others, conflict resolution, decision making, bullying, study skills, and career interests exploration. These lessons address the personal, social, educational, and career interest development of the middle school student.

School counselors serve as the liaison between the parent/family and the school. An important role of the counselor is to act as an advocate for the student in communicating with teachers, staff, and others in the school community. Additionally, counselors may provide referrals to other school and community professional services as needed. The counseling program addresses the academic, social and emotional developmental needs, and the school counselors assist students, parents, and teachers in helping each child achieve his/her potential.

HEALTH EDUCATION

The middle school health program is a comprehensive curriculum designed to meet the needs of the adolescent individual. It addresses many of the topics which are critical in today's society including: drugs and alcohol, family relationships, human anatomy, and AIDS education. The program focuses on the process of healthy living and the skills needed to maintain a lifestyle which balances physical, mental, and social stability. The students learn and have the opportunity to practice a process -- to focus, adapt and adjust to situations, and to set goals and select activities that contribute to personal health, the health of others, and a quality environment.

The health curriculum is a required course for all sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students and serves as an extension of the physical education program. During one marking period (9 weeks), students attend their respective health program which utilizes a variety of resources and materials to meet the course objectives. The text which is used is *Teen Health*, Bronson, Cleary & Hubbard, 2009

Units from within each curriculum include:

GRADE 6: Family Life and Social Health
Body Systems
Nutrition
Substance Awareness
Cardiovascular Diseases

GRADE 7: Decision-Making
Relationships/Dating Violence Education
Conflict Resolution
Puberty and Adolescence
HIV/AIDS
Dietary Guidelines
Planning for Physical Fitness
Alcohol Education
Gang Awareness

GRADE 8: Body Systems
Growth through the Life Cycle
Sexually Transmitted Diseases including HIV/AIDS Education
Communicable Diseases
Cardiovascular Disease and Cancer
Chemical Dependency
Drugs and Alcohol
Dating Violence Education

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The physical education curriculum in the middle school is an extension of the elementary program and provides the opportunity for each student to develop as a total person, physically, mentally, and socially. The program is comprehensive and strives to educate each individual in a variety of activities ranging from fitness to team and individual sports. Emphasis at this level is based upon active participation, which in turn will promote achievement and success.

The philosophy of the physical education program is to produce physically fit youth with an understanding of the importance of physical activity and to give students the skills, knowledge, motivation, and activities to remain fit throughout their lives.

Physical education is a required program for all students in grades six, seven, and eight. During the year, students will receive three marking periods of physical education and one marking period of a comprehensive health program. Students enrolled in band or chorus will attend physical education four days in a 6-Day Cycle. All other students will attend six times per 6-Day Cycle.

GRADES 6 and 7

The physical education curriculum at this level is designed to introduce students to the components of fitness, to develop specific motor skills, and to promote an understanding of the importance of movement in one's life. A variety of activities including team and individual sports and physical fitness are presented at a beginner's level. Basic skills are stressed with emphasis placed on skill acquisition, on the understanding of individual and team sports, and on assessing one's own fitness level. Lead-up games and game situations are also used to increase students' understanding of rules, strategies, and teamwork.

GRADE 8

The eighth grade physical education curriculum is designed to reinforce and refine basic skills that were previously learned and to maintain and/or improve one's fitness level. The skills, knowledge, and attitudes acquired in grade 6 and 7 should enhance the student's abilities to participate and become proficient in a variety of activities. A more in-depth concentration of skills and game situations designed to improve agility, strength, balance, flexibility, and endurance are presented in grade 8. The advanced skills and understanding of rules will promote growth and achievement within the physical education program.

INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION (ITE)

Technology education prepares students to be capable of adapting and productively functioning in a world of dynamic technological change. Technology education promotes technological literacy and training in the process of learning “how to learn” and “how to think.”

ITE at the middle school is a course of study focusing on an introduction to technology: its history and evolution, systems, resources, and controls. The fundamental teaching strategy is to provide an interdisciplinary approach with an emphasis placed on “thinking” through design and problem solving.

Students solve contemporary technological problems by employing knowledge from all disciplines and following a systematic outline called a “design model.” They assume roles of designer, engineer, programmer, fabricator, evaluator, and consumer, while working individually or cooperatively on teacher-led or self-directed problems presented with specific limitations. Students become the ultimate decision makers in the process. They learn to compare their work to the “design brief” and to recognize a successful prototype or performed activity through self-evaluation and to overcome failures with research, design, and documentation. Students acquire computer skills, which they eventually use to store and retrieve information, make working drawings, program models and manage technological systems.

