

SOUTH COLONIE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Middle School Curriculum GUIDE

A Parent's Guide
to the Grades 5-8
Middle School
Curriculum

Lisha Kill • Sand Creek

"PREPARING WORLD CLASS CITIZENS"



Dear PARENTS

This publication is designed to provide an overview of the major areas of study for grades 5 through 8 in both our middle schools in the South Colonie Central School District.

The curriculum for our middle schools is guided by leadership from the following individuals and groups:

- * *Assistant superintendent for instruction;*
- * *middle school principals and associate principals;*
- * *K-12 instructional supervisors;*
- * *site-based committees representative of instructional and support staff and parents;*
- * *Curriculum Review Board consisting of teachers, administrators, students, parents and teachers of special areas.*

The superintendent and Board of Education carefully review the recommendations of these groups. We continually strive to offer the best possible programs for all students.

Please use this handbook as a guide to the curriculum in your child's classroom. If you have questions about the school curriculum, please feel free to contact your child's teacher, the middle school principal, the instructional supervisors, or the assistant superintendent for instruction.

Sincerely,

Your South Colonie Middle School Principals

MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Our middle schools are an educational response to the needs and characteristics of youngsters in early adolescence. A middle school organization responds to the full range of intellectual, physical, social, emotional and developmental needs.

Our middle school is based on three fundamental premises:

1. Young people going through the rapid growth and extensive maturation that occurs in early adolescence need an educational program that is distinctively different from either the elementary school or the high school.
2. The academic needs of middle school students are affected greatly by their physical, social and emotional needs, which should be addressed in the school program.
3. The developmental diversity of youngsters from 10-14 years of age makes it a challenge to organize an educational program that adequately responds to the needs of all students. Therefore, in order to be responsive to the needs of early adolescents, our middle schools should include the following:
 - * A strong academic program that promotes excellence and success while keeping in mind the intellectual development and capacity of 10-14 year olds.
 - * Organizational structure that connects groups of students and staff together to provide a form of security and structure for young adolescents that promotes personal adult-student interactions.
 - * A schedule that allows flexibility in the school day to promote instructional activities to best meet the unique and varying needs of students.
 - * Exploratory experiences designed to provide learning opportunities that help youngsters explore their changing needs, aptitudes, and interests.
 - * A grade 7-8 guidance program that provides ongoing activities to help students deal with the changes and challenges of early adolescence and facilitates the transition to an all Regents high school.
 - * Opportunities both in and out of the school day for positive, meaningful socialization appropriate for 10-14 year olds.
 - * Planned time on a regular basis for physical activity, physical release, and fun activities.
 - * A variety of school sponsored competitive and cooperative activities that focus on participation and personal development.
 - * A discipline plan that promotes self-responsibility, self-discipline and assists students in respecting the rights of others.



Standards

"All Students Can Learn Well"

We value: integrity, excellence, self-worth, caring, inclusion, individuality, responsibility, security, cooperation, learning, and optimism.

FILTERS FOR ACTION

- * We will make only decisions that are in the best interest of students.
- * We will not tolerate any action or circumstance that degrades any person.
- * We will not grant tenure of a permanent appointment to anyone that demonstrates less than excellence.
- * No new program will be accepted unless parents are involved in the development and the decision, appropriate provisions for effective staff development are made, adequate resources are provided, and a program assessment component is included.
- * We will practice participatory management. (1) Those closest to the job know it best. (2) Strategic information flows downward and operational information flows upward. (3) Decisions should be made at the lowest appropriate level. (4) Accountability is commensurate with authority.

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EACH STUDENT WILL DEMONSTRATE:

- * Self-esteem;
- * The ability to make responsible choices;
- * Personal visions and plans to achieve them;
- * The use of a second language;
- * The understanding, respect and acceptance of people of different race, sex, ability, cultural heritage, national origin, religion, and political, economic and social background;
- * The skills to acquire, interpret and transmit information;
- * Mastery of all essential learner objectives at all levels of thinking; and
- * The ability to work with others to reach common goals.





New York State Assessments in English Language Arts & Mathematics

Students will take more challenging state tests in grades 5-8. The tests provide evidence of students' progress on the NYS Learning Standards in English language arts and mathematics. Students need to show not only basic skills in English and mathematics, but also to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned. In addition to answering multiple choice questions that measure reading comprehension, students will write compositions to explain their understanding of what they have heard and read, and to demonstrate their ability to use spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence formation, and paragraphing skills. They will also support their solutions to mathematics problems,

showing the steps they used in the solution and explaining the mathematical processes and concepts involved.

