

***MASCONOMET REGIONAL
MIDDLE SCHOOL***



PROGRAM OF STUDIES
2011-2012

This Program of Studies is designed to inform students and parents of the courses offered in the Middle School and to help you select those courses, where appropriate, that fit your needs and interests. Please carefully review all of the courses listed on the following pages.

Your teacher or guidance counselor will discuss the Program of Studies and the course selection procedure with you. After listening to this presentation and discussing the courses with teachers, fill out the attached Course Selection Sheet. Be sure that you fill out the sheet accurately and that the sheet is signed by parents and teachers where indicated.

All students are required to enroll in certain courses or programs as noted. In a few cases, you may select from more than one course to satisfy the requirements.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The course descriptions provided below will help you plan your Middle School program. Each course is designed to meet the needs of our Middle School students.

ENGLISH

English - Grade 7

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

Seventh Grade English is a course emphasizing reading and literature, written composition, grammar and usage, spelling and vocabulary, and speaking and listening skills. With a focus on reading comprehension, students study selections from a variety of literary types: fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Students write expository, descriptive, narrative and persuasive compositions. In grammar, emphasis is placed on the eight parts of speech, sentence structure, correct usage and mechanics. In addition, library orientation classes are provided through English classes.

English - Grade 8

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

The goal of the eighth grade English program is to enhance the growth of communication skills in an environment that encourages students to read, write, listen, and speak. Structured literature lessons encourage students to expand their reading experiences by exposing them to a wide variety of genres. Teachers work with students to help them understand that reading and writing are connected. To this end, a wide range of activities and techniques are designed to provide enrichment and reinforce language skills in the classroom.

Language Arts - Grade 7

One Trimester-3 periods per cycle

This course focuses on improving skills that enable students to deal effectively with nonfiction. Students will read journal articles, newspaper articles, and essays in order to become familiar with authors' purpose, tone, and organizational methods. Research methodology, including note-taking, paraphrasing, outlining, and citing sources is also a major part of this course. Study Island, our online MCAS prep program, will be heavily utilized as well. This is pass/fail course. No homework is required.

Language Arts - Grade 8

One Trimester-3 periods per cycle

Grade 8 Language Arts deals with reading and test-taking skills related to nonfiction. Students will read a series of articles and essays and then answer multiple choice and open-response questions related to the readings. In addition, students will practice organizing different types of essays using concrete examples. Students will also utilize Study Island, our online MCAS prep program, to practice and improve basic skills. This is pass/fail course. No homework is required.

MATHEMATICS

Every student needs to have a scientific calculator for use in class and at home. It is recommended that the calculator be solar-powered and equipped with a hard plastic cover. Texas Instrument Models TI-30, TI-30SLR, TI-30SLR+ are not satisfactory because of design limitations with some functions.

Math - Grade 7

Pre-Algebra

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

This course offers a standards-based, integrated curriculum that incorporates topics described in the learning standards for students in grades 7&8 found in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in Mathematics (c2000). These include the content strands of Number Sense and Operations; Patterns, Relations and Algebra; Geometry; Measurement and Data Analysis and Probability and the process strands of problem solving; reasoning; communication; connections and representation. In particular, this course focuses on the connections between graphs and algebraic equations. Students will begin to see that certain types of relationships can be grouped according the shapes of their graphs and the characteristics of their equations. Students will develop proficiency in computing with signed numbers. They will learn about operating with integer exponents and develop skill in using scientific notation to represent very large and very small numbers. This course also emphasizes ratio, proportion and percent as applied to a variety of problem solving situation.

Accelerated Pre-Algebra

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

This course is designed to prepare students for a formal, abstract approach to algebra and geometry in subsequent grades. The main goals of the course are to develop mathematical thinking and the ability to apply skills to unfamiliar situations as presented in problem solving contexts and to introduce students to the formal reasoning skills used to prove mathematical theorems. Content is focused around the following content and process strands; Algebra Communicating Mathematics; Data Analysis; Geometry; Interdisciplinary Applications; Measurement; Number Sense; Patterns & Functions; Probability and Technology. These strands are woven throughout the course and problems incorporating each strand appear in nearly every lesson.