INVESTIGATIONS IN INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

GRADE 7. . . . 18 weeks (Meets every 3 days on a 6-Day Cycle)

The seventh grade ITE course is designed to further develop students’ understanding of information and procedures learned in the sixth grade ITE course. Students design and develop solutions to more challenging situations and problems. Hands-on activities allow students to both individually and cooperatively explore various areas of industrial technology in greater detail.

Using *Lego dacta*TM motorized building sets, students design solutions to problems employing gear, pulley, and chain drives for power transmission. They apply their new knowledge and understandings in physical science to the design and construction of motor-driven prototypes and employ concepts of gear ratios.

Students design and construct aerodynamic, CO₂- powered, dragster-type vehicles, designing and sketching possible solutions, drawing full scale working drawings, and producing prototype vehicles while working safely on a variety of hand and power tools machinery.

LIBRARY/MEDIA

The media center is the hub of the learning process at our middle schools. Classes are scheduled into the center based on need and availability. Information literacy skills are taught through integration with the curriculum. Working collaboratively with the teachers, the media specialist provides access to a wide range of materials, both text and electronic. The media specialist provides an extensive variety of print and non-print material for student and teacher use. An excellent collection of Young Adult (YA) materials is available for all students for research and reading for pleasure. Students and staff may check periodicals out overnight.

The media center is open from 7:55 a.m. to 2:55 p.m. for independent student use. During the school day, individual students may use the center with a pass from their teacher. Classes are routinely scheduled into the media center for research projects.

The middle school media centers are now automated and provide students with an opportunity to learn valuable “searching” techniques. Both middle schools have computer labs, allowing students access to the Internet and other databases for information as part of the research process.

STUDY SKILLS

Study skills are the learned abilities that support the acquisition of content knowledge and competencies. When students learn study skills, they are learning ways of problem-solving and methods or techniques which can be used in any academic context. Through study skills instruction, students develop ways to study more effectively and to be in charge of their own learning.

Explicit instruction will enhance the use of study skills. While most study skills are basic to all learning, some subject areas have additional sets of specific skills essential to the mastery of their academic disciplines. Skills will be reinforced through practice in content area classes. Mastering study skills is critical for life-long independent learning.

The teaching, development, and reinforcement of study skills are dependent upon cooperation among students, home, and school.

In grade 6 study skills are introduced and reinforced in all content area programs.

In grade 7 and 8 study skill strategies are reinforced in all disciplines.

The media specialists, in conjunction with the library skills curriculum, also teach and reinforce study skills at all grade levels.

MATHEMATICS

A working knowledge of mathematics is vital to deal effectively with daily life. The primary purpose of our middle school mathematics program is to help students develop their ability to solve problems and reason logically. The middle school curriculum aims to give all students the opportunity to appreciate the full power and beauty of mathematics and to acquire the mathematical knowledge and intellectual tools necessary for its use in their lives.

All students acquire an appreciation for, and develop an understanding of, mathematical ideas if they have frequent encounters with interesting, challenging problems. Students at this age level also succeed if they find both challenge and support in the mathematics classroom. Thus students in grade 6 through 8 have opportunities, through classroom activities and projects, to investigate tasks that allow their teachers to adjust the level of challenge and support as appropriate.

GRADE 6

Sixth grade students use the Connected Mathematics 3 program produced by Michigan State University. One main aim of the sixth grade program is to introduce algebraic concepts while building confidence and fluency with number sense, computation skills, and problem-solving skills. The students develop the ability to make connections between ideas. Students continue to study multiple mathematics strands such as:

- Algebra and Uses of Variables
- Data and Chance
- Geometry and Spatial Sense
- Measures and Measurements
- Numerical Operations, Numeration and Order
- Patterns, Functions, and Sequences
- Spreadsheet Applications

GRADE 7

Students' understanding of foundational algebraic and geometric ideas for high school should be developed through extended experience across grades 6 to 8 with a broad range of mathematics content, including statistics, number sense, and proportional reasoning . The seventh grade mathematics curriculum is an integrated curriculum where concepts from algebra, number and operations, geometry, data and probability motivate students to pose questions, solve problems, build understandings, and develop fluency and skill with operations and procedures. Units emphasize particular strands, though the strands are connected and integrated throughout the course. The students are expected to develop an understanding in the following areas:

Algebra

- Develop and apply the properties of exponents to solve algebraic problems
- Write algebraic expressions to represent situations and patterns
- Apply the distributive property to expand and factor, and simplify expressions
- Solve single-variable linear equations in which the variable appears on both sides
- Recognize linear relationships from multiple representations
- Describe, draw, and calculate slope and distance on a coordinate grid

Geometry

- Construct, evaluate and apply formulas for volume and surface area
- Apply ideas about similarity and scale factor
- Explain the relationships between scale factor and the surface area and volumes
- Plot points in all four quadrants

Number and Operations

- Demonstrate proficiency with operations using signed numbers
- Analyze percent operations, including percent increase and percent decrease
- Demonstrate knowledge and use of ratios, rates, and proportions

Data, Statistics, and Probability

- Calculate probabilities in situations involving multipart outcomes
- Conduct simple simulations to find probabilities
- Design and interpret graphs using spreadsheet applications
- Construct and interpret displays of data

LEVELS

Students in both Math 7 and Math 7 Honors will be expected to develop competency in the identified strands. In Math 7, students study the curriculum at a flexible pace and undertake in-depth investigations. In Math 7 Honors, students study some topics with greater independence and are assigned additional investigations. Students in both groups are challenged with the same sets of enrichment assignments, and are prepared for the same course sequence in grade 8 and the high school.

GRADE 8

Students' understanding of foundational algebraic and geometric ideas for high school should be developed through extended experience across grades 6 to 8 with a broad range of mathematics content, including statistics, number sense, and abstract reasoning . The eighth grade mathematics curriculum is an integrated curriculum where concepts from algebra, number and operations, geometry, data and probability motivate students to pose questions, solve problems, build understandings, and develop fluency and skill with operations and procedures. Units emphasize particular strands, though the strands are connected and integrated throughout the course. The students are expected to develop an understanding in the following areas:

Algebra

- Solve linear inequalities, linear systems, quadratic equations
- Write and interpret linear equations
- Predict the effect of changing coefficients in graphs, e.g., $y = ax^2 + bx + c$
- Identify functions and patterns from a table, a graph, or an equation
- Identify equivalent expressions

Geometry

- Recognize and describe reflectional and rotational symmetry
- Apply algebraic rules for similarity transformations, translations, and reflections
- Construct arguments for geometric properties and formulas

Number and Operations

- Apply the definition of square roots to estimate and simplify expressions
- Classify Real Numbers into subsets

Data, Probability and Statistics

- Solve problems using combinations and permutations
- Design and interpret graphs using spreadsheet applications
- Determine probabilities and expected values

LEVELS

Students in both Math 8 and Math 8 Honors will be expected to develop competency in the identified strands. In Math 8, students study the curriculum at a flexible pace and undertake in-depth investigations. In Math 8 Honors, students study some topics with greater independence and are assigned additional investigations. Students in both groups are challenged with the same sets of enrichment assignments, and are prepared for the same course sequence at the high school.

MATH EXPLORATIONS – GRADES 6-8

Students' understanding of foundational algebraic and geometric ideas is broadened through exploratory and inquiry-based learning activities. They will explore various themes such as global awareness, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, science, and engineering. Through thematic and interdisciplinary units focused on real-life scenarios, students will construct visual representations to demonstrate their understanding of mathematics and its relevance to their world. The use of technology as a tool is emphasized as well as the students' ability to make sense of a problem, reason and construct viable arguments, and use modeling.

Students continue to study multiple math strands such as:

- Numerical Operations
- Use of variables, expressions, and equations
- Interpreting and modeling data
- Measurements
- Geometry
- Probability

MUSIC

Music in the middle school is considered an art and a craft, an individual and a group activity, creative and recreational in nature, vocal and instrumental in expression, and participant as well as community-oriented. All musical activities should be thought of and planned as episodes in a process of musical growth; therefore, the program is structured to challenge all students at their own level of ability.

The performance program's philosophy is not only to challenge the student musically but also to build character and self-discipline. All students can participate in the music program as long as they are willing to practice their instrument and have the desire to participate in one of the musical ensembles. All performance ensemble courses are elective in nature.