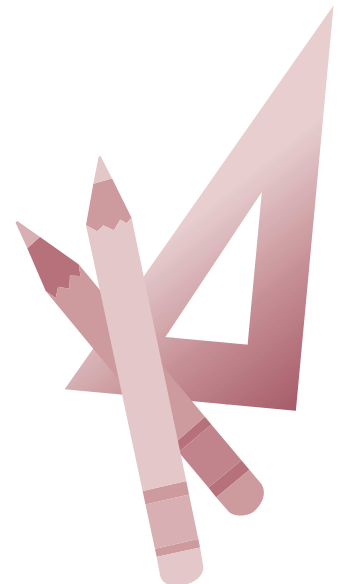
ASSESSMENTS INCLUDE:

- Grade 8 English Language Arts
- Grade 8 Mathematics
- Grade 8 Science Performance Test
- Grade 8 Science Written Test
- Grade 8 Social Studies
- Intermediate-Level Technology Education
- Grade 8 Proficiency Examination in French and Spanish
- Test of New York State Standards grades 5, 6, 7 (TONYSS)

Academic Intervention Services for Students

Middle school students may need support to achieve academic success. At Sand Creek and Lisha Kill we offer the following support services:

- Special Education Programs
- Reading and Writing Lab
- Math Lab
- Foreign Language Lab
- English as a Second Language
- Saturday Morning School
- Structured Opportunity to Succeed (SOS)
- After School Academic Assistance from Classroom Teachers
- Pupil Personnel Services - Guidance Counselor, Social Workers, and School Psychologists
- Summer School
- Review Sessions for State Assessments and Regents Examinations
- New Directions Leadership Group
- Lightspan Game Room
- R.E.A.P. (Reaching Excellence in Academic Performance)
- CAI (Computer Assisted Instruction)



Special Education Programs

Grades 5-8

The South Colonie Special Education Department offers a full continuum of services at the middle school level. Working from least restrictive settings, we offer consultant teacher services. This type of service is used for students who are 100% integrated in the general education setting. The special education teacher can provide consultation to the classroom teacher (i.e., assist the teacher in learning how to present material due to student's learning style and/or disability) and can also provide some direct consultation to the student if needed.

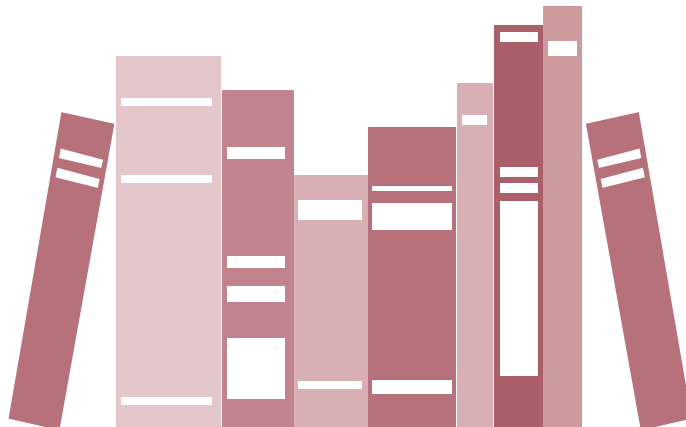
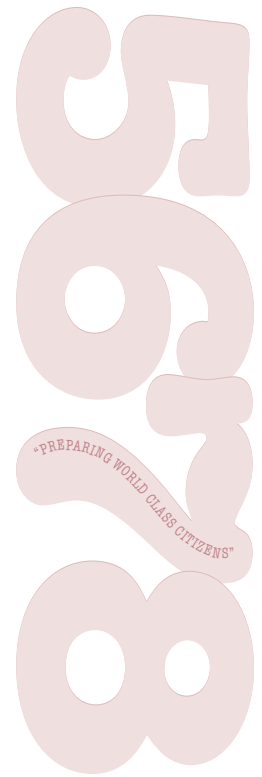
Resource room services are also provided at the middle schools. This service can take place either in the general education classroom or in a smaller setting out of the classroom. This service has a staffing ratio of one special education teacher to five disabled students.

The next level of service is for the student who presents with more significant learning challenges, either behaviorally or academically. This program is called the Integrated I Program. Special education students attend general education classes with the assistance of a special education teacher and/or teaching assistant and/or classroom monitor. This provides for a teaching situation that is enhanced and provides both a general and special education teacher within the general classroom setting. Class lessons are adapted and modified according to the student's learning needs. These students have maximum exposure to general education curriculum, the staffing ratio is up to twelve

students, one special education teacher and sometimes a teaching assistant or monitor.

The Integrated II Program provides a segregated learning setting for special education students. These students, either due to severe academic or behavioral concerns, are unable to function successfully within the general education environment even with the appropriate services and supports. These students are exposed to appropriate grade level curriculum but require a great deal of modification and adaptation. At this level, we also offer life skills programming in conjunction with the aforementioned services. Students who are not able to work toward the Regents tests, are working toward their goals of their IEP and are acquiring training and skills in areas which will prepare them for life beyond high school. Staffing is also at the 12:1:1 ratio.

The last type of service program offered at this time in the middle school is a self-contained program that is comprised of students that are emotionally disabled and have great difficulty even with support in the general education setting. These students are taught the general education curriculum in a highly individualized manner. In addition to these teaching services, a full array of related services are available to middle school special education students. These include: speech, occupational and physical therapy, counseling, as well as teaching of the visually impaired, orientation and mobility, or rehab therapy if needed.



Curriculum for: **Language Arts**

The goal of the New York State Standards in English Language Arts is to foster students' development as listeners, speakers, readers and writers in four areas:

✱ **STANDARD 1**

For Information and Understanding

Teachers identify that students are making progress toward this standard by measuring their ability to: write research reports using various sources of information; ask probing questions and take notes; and organize information by writing "how to" reports.

