

Middle School

Program of Studies

2019-2020

Grades 6-8



Jonas Clarke Middle School
William Diamond Middle School
Lexington Public Schools

Lexington, Massachusetts

Lexington Public Schools Lexington, Massachusetts

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**Lexington
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A Message to Parents

Middle School Philosophy

Both Jonas Clarke Middle School and William Diamond Middle School are communities committed to the academic, social and emotional growth of all students.

We believe that successful middle schools place the individual learner at the center of both organizational and curricular planning. Our courses and our teaching are designed to support each student's individual growth. During middle school, students will work to develop:

- Content area concepts, skills, and knowledge
- Pro-social, collaborative, and citizenship skills
- Creative, curious, and critical thinking

To help us do this, our middle schools embrace the team concept: a small group of teachers instructing English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies who work with a shared group of students. Each team is heterogeneously grouped, and all teams are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for each student to learn. Team placement is based on a variety of criteria including:

- A student's special education needs
- Gender balance
- Family history
- Social groupings to promote cooperation and collaboration
- History of academic progress
- Feedback from a child's previous teacher and administrators
- Mathematics and reading skills

We very much value parental input. The personal information you share helps us to better know your child and to create more balanced teams. However, please note that in all situations, the principal will be the final arbiter of team compositions and team placement.

Our ultimate desire is to help students master essential skills, while fostering creativity, collaboration, and citizenship. With this in mind, we work to provide students the support they need when they need it. This program of studies outlines the breadth of offerings designed to nurture and support the intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth of our students. All students take a carefully planned sequence of courses in English language arts, social studies, science technology and engineering, mathematics, world language, physical education and health. Students also have the opportunity to take courses in the visual and performing arts and may supplement their learning with general education intervention courses and/or special education services designed to improve their academic or social emotional skills.

Our curriculum is enhanced by the opportunity to participate in strong co-curricular offerings including sports, student government, math team, yearbook, vocal ensembles, drama and musical productions, and community service projects.

Anna Monaco

Anna Monaco
Principal
Jonas Clarke Middle School

Jennifer Turner

Jennifer Turner
Principal
William Diamond Middle School

Team Subjects

English Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies

English Language Arts

The purpose of the English Language Arts program is to provide students with rich and varied experiences that will inform and cultivate their abilities to think, read, write and speak with excellence.

Each course prepares and challenges our students to meet the four core objectives of the Lexington Public Schools English Language Arts curriculum:

1. Demonstrate comprehension of literary and informational texts using textual evidence.
2. Articulate ideas individually and adapt these ideas collectively for diverse media and audiences; attend to and respond to others' ideas.
3. Produce various text types for a specific purpose and audience in order to engage, narrate, inform, and argue.
4. Intentionally revise and edit writing to create pieces publishable for specific audiences.

Our curriculum is based on the 2017 Massachusetts State Framework for English Language Arts, which is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Students experience the full range of literary genres: fiction, nonfiction, poetry and drama. Teachers select books, materials and methodologies to meet students' learning needs in the achievement of grade-level standards. Teachers make conscious efforts to integrate literary selections with the themes and issues studied in other core subjects. Vocabulary instruction is integrated with the study of literature.

The English Language Arts curriculum engages students in narrative, informational, and opinion writing, with an increasing emphasis on the expository writing forms in grades seven and eight. The writing process—pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, publishing—underpins the writing curriculum and instruction. Writing topics are often student selected and drawn from personal experience.

Oral expression and listening skills are developed through class discussions, classroom presentations, interactive writing groups, and/or drama activities so that students have an opportunity to develop all of the requisite language skills, achieving increased precision, economy and sophistication in both speech and writing.

Lexington Public Schools' comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum reflects the interests and experiences of the community, adheres to state and national standards, and provides adequate time for students to develop strategies and skills on a continuum. We are committed to helping the children of Lexington grow to be effective readers, sound thinkers, and articulate communicators of their thoughts, feelings and concerns.