General Music is offered at the sixth grade level only and is the culmination of the district general music program. The program's philosophy is to cultivate an understanding and appreciation of this art form, while generating a sense of self-awareness. In the words of Karl Paulnack, "Music is a basic need of human survival. Music is one of the ways we make sense of our lives, one of the ways in which we express feelings when we have no words, a way for us to understand things with our hearts when we can't with our minds

GRADE 6

BAND – Twice in a 6-Day Cycle - year course

The grade 6 band is a training ensemble consisting of instruments from the brass, woodwind, and percussion families. Music is selected based on the ability of the incoming fifth grade students. The emphasis is placed on beginning rehearsal techniques and developing a concert band sound.

CHORUS - Twice in a 6-Day Cycle - year course

The grade six chorus rehearses two days per cycle. The emphasis is placed on learning to sing two- and three-part songs in preparation for their concert performances, while continuing to develop proper vocal technique and performance strategies. . Music is selected based on the ability of the students.

Band students interested in taking chorus will rehearse one day per cycle. Opportunities will be made to rehearse both sections in a combined setting.

GENERAL MUSIC - 18 weeks - 3x in a 6-Day Cycle

Grade six general music is a semester course required of all students. The course continues the study of the elements of music, such as rhythm, melody, harmony, dynamics, etc, while offering opportunities for the students to express themselves in the form of music. Students will compose music focusing on the various elements, while being exposed to a wide variety of musical styles. Activities are planned to continue musical growth and understanding through composition, creative thinking, and critical analysis. This course will relate to the state standards by asking students to demonstrate originality and artistic expression in the creation and performance of music, to critique and evaluate their own and others' music, and to evaluate the techniques of media in the creation of music. This course is the culmination of the general music program.

GRADE 7

BAND – Twice in a 6-Day Cycle - year course

The grade 7 band students are part of a large concert band. They rehearse as a separate band until a scheduled performance. Then the 7th graders combine with the 8th graders to form the concert band. Emphasis is placed on developing a more rounded and balanced band. Students will play more advanced literature and will have more performance demands.

CHORUS – Twice in a 6-Day Cycle - year course

The 7th grade chorus is a combination of male and female voices, both changed and unchanged, that rehearses two days in a six-day cycle. Emphasis is placed on three-part harmonic singing, developing a balanced choral sound, and developing proper vocal technique through the adolescent voice change. In addition, students will continue to improve performance strategies used at the concerts. Music is selected based on the abilities of the singers. The 7th grade chorus may be combined with other grade levels for special performances, festivals, and concerts.

Band students interested in taking chorus will be scheduled for a chorus class on one day of each cycle in lieu of an exploratory class. Opportunities will be made to rehearse both sections in a combined setting.

JAZZ BAND

Before School Practice Sessions - The jazz band is a highly select group of musicians taken from the seventh and eighth grade. Students in the jazz band should know various scales and be working diligently on their method books. The group includes a limited instrumentation of saxes, flutes, trombones, trumpets, and a rhythm section. This group performs many times during the school year, and students should be willing to be present for ALL rehearsals and performances. Students audition each year for this jazz ensemble.

SELECT CHOIR

The select choir is an auditioned choir of seventh and eighth grade students and meets after school one day per week. Their performances feature music compositions that are at an advanced level for middle school students.

GRADE 8

BAND – Twice in a 6-Day Cycle - year course

This course is for 8th grade students who wish to further their development of playing wind and percussion instruments. At times they combine with the 7th grade band to form a large concert band for performances. The level of the music requires students to practice at home.

CHORUS – Twice in a 6-Day Cycle - year course

The 8th grade chorus consists of both changed and unchanged male and female voices. This course continues to cultivate the skills introduced in earlier grade levels, such as proper vocal technique and music reading, which are honed during rehearsals that are held two days per six-day cycle. In addition to the musical skills developed during middle school, students will foster leadership skills during rehearsals and performances. This chorus may also be combined with other grade levels at the discretion of the director.

Band students interested in taking chorus will be scheduled for chorus class on one day of each cycle in lieu of the exploratory class. Opportunities will be made to rehearse both sections in a combined setting.

JAZZ BAND

Before School Practice Sessions - The jazz band is a highly select group of musicians taken from the seventh and eighth grade. Students in the jazz band should know various scales and be working diligently on their method books. The group includes a limited instrumentation of saxes, flutes, trombones, trumpets, and a rhythm section. This group performs many times during the school year, and students should be willing to be present for ALL rehearsals and performances. Students audition each year for this jazz ensemble.