✱ **STANDARD 2**

For Literary Response and Expression

Teachers identify that students are making progress toward this standard by: evaluating their original writing pieces using rubrics; regularly checking students' journal entries to determine if their responses to literature are rich and insightful; and grading student writing to ensure it accurately reflects the attributes of a given mode.

✱ **STANDARD 3**

For Critical Analysis and Evaluation

Teachers identify that students are making progress toward this standard by: evaluating their persuasive essays, book reviews, etc., using rubrics developed to assess the strength and effectiveness of student arguments; judging students' ability to support and maintain a position during classroom debates, trials, etc.; and evaluating student responses to literature using rubrics designed to identify the connections made and the depth of the analysis completed.

✱ **STANDARD 4**

For Social Interaction

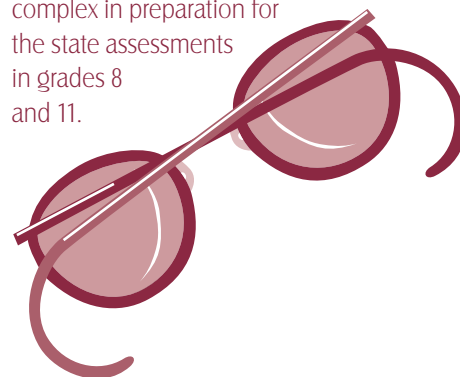
Teachers identify that students are making progress toward this standard by evaluating their ability to: "read between the lines" in social correspondence; write a business letter in response to a company; use the appropriate voice for a given audience; work as a part of a group to achieve a common goal.

GRADES 5-6

The goal of the fifth grade language arts curriculum is to implement the New York State English Language Arts Standards in developmentally appropriate ways at the fifth grade level. Fifth grade teachers work with their students to build on the language skills they have already developed at the elementary level and to prepare them for what is expected of them as language users in middle school and high school.

The goal of the sixth grade language arts curriculum is to build on those skills addressed in the fifth grade curriculum. The students in grade six will be exposed to a variety of opportunities designed to

strengthen their skills as readers, writers, listeners and speakers in the context of the New York State Standards in English Language Arts. Each experience will become increasingly richer and more complex in preparation for the state assessments in grades 8 and 11.



GRADES 7-8

Components of exemplary classrooms include substantial blocks of time devoted to sustained, independent reading and writing; strategically planned instruction about books and writing; and teacher as well as student-led discussions about writing and books.

The goal of our grade 7 English Language Arts program is to provide students with a variety of opportunities to grow as readers, writers, listeners and speakers.

The goal of our grade 8 English Language Arts program is to provide students with a variety of experiences that build on their program in grade 7 and subsequently prepare them to meet the demands of the new state assessment in grade 8.

In particular, reading and writing instruction will:

- Include opportunities for students to read, write, and interact in a range of instructional groupings such as whole group, small group, pairs and individual.
- Use authentic literature to promote students' understanding of literary elements.
- Use nonfiction materials to enhance content area reading, writing, and knowledge.

- Provide students with examples of exemplary literature across all genres that encourage reflection and awareness of the world through a balance in gender, ethnicity, and multicultural perspectives.
- Provide students with models of effective strategies to comprehend a range of modes of writing.
- Promote the use of standard writing conventions within the context of authentic writing tasks.
- Devote substantial blocks of time for reading and writing at differentiated instructional levels.
- Include time for student-led discussions about books and writing.
- Provide models and encourage students to be strategic readers, writers, thinkers, and communicators.
- Assess student progress using many formats to improve instruction and communicate progress to students, teachers, parents and administrators.
- Assist students in their effort to meet the state requirements by encouraging them to read a minimum of 25 books across all subject areas per year and write 1000 words per month.

Curriculum for: **Social Studies**

GRADE 5

The grade 5 social studies program stresses geographic, economic, and cultural understandings related to the United States, Canada, and nations in Latin America today. These perspectives build on and reinforce historic and political content about the United States included in the grade 4 social studies program.

Topics at the fifth grade level include:

- History of the United States, Canada and Latin America
- The contribution of the different ethnic, national and religious groups
- Key turning points and events in the histories of Canada, Latin America and the United States
- Industrial growth, urbanization and development in the Western Hemisphere
- Geography of the United States, Canada and Latin America
- Maps and other geographic representations
- How political boundaries change over time
- Human actions and their affect on geography
- The economies of the United States, Canada and Latin America
- Concepts such as scarcity, supply and demand, markets, resources, productivity and opportunity costs
- The interdependence of North, Central and South America, as well as the global community
- How technology has influenced the standard of living in the Western Hemisphere
- The governments of the United States, Canada and Latin America
- How constitutions, rules, and laws are developed in democratic societies
- How legal, political and historic documents define the values, beliefs and principles of constitutional democracy
- How the roles of citizenship are defined by different constitutions in the Western Hemisphere

GRADE 6

The grade 6 social studies program emphasizes the interdependence of all people, keying on the Eastern Hemisphere. The grade 6 program focuses on a social science perspective emphasizing the interaction of geography and economics. The core disciplines of geography and economics are used to develop and draw relationships and understanding about social, political and historic aspects of life in the Eastern Hemisphere.