Sixth Grade – English

Course #060

In this transitional year, students extend the reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills taught in the elementary school. Students are introduced to many new skills and concepts that will be studied with greater complexity in seventh grade and eighth grade. The program includes spelling, vocabulary, paragraph structure, punctuation and grammar, all of which are often integrated into writing and reading activities.

In composition, two major writing types are taught: narrative, and argumentative. Students engage in process writing, which includes pre-writing activities, rough drafts, final drafts, and peer and teacher conferences. Composition models help students understand and meet expectations. Editing involves checking for accuracy in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The revision aims to clarify expression, develop cohesion, and resolve structure and logic issues in student writing. Expository paragraph structure receives particular attention.

Students work with short stories, short novels, poetry, and literary nonfiction assigned by teachers and individually chosen by students. In close reading of literature, students make and support inferences, tracking the development of characters and conflicts. They also explore how specific word choices imply meaning and tone. Students respond to and analyze their reading through various writing formats, such as journals, study guides, quizzes, short essays and book reports. Discussion groups help students learn to express and share their ideas, explore meaning in literature, and relate what they read to their lives. Historical fiction and traditional literature receive particular focus.

Teachers use a variety of activities to ensure that students are acquiring skills in speaking and listening. Oral presentations and discussions are common features and allow class members the opportunity to ask questions and practice using language as a tool for learning.

Seventh Grade – English

Course #070

Reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills continue to be the major areas of concentration for students in the seventh grade, focusing on foundational critical and inferential thinking skills. Through the reading of short stories and novels, students focus on the elements of characterization, setting, conflict, and theme. Particularly, students are challenged to determine and track the development of theme. Informational reading skills are developed during a nonfiction reading unit.

Students work on developing their argumentative writing skills by composing a number of pieces. In this work with writing, students express their opinions and insights, organize their thoughts, and support their claims with valid reasoning.

Eighth Grade – English

Course #080

Grade Eight English continues to develop students' reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills. Eighth-grade students develop their reading skills in a literature program that includes short stories, novels, plays, poetry, and nonfiction with texts such as *Of Mice and Men*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Students study how authors, playwrights, and poets manipulate structure, language, literary devices, and the elements of literature to affect readers and develop themes. The course also explores the art of argumentation through close analysis and evaluation of opinion texts such as essays, speeches, and editorials.

Students compose in varied forms to express their ideas about their reading. Such compositions require analysis supported with textual evidence, and so reflect and nurture students' emerging inferential reasoning skills. When writing, students manipulate their phrasing, diction, and sentence structure to convey precise ideas fluidly, applying transitional devices to cohesively organize their thoughts. Peer editing is frequently used to assist in the revision of drafts, providing yet another opportunity for students to apply their conceptual knowledge and reasoning skills.

Sixth Grade – Reading Intervention (Clarke Only)

Course #063

This Course is for students who are below grade level in their reading comprehension and literacy skills. Placement into this course is determined by a combination of teacher recommendation and student performance on the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System test. Please note that while enrolled in these courses all students continue with their regular English course and instruction. The course is focused on meeting students' individual needs through targeted instruction and progress monitoring.

Seventh Grade – Reading Intervention (Clarke Only)

Course #071

This Course is for students who are below grade level in their reading comprehension and literacy skills. Placement into this course is determined by a combination of teacher recommendation and student performance on the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System test. Please note that while enrolled in these courses all students continue with their regular English course and instruction. The course is focused on meeting students' individual needs through targeted instruction and progress monitoring.

Eighth Grade – Reading Intervention (Clarke Only)

Course #081

This Course is for students who are below grade level in their reading comprehension and literacy skills. Placement into this course is determined by a combination of teacher recommendation and student performance on the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System test. Please note that while enrolled in these courses all students continue with their regular English course and instruction. The course is focused on meeting students' individual needs through targeted instruction and progress monitoring.