Spiral learning is an important feature of this course. Students master concepts as they deal with them in different settings and contexts. Key concepts are previewed before a formal presentation and are reviewed frequently thereafter.

Students who want to be considered for the accelerated program must complete a two part assessment process. This will take place outside of the normal school day and be administered at Masconomet Regional Middle School. Details about this program – including dates and times for testing – will be sent home to parents through the elementary schools during the first week of March.

Geometry Lab

One Trimester – 3 periods per cycle

This course will provide students with an opportunity to investigate the concepts and skills related to Geometry and Measurement as delineated in the May 2004 revision of the

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in Mathematics (c. 2000). Students will analyze the relationship between the number of sides and the sums of interior and exterior angles in polygons. They will learn to classify figures in terms of congruency and similarity and apply these relationships to problem solving situations. They will use ratio/proportion to solve problems about similar figures as well as indirect measurement. Students will learn about parallel lines, the Pythagorean Theorem, and transformations in both unmarked planes and the coordinate plane. By the end of the course, students will be able to identify and classify two- and three-dimensional figures by physical appearance and distinguishing attributes. Students will be able to select and apply the appropriate formula to find perimeter/circumference, area, surface area and volume.

Students are responsible for this content on both the grade 7 and grade 8 MCAS tests. Because the core program in mathematics in the middle school is algebra, there is not enough time in that program to cover this content in sufficient detail.

Math - Grade 8

Student's math selection for Grade 8 must be approved by his/her seventh grade math teacher. When a student enters Grade 8 without attending seventh grade at Masconomet, the Department Chair will recommend appropriate placement. This recommendation will be based on consideration of records from the feeder school and, when appropriate, performance on a placement test and/or brief interview.

Students going from Grade 7 to Grade 8 may elect to participate in a three-week summer school program in mathematics. The course is individualized to address the specific weaknesses of each student.

IMPORTANT! Grades for 8th grade algebra will be recorded on students' high school transcript.

Algebra

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

This course offers a standards-based, integrated curriculum that incorporates topics described in the learning standards for students in grades 7 & 8 found in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in Mathematics (c2000). These include the content strands of Number Sense and Operations, Patterns, Relations and Algebra; Geometry; Measurement and Data Analysis and Probability and the process strands of problem solving; reasoning; communication; connections and representation. In particular, students develop a more formal understanding of families of functions. They learn to recognize the type of function from its graph or equation and explore intercepts, maximum and minimum points and lines of symmetry. They extend their understanding of exponents and begin to see the relationship between exponents and roots.

During this course, students learn to solve a wide range of equations in one variable. In addition, they begin to consider how to solve systems of equations in two variables. Various problem-solving strategies will be emphasized throughout the course. Students will improve their ability to discuss and illustrate strategies used to solve multi-step applied problems using tables, graphs and symbolic representations. Considerable time will be spent writing about their approach to solving problems.

Algebra I (H)

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

This is the first in a series of rigorous, intensive honors math courses that lead to Advanced

Placement Calculus in grade 12. The course includes the study of equations in one and two variables, graphing in one and two dimensions, word problems, polynomials, factoring and quadratic functions. Students who are currently in Accelerated Pre-Algebra must have an average of C- or higher and be recommended by their current teacher to continue in this program. Students currently in Standard Pre-Algebra must receive a minimum grade of A- each trimester, and be recommended by their current teacher in order to be scheduled for this course.

Students who are moving from the standard program in grade 7 to the honors program in grade 8 must take a pre-algebra test during the summer. Students will receive materials related to this and information about how to schedule the test from their current math teacher on the last day of school. Failure to take the test by the deadline indicated in these materials means the student cannot take Algebra I (H) in grade 8.