Topics at the sixth grade level include:

- History of the Eastern Hemisphere nations
- The Neolithic Revolution and its impact on human development
- Religions and other belief systems
- The river valley civilizations
- The contributions of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance
- Geography of Eastern Hemisphere nations
- Geographic features and climatic conditions in the Eastern Hemisphere influence land use
- The migration of people has led to cultural diffusion
- The environment is affected by people as they interact with it
- Economies of Eastern Hemisphere nations
- The way resources are used impact the economic, political and historic aspects of life
- Different economic systems have evolved to deal with economic decision making
- The decision making process in market and command economies
- Governments of Eastern Hemisphere nations
- Governments change over time and place

GRADE 7

Social Studies in grade 7 focuses on a chronological study of the history of the United States and New York State's role within it. The seventh grade course traces United States history, including the political, geographic, economic and social trends

from the early Native Americans to the Civil War.

Topics at the seventh grade level include:

- The Iroquois nations of New York State
- European exploration and settlement of North America
- Social history of colonial America
- The causes of the American Revolution
- The articles of Confederation
- The constitution of the United States and the Constitution of New York State
- The new government and the new nation
- The presidency of Andrew Jackson
- The division of the United States and the causes of the Civil War

GRADE 8

Social studies in grade 8 continues the chronological study of the history of the United States that was begun in grade 7. The eighth grade course traces United States history, including the political, geographic, economic and social trends, from the Civil War to the present.

Beginning in June of 2001, all eighth graders in the State of New York will be taking the new state Social Studies Exam. This test will evaluate the students' performance at the seventh and eighth grade levels in social studies, as well as predict future performance on state Regents exams in high school.

Basic knowledge of the history of the United States and New York State will be tested and students will be asked to apply and interpret this knowledge. In addition to multiple choice questions, students will be asked to interpret, in writing: historical quotes, maps, charts, etc. They will also be expected to use and analyze historical primary source documents.

Topics at the eighth grade level include:

- Results of the Civil War
- Industrialization
- The Progressive Movement
- The United States Expansionism
- World War I, Roaring 20's
- Great Depression, World War II
- United States in the Cold War
- The United States in the 20th Century

Curriculum for: **Mathematics**

GRADES 5-6

The 5th grade mathematics program builds on those skills and concepts introduced in grades K-4. Fractions and decimals are given additional significance at this grade level. Mathematical reasoning and problem solving also receive increased attention.

The focus of 6th grade mathematics is to build on those skills and concepts introduced in grades K-5. Continued work in fractions, decimals and percents with respect to the operations is accomplished. Problem solving, reasoning and thinking mathematically are also a focus.

The following are the key areas of study:

Mathematical reasoning

- Problem solving

Numbers and numeration

- recognize, represent and use numbers in a variety of equivalent forms
- ratio, proportion and percent

Operation

- consistent and accurate operations with decimals and rational numbers

Modeling/multiple representation

- to provide a means of presenting, interpreting and connecting mathematical information
- graphs and tables
- geometry

Uncertainty

- probability and statistics
- estimation

Patterns/Functions

- recognize, describe and generalize patterns and functions

Measurement

- describe and compare objects and data
- understand area, volume, perimeter and circumference

GRADES 7-8

In preparation for the 8th grade New York State Mathematics Assessment, the focus is to improve the problem-solving and reasoning abilities of the students, while continuing to refine their understanding of mathematical skills and concepts. Seventh grade builds upon the foundation of many of the topics that are introduced in sixth grade. Students use scientific calculators and work on numerous real life applications. Solutions involve showing the steps they used and explaining the mathematical processes and concepts. Many topics are introduced in 7th grade and pursued in more depth at 8th grade.

The following topics are the major areas of study:

Mathematical Reasoning

- Employ problem solving strategies
- Express solutions clearly and logically using appropriate mathematical notation, terms, and language

Number and Numeration

- Recognize, represent, and use numbers in a variety of equivalent forms (integer, fraction, decimal, percent, exponential, expanded, and scientific notation)
- Understand ratio, proportion, and percent

Operations

- Consistently and accurately perform operations on integers, decimals, and rational numbers

Modeling/Multiple Representation

- To provide a means of presenting, interpreting, communicating and connecting mathematical information and relationships
- Use maps and scale drawings to represent real objects or places
- Understand graphs and tables
- Understand Geometry and measurement

Measurement

- To describe and compare objects and data
- Understand Area, Volume, Perimeter, and Circumference
- Utilize Trigonometry
- Utilize statistical information