Mathematics

Program Overview

During the middle school years, students will experience significant changes in their ability to reason mathematically and think abstractly. Our goal is to enable all students to reach high standards and their full potential in a supportive environment. We seek to engage all students in meaningful mathematics that stimulates curiosity and enjoyment, while providing a balance between conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application of skills in problem solving situations. Throughout our curriculum, we emphasize these eight Mathematical Practices identified in the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics Incorporating the Common Core State Standards:

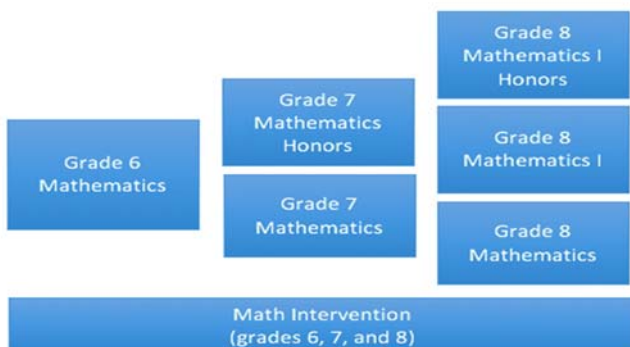
1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
4. Model with mathematics
5. Use appropriate tools strategically
6. Attend to precision
7. Look for and make use of structure
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

All middle school mathematics courses are aligned with the 2017 Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics. Each course is integrated in that there is a blend of topics from algebra, geometry, and data analysis. The aim of this integrated approach is to present mathematics with focus, coherence and rigor, while emphasizing key mathematical practices such as reasoning, problem solving, and modeling. This structure also provides continuity from the elementary schools to the high school program.

Placement Determinations

The Mathematics Department is committed to informing all parents and students of the criteria used to determine student placement in the above courses. Mathematics teachers and administrators have worked to develop a robust placement process to ensure that all students have equal access to our courses and also to ensure that no single assessment is a determining factor for student placement. As a result, the placement process is ongoing throughout the academic year and includes a comprehensive package of assessments that are administered at appropriate moments in our curriculum. Teachers and administrators look carefully at our common placement criteria for the purposes of norming scoring and establishing an algorithm that appropriately makes placement determinations according to student performance and growth.

Sequence of Middle School Mathematics Courses



Math Intervention

Grades 6, 7, 8

Math Intervention is a course that is designed to support all students in gaining self-confidence by practicing perseverance and participating in growth mindset activities, as well as learning how to advocate for themselves in their regular math classes. In this course, students engage in accessible activities that develop strategies on how to look at math in a variety of ways and determine starting points for problem solving. In order to assist all students in achieving success in mathematics, intervention teachers will support students in mastering grade-level standards, reteach critical concepts and skills, and fill existing gaps in learning. The goal of math intervention is to support all students in becoming more resourceful in their learning of mathematics at Lexington Public Schools.

Sixth Grade – Mathematics

Course #260

All sixth grade students will enroll in Sixth Grade Mathematics. In this course, students will focus on five critical areas:

1. connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division, and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems;
2. completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers;
3. writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations;
4. developing understanding of statistical thinking; and
5. reasoning about geometric shapes and their measurements.

Students will also solve problems involving percents and their applications. Students will write and evaluate algebraic expressions, and solve word problems related to these algebraic concepts. Through heterogeneous grouping and an emphasis on the mathematical practices, students will solidify their number sense and begin to apply this understanding to algebra, geometry, and statistics conversations.

Students who complete this course will enroll in either Seventh Grade Mathematics (#270), or Seventh Grade Mathematics Honors (#271).

Seventh Grade – Mathematics

Course # 270

Students in this course will solidify skills and apply concepts related to percents, percent change, ratio, and proportion. Students will manipulate algebraic expressions and solve multi-step equations, inequalities, and word problems. Students will also simplify expressions using properties of exponents. Students will be introduced to rate of change and linear functions. In geometry, students will identify and describe relationships among figures in two and three dimensions, solve real-world problems involving measurement, and examine similarity as it relates to figures. Additionally, students will solve problems involving probability and statistics, including examining samples, populations, and their effect on data collection.