Data Analysis Lab

One Trimester – 3 periods per cycle

This course will provide students with an opportunity to investigate the concepts and skills related to Data Analysis, Statistics and Probability as delineated in the May 2004 revision of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in Mathematics (c. 2000). Students will learn how to select, create, interpret and utilize various tabular and graphical representations for data including: circle graphs, Venn diagrams, scatter plots, stem and leaf plots, box plots, histograms, tables and charts. They will be able to distinguish between continuous and discrete data and the ways to represent each. Students will be able to find, describe and interpret measures of central tendency and the range for a given set of data. Students will be able to create and use tree diagrams, tables, organized lists and area models to compute probabilities for simple compound events.

Students are responsible for this content on the grade 8 MCAS test. Because the core program in mathematics in the middle school is algebra, there is not enough time in that program to cover this content in sufficient detail.

SCIENCE

Science - Grade 7

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

The focus of this course is on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework related to the life sciences. Topics include classification, the structure and function of cells, systems in living things, reproduction, evolution and biodiversity, living things and their environment, energy in living things and changes in ecosystems over time. This course presents science as a process that involves research, experimentation, and theory development. Inquiry lab activities and hands-on projects keep student focused, interested and motivated. Lab safety rules are explained and enforced. Study skills, reading for information, and documentation of lab observations will be taught in context. A science research project and science fair participation is encouraged.

Science - Grade 8

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

This course emphasizes Earth Science and also includes some topics in Physical and Life Science as needed to prepare for the grade 8 MCAS test. Earth Science is the study of our planet Earth and its environment in the vastness of space. Students investigate the many types of objects that exist in the universe and their relationships to each other; the solid, liquid and gaseous parts of the earth; and the evolutionary changes that take place on Earth and in space. The course also examines human impact on the Earth.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social Studies Department is committed to exposing students to the local, national and global world around them and to promote active citizenship by meeting the Massachusetts History and Social Science Frameworks. The Grade Seven and Eight curriculum places a focus on global awareness and life-long learning.

Grade 7 - Ancient Cultures

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

The Middle School World History program begins with Grade 7 Ancient Cultures and will focus on world historical events and issues from the dawn of human civilization to the fall of Rome. Historically, students will explore early, developing civilizations including Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome and make connections between the past and present. Historical events and the political, social and economic developments of these early civilizations will be studied and explored in preparation for the Grade Eight curriculum.

Grade 8 - World History 800-1815

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

As directed by the Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework, the eighth grade Social Studies program involves the study of the development of world civilizations after the fall of the Roman Empire. Students study the history of the major empires and political entities of this period: the Ottoman Empire, the Moghul Empire, the Chinese dynasties, the Byzantine Empire, and the major pre-Columbian civilizations that existed in Central and South America. Students examine the important political, economic and religious developments of this period, including the development of Christianity and Islam, the conflicts between them in different parts of the world, and the beginnings of European influence on the Western Hemisphere. Students will also be introduced to the development of democratic, scientific, and secular thought in the major events and developments of European history.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The Foreign Language Department is committed to meeting the Massachusetts and National standards of communication, culture, connections, comparisons and communities. Studying a foreign language, like other subject areas, prepares students for lifelong learning.

Grade 7 – French or Spanish

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

In this course students will begin to learn the fundamentals of the target language. They will acquire a practical vocabulary and the basic structure needed to ask/answer questions, express opinions/wants/needs and narrate in present tense. The skills of listening and speaking will be emphasized. Students will explore the culture of countries where the target language is spoken and will do cultural projects, as well. The curriculum covered is the first half of the textbook. Students are expected to complete daily homework assignments conscientiously, to study every evening and to participate actively in class.