Uncertainty

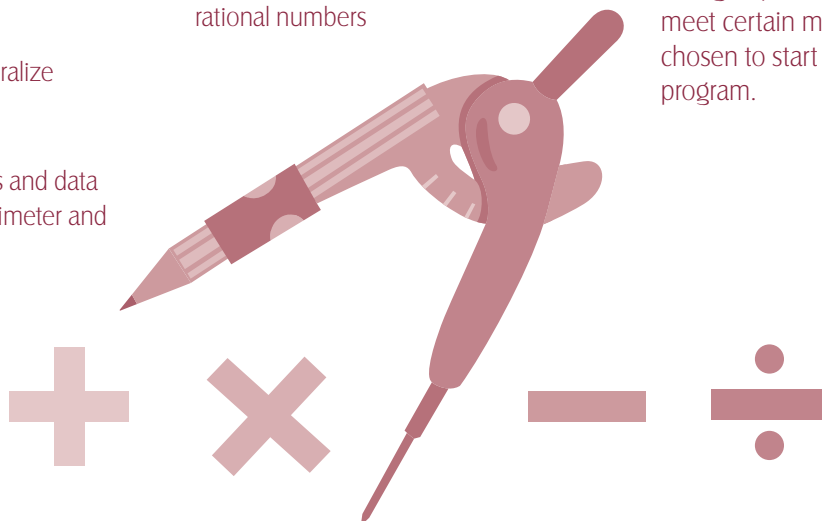
- Use ideas of uncertainty to illustrate that mathematics involves more than exactness when dealing with everyday situations
- Probability and Statistics
- Estimation

Patterns/Functions

- Recognize, describe, and generalize a wide variety of patterns and functions (number patterns, geometric patterns, and patterns that appear in graphs and tables)

ACCELERATED MATHEMATICS

A group of 8th grade students who meet certain mathematics criteria, will be chosen to start the Math I High School program.



Curriculum for: **Art**

GRADES 5-6

The goal of the Middle School Art Program is to present students with art experiences based on National, New York State and South Colonie Standards. We strive to enable our students to:

- * Value art from historical and aesthetic perspectives
- * Learn the life skill of creative and analytic problem solving
- * Develop personal artistic growth

Students will be able to:

1. understand the historical context in which art works are made
2. create artwork based upon the aesthetic values of specific time periods, cultures or artists
 - Coat of Arms
 - Egyptian
 - Mexican
 - American Colonial
 - Chagall
 - Pollock
 - Seurat
3. Coordinate specific art lessons with other subject areas
 - History
 - Science
 - Literature
 - Technology
4. Use proper descriptive vocabulary in critiques
5. Use an array of artistic mediums to create artworks
 - Paint
 - Pencils
 - Printmaking
 - Computer
 - Oil Pastels
 - Yarn
 - Clay
6. Draw contour line compositions from observation
7. Use brainstorming in group and individual settings

GRADES 7-8

The goal of the Middle School Art Program is to present students with art experiences based on National, New York State and South Colonie Standards. We strive to enable our students to:

- * Value art from historical and aesthetic perspectives
- * Learn the life skill of creative and analytic problem solving, and
- * Develop personal artistic growth

In seventh and eighth grade the students will be able to:

1. Practice observation drawing with daily sketches
2. Create a relief sculpture with textures and patterns using the subtractive method
3. Create a small clay sculpture inspired by Pop art that closely matches a real food object in form, texture and color
4. Learn and value the elements of art and the principles of design during the process of creating their art works
5. Use overlapping, size, placement, detail, atmospheric and one point perspective to create a drawing of a city scene
6. Become familiar with Gothic and Roman styles of lettering
7. Learn the process of creating an enlargement of an art work using the grid method
8. Analyze and make informed judgments about their own art works and others through group critiques
9. Explore community sculpture and its role in our American culture
10. Use brainstorming in the process of creating art works
11. Identify specific art movements
12. Draw objects from observations and shade these objects



Curriculum for: **Science**

GRADE 5

Science at the fifth grade level includes:

Living Things

- Understanding life functions
- Classifying organisms

Viruses and Bacteria

- Effect of viruses and bacteria on health
- Protists and fungi

Introduction to Plants

- The plant kingdom
- Photosynthesis
- Mosses and ferns

Seed Plants

- Gymnosperms and angiosperms
- Plant growth and response

Animals

- Invertebrates - sponges, worms, mollusks
- Anthropoids, echinoderms
- Cold blooded vertebrates - fishes, amphibians, reptiles
- Warm blooded vertebrates - birds and mammals

Human Biology and Health

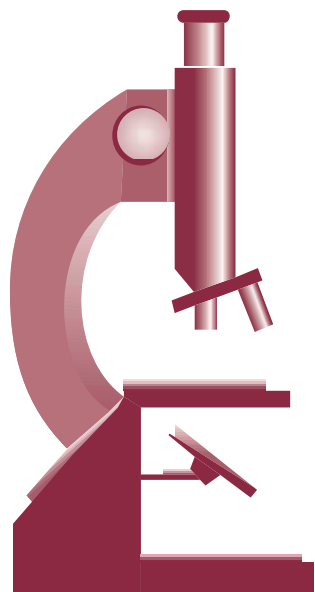
- Body systems
- Bone, muscle and skin
- Food and digestion
- Circulatory system

Activities

- Frog dissection, greenhouse activities

Technology Challenge

- Building an effective electromagnet



GRADE 6

Science at the sixth grade level includes:

Cells and Heredity

- Cell Structure and Function
- Cell Processes and Energy
- Genetics: The Science of Heredity
- Modern Genetics
- Changes Over Time

Human Biology and Health

- Respiration and Excretion
- Fighting Disease
- The Nervous System
- The Endocrine System and Reproduction

Environmental Science

- Populations and Communities
- Ecosystems and Biomes
- Living Resources
- Land and Soil Resources
- Air and Water Resources
- Energy Resources

Additional Activities

- Dissection of preserved materials
- Developing Hypotheses
- Controlling variables
- Observing
- Creating data tables
- Measuring
- Calculating
- Predicting
- Graphing data
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Manipulating a compound microscope to view microscopic objects
- Preparing a wet mount slide
- Designing and using a Punnett square to predict the probability of certain traits

Technology Challenge

- Building an effective electric motor

GRADE 7

Physical Science is studied in the seventh grade. Physical science is broken down into two parts: chemistry and physics.