Students who complete this course will enroll in either, Eighth Grade Mathematics (#280), Eighth Grade Mathematics I (#281), or Eighth Grade Mathematics I Honors (#282).

Seventh Grade – Mathematics Honors

Course # 271

This course is designed to meet the needs of learners who have thoroughly mastered all the concepts and skills from 6th grade and who thrive in a collaborative student-led environment with less direct instruction. Students in this course will engage in the same curriculum as that of the Grade 7 Mathematics course in addition to extension topics based on students' readiness. Students are expected to solve non-routine problems and employ abstracting reasoning skills.

Students who complete this course will enroll in either Eighth Grade Mathematics (#280), Eighth Grade Mathematics I (#281), or Eighth Grade Mathematics I Honors (#282).

Eighth Grade – Mathematics

Course # 280

Students in this course will learn the foundations of algebra, including algebraic language, concepts, structure, and skills. Students will solve equations and systems of equations. They will also solve related word problems. Students will graph, write, and analyze functions. In particular, students will examine linear functions using algebraic and graphical approaches, and use these functions for modeling and problem solving. In geometry, students will perform transformations and use those principles to determine congruence or similarity. Students will explore proofs of the Pythagorean Theorem and apply the theorem to problems. In data, students will examine scatter plots, interpret distributions with outliers, and analyze two-way tables.

Students fully meeting the goals of this course will enroll in Math 1 (Algebra/Geometry/Statistics) at the High School.

Eighth Grade – Mathematics I

Course # 281

This is an accelerated course that covers both grade 8 and grade 9 curriculum standards.

Students in this course will learn the foundations of algebra, including algebraic language, concepts, structure, skills, properties, and proof. Students will solve equations, inequalities (including compound and absolute value), and systems of equations and inequalities. They will also solve related word problems. Students will graph, write, and analyze functions, including function transformations. In particular, students will examine both linear and exponential functions using algebraic and graphical approaches, and use these functions for modeling and problem solving. Direct variation and coordinate geometry concepts such as the midpoint formula will be addressed as well. In geometry, students will perform transformations and use those principles to determine congruence or similarity. Students will also perform constructions. Additionally, students will connect transformations to the coordinate plane. Students will prove triangle congruence, as well as various principles of coordinate geometry. Students will explore proofs of the Pythagorean Theorem and apply the theorem to problems. In data, students will examine scatter plots, interpret distributions with outliers, and apply measures of dispersion to solve problems. Students will also create and analyze lines of best fit as well as work with two-way tables.

Students fully meeting goals of this course will enroll in either CP1 Math 2 (Algebra2/Geometry/Statistics), or Honors Math 2 at the High School.

Eighth Grade – Mathematics I Honors

Course # 282

This is an accelerated course that covers both grade 8 and grade 9 curriculum standards.

This course is designed to meet the needs of learners who have thoroughly mastered all the concepts and skills from prior courses. Students in this course will engage in the same curriculum as that of the Mathematics 1 course in addition to extension topics based on students' readiness. Students are expected to solve unfamiliar problems, and progress through the Math 1 curriculum with a greater emphasis on problem solving, exploration, and higher order thinking skills.

Students fully meeting the goals of this course will enroll in either CP1 Math 2 (Algebra2/Geometry/Statistics), or Honors Math 2 at the High School.

Science

The science program offers opportunities for students to engage in science disciplinary core ideas and science practice skills each year during the middle school experience. The disciplinary core ideas and practice skills are derived from the Massachusetts Science, Technology, and Engineering Frameworks. Students explore scientific concepts by conducting laboratory experiments, participating in field studies, gathering and interpreting data, reading pertinent scientific material, and participating in project based learning activities. Science core topics are selected from earth, life and physical science, along with integrated topics in technology and engineering. The following science and engineering practice skills are introduced and used throughout all middle school science and engineering courses:

- Asking questions and defining problems
- Developing and using models
- Planning and carrying out investigations
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Using mathematics and computational thinking
- Constructing explanations and developing solutions
- Engaging in argument from evidence
- Obtaining, evaluating and communicating information

The middle school science program incorporates the engineering design practices by engaging students in project and problem based learning experiences. Engineering skills are introduced in sixth grade and continue through the eighth grade. In the science courses, students use their science knowledge to inform the engineering design of possible products.