SELECT CHOIR

The select choir is an auditioned choir of seventh and eighth grade students and meets after school one day per week. Their performances feature music compositions that are at an advanced level for middle school students.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TECHNIQUES

1 x week - year course - Each student, in order to be in one of the ensembles or large performing instrumental groups, must continue to study his/her instrument by enrolling for at least one period per week of instrumental music. A limited number of beginners may be enrolled, depending upon the instrument desired and available time. All lessons are arranged on a rotating basis so that students do not regularly miss the same scheduled class every week. All facets of instrumental music training are emphasized. Students are expected to practice daily at home.

SCIENCE PROGRAM

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE:

The purpose in science instruction in the middle schools is to serve a general education function. That is, science instruction should focus on providing the student with (1) a valid understanding of the nature and purposes of science and of those mental and physical behaviors that characterize science as a human process, (2) a familiarization with certain general principles and concepts of science that have lasting relevancy, and (3) stimulating intellectual encounters with challenging problems involving investigative activities. The goal of preparing the student for future science courses is met by the successful attainment of these more general goals.

Science instruction requires active investigative behavior on the part of students. By coordinating/integrating the middle school science program students are provided with opportunities throughout their middle school experience to reconnect to the themes of Systems and Change. In this manner students and teachers are regularly collecting data on student progress toward learning goals not only during the year but from year to year. The threading of these themes from sixth grade through eighth grade will lead to increased understanding and appreciation for the myriad of connections that exist among and between the branches of Earth, Life, and Physical Science. By *doing* science in addition to learning about science, students are given the opportunity to apply problem solving skills, learned across the curriculum, to real problems they and society as a whole will face.

GRADE 6 Science - 5 x week - year

Sixth grade science provides students with a coordinated science course focused on the themes of systems and change. The course integrates concepts in Life and Physical science with the studies of Astronomy, Meteorology, Waves and Electromagnetic Radiation, Cells, Genetics, and Human Biology. Students will actively engage in scientific and engineering practices and apply crosscutting concepts to deepen their understanding of the core ideas. The learning experiences provided for students will engage them with fundamental questions about the world and with how scientists have investigated and found answers to those questions. Students will have ongoing opportunities to carry out scientific investigations and engineering design projects related to the disciplinary core ideas throughout the course.

GRADE 7 Science - 5 x week - year

Seventh grade science provides students with a coordinated science course focused on the themes of systems and change. The course integrates concepts in Life, Earth, and Physical Science including water and aquatic systems, cells, change over time, human body systems, and waves, sound, and light, as well as examining issues related to human activities. The units of study are as follows: Earth's Waters; Cells & Heredity; Evolution & Classification; Diversity of Living Things; and Human Biology. Students will explore various problem solving techniques used in science as well as the tools scientists use to conduct this research. Students will be producing scientific writing in the form of formal laboratory reports as well as in maintaining informal journals. Hands-on and Minds on inquiry based learning activities will provide students with opportunities to investigate authentic problems and scenarios that are analogous to those faced by scientists in industry as well as the public at large.

GRADE 8 Science - 5 x week - year

The Eighth grade science program provides an introduction to fundamental principles of chemistry and physics, as well as applications of these topics to the ever-changing earth. The units of study are the following: Motion & Force; Waves; Sound, & Light; Changing Earth; and Chemical Interactions. Inquiry, process skills, and direct hands-on experiences enhance students' learning and allow them to be actively involved in the process. These areas of learning will build the framework for future science courses.

Attention will be given to those activities that assist students in their transition to high school science.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social studies in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Middle School is designed to give students knowledge of the development of human civilizations, understanding of the political, cultural, and economic roots of the United States, appreciation of the diverse cultures that are the foundations of modern times, and awareness of and respect for our own multicultural society. The social studies curriculum emphasizes varied skills which include note taking, gathering information, cooperative learning, written and oral communication, interpretation, and analysis of primary sources, and critical thinking skills.

The great record of human experience becomes the laboratory of the social studies program where students study the achievements and conflicts that have faced societies throughout history. The students also study the geographic conditions and social environments that influence past and present decisions. Students examine the decision making process and design solutions for problems confronting the United States and the world today with a focus on understanding the consequences of those choices.

GRADE 6

The primary focus in sixth grade is on world geography. The students explore how physical geography (location and place) and human geography (culture and region) interact to shape the political, economic, social, and cultural features of the world's major regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas). Management and allocation of resources and preservation of the natural environment are central to the course. An issues-centered approach to geography challenges students to think about solutions to important global issues as they are experienced in various places and times.