Grade 7- Chinese H

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

Students will begin to learn the fundamentals of the Chinese language and character writing. The skills of listening and speaking will be emphasized with stress on the 4 tones of Mandarin used to clarify the meanings of words. Students will explore the ancient culture of China and will do cultural projects. Learning Chinese is considered to be challenging because of the 3,000 common characters there are in the language. Therefore, students selecting this course must be dedicated to studying and transcribing characters everyday and be committed to continue their study of the language well into high school. **This year only one section will be open and students choosing Chinese should also select a second choice of a foreign language.**

Grade 8- Chinese H

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

Students will continue to learn the fundamentals of the Chinese language and character writing. By the end of the 8th grade, students will have completed the equivalent of a high school level I program. Students will learn 100 characters and 250 words. Along with the fundamentals of Chinese, students will become more acquainted with the culture and customs of the Chinese. Daily studying and transcribing of characters is necessary to be successful in this course.

Grade 8 – French or Spanish

Full Year-6 periods per cycle

This course is a continuation of the seventh grade program. Therefore, students may not begin a new language in Grade 8. Students must continue with the language studied in Grade 7. Students will increase their vocabulary and knowledge of structure while further exploring the culture of countries where the target language is spoken. As they continue to develop their listening and speaking skills, students will begin to read and to write in the target language. They will complete the second half of the textbook. French or Spanish is the language of instruction and students are expected to speak it within the scope of their abilities whenever possible. Students are required to complete daily homework assignments and special projects, to study every evening and to participate actively in class. Grade 8 teachers will recommend students for the appropriate high school level, honors or college preparatory, based on their success in learning the target language in Grade 8 and their work ethic.

IMPORTANT! Grades for 8th grade Foreign Language courses will be recorded on students' High School transcript.

ART

Grade 7

One Trimester-6 periods per cycle

Grade 7 Art is a comprehensive art program. It is designed to allow for discovery by presenting creative challenges involving both technical skill and reflective experience. Units covered include Drawing, Color, 2-D Design, 3-D Design and/or Printmaking. Art appreciation is woven into the fabric of each unit. Students will be asked to observe, think creatively, and make critical decisions while developing stronger problem solving skills. Students may spend some of their art time each trimester working on interdisciplinary units with their academic subjects.

Grade 8

One Trimester-6 periods per cycle

Grade 8 Art is a continuation of the comprehensive art program introduced in Grade 7. Units covered include Drawing, 3-D Design, Color Relationships, Printmaking and Design. By the end of two middle school trimesters of art, the students will have experienced the important elements of art and principles of design necessary to complete their own work. They will have also begun to analyze and talk about the work of others. Students will be asked to observe, think creatively, and make critical decisions while developing stronger problem solving skills in this hands-on course.

MUSIC

Music Performance Groups

Any student electing to participate in a performing group is expected to remain with the group all year.

Chorus - Grade 7

Full Year-3 periods per cycle

This course is designed to provide all students with the experience of performance through singing. Students are introduced to the fundamentals of choral singing through a curriculum of tonal and rhythmic solfege as well as some movement activities. The majority of the music sung would be unison with some easier two-part music introduced later. These groups rehearse throughout the school year and perform in selected assemblies and concerts. Performance attendance is mandatory.

Chorus – Grade 8

Full Year-3 periods per cycle

This course is designed to provide all students with the experience of performance through singing. The fundamentals of choral singing, introduced in seventh grade chorus, are reinforced through a curriculum of tonal and rhythmic solfege as well as some movement activities. Students will also have exposure to various performing arts such as acting, mime and dance and field trips to major performing venues featuring musical theater will be offered. Attention will be given to the development of adolescent voices. The music will consist of two and three part choral literature. The group rehearses throughout the school year and performs in selected assemblies and concerts. Performance attendance is mandatory.

Band - Grade 7

Full Year-3 periods per cycle

The Seventh Grade Band program is comprised of student from the elementary band programs. Students who wish to participate in the Seventh Grade Band are required to audition for the Middle School Band Conductor in the spring of their sixth grade year. All students who wish to participate in the program must have prior experience playing a woodwind, brass, or mallet percussion instrument. Pianos and guitars are **NOT** used in this group. The Seventh Grade Band emphasizes correct tonal production, proper articulation, breathing, accurate performance of rhythmic patterns and melodic phrases in a variety of musical styles. The Seventh Grade Band rehearses three periods per cycle during the school day. Enrollment in the after-school private lesson program is recommended for all students in both groups. Such participation is not required but it has been proven that students who do participate achieve greater success than those who elect not to participate. Performance attendance for the Seventh Grade Band is required at the Holiday Concert in December, the Invitational Band Jamboree, and the Spring Concert in May. Enrollment in

the Seventh Grade Band is a one year commitment. All students who are interested in Band 7 are required to demonstrate an ability to read standard melodic notation prior to enrolling in the class.