Sixth Grade – Science

Course# 360

Sixth grade students are introduced to the science practice skills through building content knowledge in physical and earth science topics. These topics include; Density, Uncovering Earth's layers, Continental Drift & Plate Tectonics, Structure of the Universe, Waves, Heat, Weather, Climate & Climate Changes. Students have many opportunities to engage in laboratory experiences and inquiry-based activities throughout the year.

Seventh Grade – Science

Course # 370

The seventh grade curriculum focuses on life science topics. Students are immersed in learning about; the Characteristics of Living Things, the Cell & Cell Processes, Human Body, Genetics, Evolution, and Ecology. Students engage in laboratory experiences and instruction in microscope use, selected dissections, and project-based experiences that integrate bioengineering.

Eighth Grade – Science

Course # 380

The eighth grade program incorporates learning from previous years and integrates topics in earth, space and physical science. Topics of study include; Motion, Energy, Gravitational & Electrical Forces, States of Matter, Atoms, Mixtures & Solutions, Chemical Reactions, Seasons, Lunar Phases, Tides & Planetary Motion, and Human Impact on Global Systems. Students acquire content and practice skills in science, technology, and engineering that prepare them for high school. In the spring, students participate in the MA Science, Technology and Engineering MCAS grade eight assessment.

Engineering and Design

The Engineering and Design courses have a strong interdisciplinary tie to the middle school science program. The courses promote technological literacy and introduce students to the engineering and design process through a variety of projects that involve finding a solution to a problem through creativity and design. The Massachusetts Science, Technology and Engineering Frameworks set the course curriculum.

Sixth Grade – Engineering and Design

Course # 361

This semester course meets twice per week. Students are introduced to the engineering design process as a method to develop solutions using specific criteria and constraints. Several of the projects require students to build models that could address real world problems.

Eighth Grade – Engineering and Design

Course # 381

This semester course meets twice per week. This course incorporates science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills to solve problems. Students are asked to use the engineering design process to develop solutions that address real world issues. They use science and engineering tools, construct accurate scaled drawings, evaluate models, identify model limitations, and rebuild to improve their prototypes. Students have experiences with LEGO Robotics, modeling software, and 3D printing. The curriculum prepares students for the MA Science, Technology and Engineering MCAS grade eight assessment.

Social Studies

Mission Statement

The primary purpose of the Lexington Public Schools' Social Studies Department is to foster curiosity and help to create life-long learners who make informed decisions as they actively engage as citizens in their local, national and global communities.

- Understand the major events and trends in these domains that have shaped the modern world
- Connect the past with the present and gain insights
- Use a wide variety of technologies and emphasize the importance of gathering, analyzing and evaluating evidence and information
- Discover their own authentic voice, learn to think independently, work collaboratively, and communicate their ideas effectively

The middle school social studies program is designed to meet the needs of students who are in transition developmentally from childhood to early adolescence. It affords an opportunity for the student to explore in some depth the social studies subject areas. In addition, the introduction, development and refinement of specific social studies skills form the foundation of social studies education. These skills are coupled with the various social studies disciplines to form a rigorous course of study. The program also expands the knowledge students have gained at the K-5 level in the areas of history, geography, government and other social sciences.

Sixth Grade – Social Studies

Course # 160

The content of the course is the study of archaeology, early humans and selected ancient civilizations, including Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece. The course begins with archaeology and examines the basis for historical, cultural and archaeological reconstruction. It also allows students to consider and understand technology, social structures, ideologies and cultures of the past. Sixth graders continue their studies by examining early humans and societies, early river civilizations, and classical civilizations. The varied techniques in this course of study provide students with more sophisticated practice in reading, listening, writing and oral communication. Students also use proper research and bibliographic techniques as they evaluate a variety of sources to gather relevant information.