Students develop skills that include the interpretation of maps, globes, databases, and charts. They engage in research and develop analytical reports. Through public speaking, multimedia presentations, classroom discussion, and simulations, they explore issues including world hunger, pollution, population density, and energy needs. Students use technology to gather and exchange information with other students studying geographic concerns.

GRADE 7

The seventh grade social studies program integrates civics and history in a study of the development of the United States from the Revolutionary period to the Civil War Era. Students develop an understanding of the philosophical and historical developments that led to the democratic institutions we experience today. Students study the Revolutionary period as a way to understand how and why the Constitution was designed as it was, and they investigate both historical and contemporary events and issues that illustrate how the U.S. government operates. In addition, units on major political and social issues, such as current and landmark elections, further help students to understand civics in action. The independent service learning project affords students the opportunity to practice active citizenship.

Besides studying factual content, there is an emphasis on reading a variety of fiction and non-fiction resources including primary source material. There are numerous opportunities for research and the development of expository and analytical writing. Teaching strategies include cooperative learning, journal writing, service learning, inquiry approach to discussions of current issues, and the integration of technology.

GRADE 8

The eighth grade program in social studies builds on students' knowledge of basic geography, civics, culture, history and economics through a study of ancient and medieval civilizations. Students examine the historical roots of the political, social, cultural, and economic systems that were developed in the various regions of the world, and investigate the results of interactions among those systems. Using essential questions such as "How do societies get what they need?" and "What are the consequences of interaction?", students begin to understand how the experiences of past civilizations help us to understand the challenges we face in the modern world.

Students use primary source documents and secondary sources to interpret and evaluate the decisions of the past. They frequently relate the developments in the ancient and middle ages to the political, economic and cultural organizations of today. Emphasis is placed on understanding the contributions of various cultures by studying the literary, philosophical, and artistic traditions throughout the ages and how these contributions shape our own multicultural society. Students develop research, written and oral communication, and critical thinking skills.

RESOURCE CENTER PROGRAM

The Resource Center program enrolls students in the pull-out replacement (POR) classroom and/or in-class resource (ICR) classroom. Instructional responsibility for a Resource Center student is shared between the special education and the general education teachers. The Resource Center program allows students to develop skills, learning strategies and/or attitudes that will enable them to develop and improve their educational competencies. A special education teacher, using a small group approach, provides instruction in the POR setting. Instruction is tailored to meet the academic needs of the pupils enrolled in the class, through a modified curriculum. General and special education teachers deliver the ICR instruction in a general education classroom, using a team teaching approach. All Resource Center students have been identified and classified by the child study team as having specific disabilities which interfere with their learning. Individualized Educational Programs (IEP) have been developed for such learners. This document determines which resource setting is appropriate for the student and what accommodations and/or modifications are necessary to assist learning.

SELF-CONTAINED SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Classified students who require a more specialized education program than the Resource Center receive services in the self-contained. Instruction in the self-contained classes addresses the academic, emotional, and social needs of students whose disabilities require the integration of significantly modified content area proficiencies. As needed, the self-contained program incorporates instruction in the areas of daily living and functional life skills. Academic and functional life skills may also be taught through community based instruction throughout the school year. Students are included in typical academic and non-academic classes whenever they can demonstrate possible success in such a placement.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Speech/language specialists examine, appraise, diagnose, and remediate the speech, voice, and language of children who experience difficulty with these functions. Students may be referred by parents, teachers, and/or a member of the child study team. The presenting speech/language problem must interfere with the educational process in order for the student to be eligible for in school services. Services are offered in accordance with the identified individual needs of the children being served as delineated in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Speech services may be provided in a pull-out setting or within the student's classroom setting. It is also the responsibility of the speech/language specialist to serve as a consultant for the entire staff and to provide materials and suggestions to any teacher who is working with a communication challenged child in the classroom situation. Referrals are made to other specialists (medical, dental) when appropriate.

WORLD LANGUAGES

The World Languages program in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools is committed to helping ALL students acquire an understanding and respect for other people, cultures, contributions, and points of view. We believe that through a long sequence of language study, students' lives are enriched by exposing them to the study of cultures as reflected in language, art, music, geography, and history.

Our nation's expansion into the international arena has made the study of world languages a national priority. Therefore, we are committed to providing a world language sequence that integrates an understanding of the interrelationship between language and culture in the multiethnic community that exists in our global society. Through our program, students will begin or continue to gain proficiency in three modes of communication: interpretive (listening, reading and viewing, interpersonal (speaking and writing), and presentational (speaking and writing.)