Chemistry

- Metrics
- Scientific notation
- Matter and its phases

- The atom, atomic structure
 - Periodic table
 - Compounds and mixtures
 - Acids and bases
 - Chemical reactions and chemical bonds
- #### Physics
- Newton's 1st, 2nd and 3rd Laws of Motion
 - Law of gravity
 - Simple machines
 - Energy
 - Heat and temperature
 - Waves, light and sound
 - Electricity and magnetism

GRADE 8

A comprehensive coverage of earth science is provided for eighth grade.

Geology

- Size, shape layers of planets
- Characteristics of minerals
- Map reading skills

Astronomy

- Origin of the solar system
- Motion of the planets
- Gravity
- Characteristics of the moon and stars

Meteorology

- Types of weather systems
- Erosion and weathering
- Climate

Water systems

- Fresh water systems
- Ground water systems
- Oceans

Energy Sources

- Fossil fuels
- Pollution
- Alternative energy resources/energy conservation

Regents earth science is offered for students who excel in science and are recommended to take the course. In addition to the curriculum above, Regents students are required to complete one laboratory experiment a week after school hours. The earth science teachers run these laboratory experiences.

Curriculum for: **Foreign Language**

GRADE 5

Students in the 5th grade participate in either French or Spanish class every other day. The focus of the 5th grade foreign language program is on basic vocabulary acquisition, communicating in the target language and culture. Through communicative activities, songs, the language computer lab, games and realia, students study topics such as greetings, colors, numbers, foods, clothing, animals and much more.

GRADE 6

The 6th grade foreign language program is a continuation of the 5th grade curriculum. Students review material from the previous year while learning new vocabulary such as the alphabet, classroom objects, weather phrases, feelings, and the house. The emphasis of the 6th grade

program is on communication, culture and vocabulary acquisition with an introduction to reading and writing in the target language. Students participate in skits, the language computer lab, games, TPR storytelling in addition to several other exciting activities.

GRADE 7

The focus of the 7th grade foreign language program is to increase the students' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills along with an in depth look at the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries around the world. In class students participate in TPR storytelling activities. Through stories in the target language, students acquire grammatical structures and patterns such as the present tense, subject pronouns, the personal "a" and adjective agreement. The students also attend the

foreign language computer lab where they have the opportunity to receive additional comprehensible input in the target language.

GRADE 8

In 8th grade, students further develop their skills and cultural knowledge. Great emphasis is put on students' output such as speaking and writing to prepare them for the New York State Second Language Proficiency Examination. This exam will be the final test in 8th grade foreign language and, students who pass it, will earn one unit of credit toward graduation. Eighth graders will also continue the use of TPR storytelling and acquire higher-level grammatical structures such as stem-changing verbs, object pronouns, idiomatic expressions with "tener" and the preterite tense. Students also use the foreign language computer lab to reinforce skills and vocabulary learned in class.

Curriculum for: **Music**

GRADES 5 AND 6

General Music: Fifth and sixth grade general music is provided to every student in the district. We strive to involve the students in as many diverse musical experiences as possible by including singing, dancing, performing, listening and describing various musical styles as an integral part of the core curriculum.

The students will:

- identify, categorize and describe the vocal ranges and the changing voice
- perform a variety of vocal pieces
- describe and identify styles of American music such as Spirituals, Blues, Jazz and Rock and Roll
- perform a variety of musical styles at the keyboard
- read and write simple melodies and rhythmic examples
- identify and describe the music and composers of the Classical and Romantic time periods

BAND

Fifth grade is the first opportunity for students to participate in the band program. Students are involved in learning both how to perform correctly on their individual instrument and how to work together in a large group rehearsal. Sixth grade band continues to reinforce and build upon those skills acquired through participation at the fifth grade level. Students perform in three scheduled concerts throughout the school year and also have additional opportunities to perform outside of school in our community. In addition to performing group rehearsal, students receive a small group lesson once a week for 30 minutes to develop their musical skills.

The students will:

- demonstrate correct assembly, hand position and technique on their instrument
- identify musical symbols, notes and rhythms

- perform music, using their knowledge of note and rhythm reading
- listen to, evaluate and describe various styles of music
- experience positive and successful musical performances
- apply knowledge of music reading to performing music at sight

ORCHESTRA

After being introduced to the string instruments at the fourth grade level, fifth and sixth grade students have the opportunity to continue their participation as a member of the fifth and sixth grade orchestra program. Orchestra meets regularly and students in the orchestra program perform in three scheduled concerts throughout the school year. Students also receive a small group lesson once a week for 30 minutes to enhance and develop their musical skills.