Seventh Grade – Social Studies

Course # 170

Geography in grade seven will review and reinforce the geographical concepts and suggested learning outcomes outlined for grades K-6. As such, the course will help students discern the global patterns of physical and cultural characteristics such as landforms, climate, population, transportation and communication, economic linkages, and cultural diffusion.

The primary focus of study is cultural geography which deals with how the activities of different culture groups affect the use and form of the landscape. It explores a variety of themes including the human use of the habitat and its resources, the human impact on the ecology of the earth, the origin and spread of cultures, environmental perception or the geography of settlement forms. Regions selected for study will vary, but should include case studies from geographic areas such as Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa. These studies are set in their regional context and exemplify important geographic concepts or problems. Students build upon the research skills developed in grade 6, as they create discipline-specific writing that includes topic sentence/evidence in support of a claim and state a conclusion.

Eighth Grade – Social Studies

Course # 180

Our chronological study of U.S. History will begin with 1754 (French and Indian War) and continue through the Civil War. Teachers may provide historical context by reviewing European discovery, settlement and colonization of North America. Emphasis is placed on the American Revolution, Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, Civics and Governance, Westward Expansion, Reform Movements, and the Civil War Era. Skills in research and reporting, cartography, non-fiction literacy, historical thinking, formulating and supporting a thesis, and drawing conclusions are developed throughout the course.

Other Major Subjects

World Languages

Visual and Performing Arts

Physical Education and Wellness

World Languages

The Lexington Public Schools World Language Program prepares students for meaningful interactions with people around the world, helping them to understand the inextricable link between language and culture as they work to understand and communicate with respect in the language they are learning, and at the same time deepening their understanding of their own language and culture; while inspiring them to be curious, to be open to sharing new experiences and new ideas, ultimately with the goal of creating networks of collaboration to address the challenges facing today's world.

French

Sixth Grade – French

Course #460

By engaging in learning French, students in grade six will build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. Students will build proficiency in three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing). They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of French-speaking cultures.

Students in grade six will advance from **Novice Low to the Novice Mid** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Seventh Grade – French (Continuing)

Course #470

By engaging in learning French, students in grade seven will continue to build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. Students will build proficiency in three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing). They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of French-speaking cultures.

Students in grade seven will advance from **Novice Mid to the Novice High** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Eighth Grade – French (Continuing)

Course #480

By engaging in learning French, students in grade eight will continue to build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. Students will build proficiency in three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing). They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of French-speaking cultures.

Students in grade eight will advance from **Novice High to the Intermediate Low** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Eighth Grade – French (Advanced)

Course #481

By engaging in learning French at the advanced level, students who demonstrate excellence in the three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing), independent learning and who have been recommended for this class, continue to increase proficiency at a rapid pace. In grade eight students will continue to build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of French-speaking cultures.

Students in grade eight will advance from **Intermediate Low to the Intermediate Mid** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Mandarin

Sixth Grade – Mandarin

Course #462

By engaging in learning Mandarin, students in grade six will build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. This beginning course introduces the Pinyin system of pronunciation of Chinese sounds and tones, and the radicals and stroke order of characters. Students will build proficiency in three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing). They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of Chinese cultures.

Students in grade six will advance from **Novice Low to the Novice Mid** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Seventh Grade – Mandarin (Continuing)

Course #472

By engaging in learning Mandarin, students in grade seven will continue to build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. Students will build proficiency in three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing). They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of Mandarin-speaking cultures.

Students in grade seven will advance from **Novice Mid to the Novice High** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Eighth Grade – Mandarin (Continuing)

Course #482

By engaging in learning Mandarin, students in grade eight will continue to build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. Students will build proficiency in three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing). They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of Mandarin-speaking cultures.

Students in grade eight will advance from **Novice High to the Intermediate Low** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Spanish

Sixth Grade – Spanish

Course #464

By engaging in learning Spanish, students in grade six will build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. Students will build proficiency in three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing). They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of Spanish-speaking cultures.