The middle school world language program is composed of an exploratory experience in the fifth grade and an opportunity for formal language study in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. French, Italian, and Spanish are the languages offered in the program.

GRADE 6:

In the sixth grade, the students begin to study the language of their choice for three days of a six day cycle. Students are introduced to the target language and culture via units of study that focus on common informal settings and aspects of daily life within a meaningful cultural context. Emphasis is placed on using the language communicatively and instruction is primarily in the target language. Student-centered activities actively engage the learners in demonstrating language proficiency through the interpretive, interpersonal and presentational modes of communication.

GRADE 7:

In the seventh grade, the students continue to study the language of their choice with classes increasing to five days a week. Students learn the target language and culture via thematic units of study that focus on common informal settings and aspects of daily life within meaningful cultural contexts. . Emphasis is placed on using the language communicatively and instruction is primarily in the target language. Student-centered activities actively engage the learners in demonstrating language proficiency through the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication.

GRADE 8:

In the eighth grade, the students continue in their chosen language five days a week. Each course is designed to reenter and build upon previously learned material in units of study that integrate language and culture. There is a continued emphasis on listening and speaking with reinforcement from simple readings and some writing.

Instruction is delivered in the target language. Students will actively apply their language skills through student-centered learning activities that will help them continue to acquire and demonstrate language proficiency through the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication.

DISTRICT-WIDE TESTING

Each year, a district-wide standardized testing program, including measures of readiness for learning, academic achievement, and aptitudes, is administered at appropriate grade levels. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) assessment is administered in the spring of each year for grades 6, 7 and 8. In addition, eighth grade students will also take a standardized test for Science in the Spring. Individual student performance profiles are distributed to parents for these assessments. Student results may be discussed, by appointment, with your student's team of teachers and/or principal.

Results from the testing program provide information for:

1. parents in understanding the achievement levels of their children,
2. teachers in planning instructional programs for both total classes and for individual students within their classes,
3. administrators and supervisors in analyzing, evaluating and revising district-wide curricula and in planning instructional programs to comply with the state requirements, and
4. Board of Education and community members to remain informed of the achievement levels of students.

MIDDLE SCHOOL S.T.A.R. PROGRAM
(STUDENTS TAKING ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY)

The purpose of the S.T.A.R. program is to offer students enrichment opportunities and academic support while simultaneously providing students and teachers with a structure in which to forge close relationships.

TEAM BUILDING (All Grades)

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 will periodically participate in various teambuilding activities. The activities are structured so that students collaborate, problem-solve, exercise interpersonal skills, establish trust, demonstrate respect for others, and strengthen relationships with their teachers and peers. At times, the teambuilding activities may include groups of students from all grade levels working together toward a common goal.

GRADE 6 (Full Year)

Students will participate in activities focused on learning strategies, study skills, organizational skills, and creativity. Additionally, all sixth graders will explore topics related to character education by reacting to typical adolescent situations. These topics include, but are not limited to: trustworthiness, caring, respect, citizenship, fairness, and responsibility.

During the sixth grade year, students will also have the opportunity to read independently and receive academic support from the teachers. The goal is to provide meaningful time during the school day whereby teachers are able to give additional academic support to all students.

GRADE 7 (One Semester)

Students will participate in character education, as well as expanded study/organizational skills activities. These activities offer students a valuable personal connection between making decisions and problem solving. Through this journey, students will explore character education topics such as growing up, dealing with peer pressure, respecting others, drug and alcohol awareness, and preventing conflicts.

Additionally, students will have the opportunity to have an Independent Development Day. This day will provide time for students to organize, complete work, and study under the guidance of a teacher.

GRADE 8 (One Semester)

Students will participate in a *High School Exploration Project*. This activity offers students a valuable personal connection between learning and the high school planning process. Students will explore dreams and goals for their life's pursuits. Students will examine choices they must make in order to have a successful path into and during high school. Through this journey students will engage in a series of activities such as an online interest survey and a roundtable discussion with current high school students.

Additionally, students will explore character development through the use of movies. Through interactive activities and short video clips, students will work collaboratively in exploring various character education themes.

Finally, students will have the opportunity to have an Independent Development Day. This day will provide time for students to organize, complete work, and study with the facilitation of a teacher.