Curriculum for: **Music** – continued

The students will:

- identify musical symbols and notes
- perform simple scales and arpeggios
- develop bowing and left hand fingering techniques
- perform music using correct notes, rhythms and style
- experience pride after successful performances for the school and community
- apply knowledge of music reading to performing music at sight

CHORUS

Fifth grade is the first time that students have an opportunity to sing in a large choral group. This experience continues at the sixth grade level as the students work to develop their choral ensemble skills. Chorus meets regularly and students in the choral program perform in three scheduled concerts throughout the school year. Particular emphasis is placed on exposing students to a wide variety of musical styles and cultures.

The students will:

- perform music of all musical time periods, styles and languages
- perform songs with expression demonstrating good tone and diction
- perform music using correct vocal techniques such as phrasing and breath support
- demonstrate appropriate concert behaviors in performance situations
- apply knowledge of musical symbols to reading music
- listen to and evaluate choral performances

GRADES 7 AND 8

General Music: Seventh grade general music is a required course for students who are not participating in the band, chorus or orchestra programs. This course meets every other day for the entire year and allows students to continue to explore reading music notes and learning about composers and musical time periods.

The students will:

- read music notes and simple rhythms
- identify musical symbols
- perform simple melodic and rhythmic examples on the recorder and keyboard
- identify and describe music and composers of the Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Twentieth Century musical time periods
- discuss and experience different styles and aspects of music

BAND AND ORCHESTRA

Seventh and eighth grade band and orchestra build on the techniques developed at the fifth and sixth grade level and propel the students to a higher level of musicality. The literature becomes increasingly challenging, requiring students to play with more confidence and independence. Students continue to meet for large group rehearsals every other school day and have small group lessons for 30 minutes once a week. Performances

include regularly scheduled concerts and special community performances and events in which students are asked to participate.

The students will:

- read and perform advanced music, utilizing knowledge of notes, rhythms and musical symbols
- perform a wide variety of musical literature from different time periods and cultures
- perform scales, arpeggios and other exercises to continue to develop technique
- apply knowledge of music reading to performing music at sight
- listen to and evaluate musical performances
- experience positive and successful performances for both the school and community

CHORUS

Seventh and eighth grade chorus rehearses every other school day to prepare the students to perform in three scheduled concerts throughout the school year. Chorus provides a unique musical experience to all of its members as it continues to develop the musical ensemble skills gained by the students at the fifth and sixth grade level. The students sing in two and three part harmony and learn how to sing with more advanced tone and technique.

The students will:

- demonstrate appropriate concert behavior in performance situations
- perform music using correct vocal techniques
- experience music from all time periods, styles and cultures
- apply knowledge of musical symbols to reading music
- develop large group rehearsal techniques



Curriculum for: **Physical Education**

GRADES 5-8

The purpose of the 5-8 physical education program is to provide a skill foundation in many physical activities. Emphasis is placed upon skill progression and development rather than on the “play” of the activity.

ADAPTIVE PE

Students who are unable to participate fully in a regular physical education class due to an injury or other physical limitation may satisfy their requirements by being placed in a modified physical education environment. Topics of study will be determined by consultation with the attending physicians to guarantee participation appropriate to the student’s capabilities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION STANDARDS

Standard 1 – Personal Health & Fitness

Students will have the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness, participate in physical activity and maintain personal health.

- Assessment Methods: written tests, rubrics, student contract, teacher observation, skills performance, and self-evaluation

Standard 2 – A Safe and Healthy Environment

Students will acquire the knowledge and ability necessary to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.

- Assessment Methods: teacher observation, rubrics, written tests, peer assessment, and self-assessment

Standard 3 – Resource Management

Students will understand and be able to manage their personal and community resources.

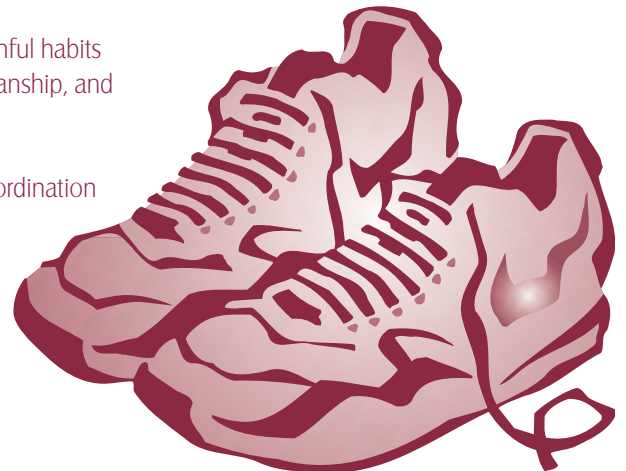
- Assessment Methods: program enrollment, written test, and attendance and feedback from students, parents, and program directors

Objectives

- Possess a lifelong desire to maintain a high level of physical fitness
- Maintain a lifestyle with healthful habits
- Develop self-control, sportsmanship, and respect for others
- Develop lifetime sports skills
- Develop body mechanics, coordination and rhythms to live better physically
- Possess a personal sense of self-confidence and pride

PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

- Flag Football
- Speedball
- Pickleball
- Soccer
- Cooperation/trust-building games
- Team handball
- Fitness activities
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Softball
- Lacrosse
- Floor hockey
- Modified weight-training
- Badminton
- Self-defense
- Wrestling
- Track & field



Curriculum for: **Health**

GRADES 7 AND 8

The seventh and eighth grade health education curricula focus on the changes, challenges and choices that face today’s adolescents. The program is designed to help students develop positive attitudes and life-long wellness.