Band - Grade 8

Full Year-3 periods per cycle

The Eighth Grade Band is comprised of students who participated in the Seventh Grade Band programs or are able to demonstrate to the Middle School Band Conductor that they possess the skills required for success in the Eighth Grade Band. This program reinforces the basics of embouchure, tone, articulation, breathing, ensemble playing, and musical nomenclature. A variety of musical styles are performed. The Eighth Grade Band rehearses during the school day throughout the entire school year and performs in school assemblies and formal concerts. In order to be successful in the Eighth Grade Band, it is recommended that the student enroll in the after-school private lesson program. Performance attendance is mandatory at the Holiday Concert in December and the Spring Concert in May. Performance attendance is mandatory. Enrollment in the Eighth Grade Band is a one year commitment. All students who are interested in Band 8 are required to demonstrate an ability to read standard melodic notation prior to enrolling in the class.

Private Music Lessons

All members of the Bands and the Choruses are encouraged to take private music lessons to improve their music skills. Lessons may be taken at Masconomet or with other private teachers of their choice. Lessons are available for all the band instruments, voice and piano. Space is limited so early enrollment is recommended.

Recitals

Recitals are provided for all interested instrumental and vocal students. Four recitals are scheduled throughout the year; three informal and one formal. These recitals are designed to help students gain greater poise and confidence through performances of solos, duets and ensembles. Contact any member of the Music Department for Music Recital Guidelines.

School-Owned Instruments

A limited number of the larger instruments are available on a lease basis. For information, contact the Music Department at 978- 887-2323 X6129.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Grades 7 and 8

Full Year-3 periods per cycle

The Middle School Physical Education Curriculum provides a background in the skills basic to most physical education activities, an opportunity to participate in group games of low organization, team sports, and to develop an awareness of physical fitness. Yoga, self defense, aerobics and weight training will be introduced at both grade levels. All students in Grades 7 and 8 participate in Physical Education three times per cycle for a full year.

HEALTH

Grade 7

One Trimester-6 periods per cycle

Health 7 is the first level of our health education program for middle-school aged students. The course focuses on building knowledge and skills related to safety and injury prevention. Substance abuse/use prevention, refusal skills in situations with peer pressure, alternatives to violence in problem solving, and self-protection skills in harmful situations are some of the topics covered in this course. The Project Alert curriculum is utilized as a means of helping students build skills that resist substance abuse. Health 7 addresses standards 9-11 of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum frameworks.

Health - Grade 8

One Trimester-6 periods per cycle

Health 8 is the second level of our comprehensive health education program for middle-school aged students. This course focuses on promoting wellness in the areas of physical, social, and mental health. Students develop knowledge related to disease prevention, nutrition, growth and development, sexuality and skills utilized in making responsible decisions that promote health. Resources utilized in this course are the DECIDE model of decision making, *Choose to Refuse: Heroin/Oxycontin Education Program*, the *Preventative Alcohol Education*, and www.mypyramid.gov. Health 8 addresses standards 1, 4-8 and sections of 10-14 of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum frameworks.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Accelerated Courses

Endorsements and approvals for admission to Accelerated Courses will be based on the criteria outlined below. In cases of dispute the situation may be brought to the Principal whose decision will be final.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO ACCELERATED GRADE 8 HONORS LEVEL COURSES

The student should demonstrate:

1. Proficiency in the subject by attaining a minimum grade of A- in the appropriate course in the sequence;
2. Teacher recommendation.