The objectives of the seventh and eighth grade health education curricula include but are not limited to:

Personal Health and Fitness

Students will have the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness, participate in physical activity, and maintain personal health.

A Safe and Healthy Environment

Students will acquire knowledge and ability necessary to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.

Resource Management

Students will understand and be able to manage their personal and community resources.

Issues and topics addressed by the curricula are:

- Interpersonal Skills
 - self-confidence
 - stress management
 - anger management and conflict resolution
 - peer pressure and refusal skills

- building tolerance
- violence prevention
- family and peer relationships
- goal setting for healthy lifestyles
- effective communication
- Personal hygiene and sleep
- Nutrition and weight management
- Growth and development
- Drug education – including alcohol and tobacco
- Physical fitness
- Communicable diseases
- AIDS education
- CPR
- Environmental responsibilities
- Service learning

Curriculum for: **Home & Careers**

GRADES 7 AND 8

PURPOSE AND CONTENT:

Home and Career skills program at the middle school empowers students to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse, global society. The course is designed to educate adolescents about their present and future responsibilities as family members, consumers, home managers, and wage earners. Through active participation and hands-on learning, students develop a better understanding of themselves and their world. All seventh and eighth grade students are required to receive Home and Career skills instruction. This course meets everyday for one quarter.

SEVENTH GRADE:

Process Skills

- Decision Making strategies
- Problem Solving techniques
- Independent Living Skills

Personal Development

- Self Image
- Values Exploration Family
- Relationship Issues
- Communication Process
- Conflict Resolution

Nutrition Management

- Diet and Health
- Eating Patterns

Seventh Grade Objectives:

- Promote optimal growth and development of self, family members and others across the life span
- Analyze how the well being of individuals and society is dependent on the family
- Evaluate nutritional and wellness practices to promote individual and family well being across the life span

EIGHTH GRADE

Career Planning

- Introduction to Work
- Career Goal Setting
- Career Exploration

Consumerism

- Rights and Responsibilities
- Product Comparison
- Advertising Impact
- Consumer Behavior
- Money Management
- Spending Habits
- Budgeting

Eighth Grade Objectives

- Integrate multiple life roles to enable individuals to connect family, career and community responsibilities
- Demonstrate respectful and caring relationships in the family, workplace and community

Library Media Center

The library media center in each school offers a variety of services to students, staff and the community. Each has collections of books, magazines, video tapes and computer software. The collections are integral to the teaching program in all curricular areas and meet the recreational and informational needs of the students.

Students have many opportunities throughout the day to visit the media center for book selection or to seek answers to

reference questions. Library instruction focuses on the integration of library skills with classroom curriculum. Library media specialists encourage students to recognize the importance of reading a variety of literature.

The South Colonie library curriculum is based on the New York State Learning Standards, which require integration of research skills in all academic areas. The goal of our media centers is to develop

independent library users and lifelong readers.

The integration of technology in the library media center is accomplished through a bank of computers available for student use. An open access computer lab is connected to the library to assist larger numbers of students when necessary. Students have supervised access to the Internet in both the library and the computer lab.

D.A.R.E.

The D.A.R.E. program is an officer-led, in-classroom, anti-drug, anti-gang, anti-violence education program and currently is taught in the middle schools at the 5th grade level. The program was developed by health education specialists and specially trained police officers teach a course in drug resistance and violence avoidance techniques.

Lessons focus on:

- 1) providing students with accurate information about alcohol and drugs;
- 2) teaching students decision-making skills
- 3) showing students how to resist peer pressure; and
- 4) giving students ideas for alternatives to drug use and violence.

D.A.R.E. provides children with information and skills they need to live drug and violence free lives. It establishes positive relationships between law enforcement and students, teachers, parents and other members of the community.

Technology

Grades 7/8

At the middle school level, one unit of technology is required by the state. Technology is taught throughout the seventh and eighth grades every other day. Technology at this level focuses on introduction to materials processing as well as the computer software that relates to the industry and the building trades such as CAD, electrical programs, solid modeling

(taking a two-dimensional image and turning it into a three-dimensional image), true modeling and architecture. Today's technology classes at the middle school level are what used to be called Industrial Arts classes which includes wood and metal working, but today, computer technology is a major component.

Computer Education

Grades 7/8

These courses at grade 7 and 8 are designed to provide students with computer experiences that include keyboarding, word processing, simple spreadsheets, and

databases. Students learn to use several commercial software programs that include applications that are helpful in future computer experiences at high school.

Instruction

Grades 5-8

Students in grades 5-8 receive Computer Assisted Instruction in mathematics and reading/English language arts as part of their instructional program. This is a supplemental program which allows

students to individually work to improve their skills in these two areas. Information is captured by the computer and reports are given to teachers identifying strengths and weaknesses of students.

School Information

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MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE

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