Students in grade six will advance from **Novice Low to the Novice Mid** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Seventh Grade – Spanish (Continuing)

Course #474

By engaging in learning Spanish, students in grade seven will continue to build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. Students will build proficiency in three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing). They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of Spanish-speaking cultures.

Students in grade seven will advance from **Novice Mid to the Novice High** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Eighth Grade – Spanish (Continuing)

Course #484

By engaging in learning Spanish, students in grade eight will continue to build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. Students will build proficiency in three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing). They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of Spanish-speaking cultures.

Students in grade eight will advance from **Novice High to the Intermediate Low** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Eighth Grade – Spanish (Advanced)

Course #485

By engaging in learning Spanish at the advanced level, students who demonstrate excellence in the three modes of communication: interpersonal (person-to-person speaking or writing), interpretive (listening and reading) and presentational (one-way speaking and writing), independent learning and who have been recommended for this class, continue to increase proficiency at a rapid pace. In grade eight students will continue to build 21st century literacy skills essential for their future. Reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are integral to the world language learning process. They will learn to understand the structure and patterns of language, ask and answer questions, identify words, describe; retell stories, interpret text, and apply the conventions of language. They will investigate the products, practices and perspectives of Spanish-speaking cultures.

Students in grade eight will advance from **Intermediate Low to the Intermediate Mid** Level by the end of the course [these are the levels described in the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines].

Performing Arts

Drama

A primary goal of the middle school drama curriculum is to provide students a variety of authentic experiences that respond to the National Core Arts Standards and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

The program services sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students with a combination of required and elective courses. Each course meets two hours per week for a semester. Drama classes emphasize the genre as an active and social process. Through the use of role play, improvisation and character development, students explore and express ideas with different approaches. They bring their own experience to the situation developing listening, speaking, concentration, problem solving, self-esteem, critical thinking skills and understanding and reflection of universal human experience.

Sixth Grade – Drama

Course # 866

The sixth-grade drama curriculum is designed to introduce students to many forms of theatrical expression. Students will build their physical and vocal awareness, collaborate with others to tell stories through the performance of scenes and increase their “behind the scenes” theatrical knowledge. Puppetry is introduced.

Seventh Grade – Drama

Course # 876

The seventh-grade drama curriculum is designed to develop self-awareness, collaborative skills, and an appreciation of the diversity in our community and beyond. Students will use improvisation and collaborative playwriting to explore social dynamics and character development. Genre, theatrical design and script analysis are introduced.

Eighth Grade – Drama

Course # 886

The eighth-grade drama curriculum is designed to strengthen performance skills, increase theatrical knowledge and build physical and social awareness. Students are challenged to create scenes using playwriting, character development and other scene building skills. They work collaboratively to perform scripted material using scene and character analysis during the rehearsal process. The exploration of different genres and theatrical techniques, improvisation and theatrical design are introduced.

Music – General Music

Sixth Grade – Fundamentals

Course # 860

Students will learn the fundamentals of musical notation and write compositions of their own. Then, through listening, research, and discussion learn about elements of Western music. Students are enrolled in General Music only if they are not enrolled in chorus, band, or orchestra.

Seventh Grade – Guitar

Course # 870

Students will learn to play the acoustic guitar (provided by the school). They will learn basic chords, strumming techniques, tuning, learn to play notes using musical notation, and will be able to apply these skills to a diverse set of songs.

Eighth Grade – Students as Composers

Course # 889

Students will explore music theory and composition techniques including rhythms, pitches, harmony, chords, and musical form. They will be able to create and arrange composition using both written notation and music technology.

Music – Performing Ensembles

Chorus, Band, and Orchestra are the three primary performing organizations open to all middle school students. These performing ensembles may be taken as an elective or to fulfill a music requirement. Students are expected to participate in all concerts, clinics and festivals as part of the course requirements toward their grade. All students who participate in performing ensembles are expected to participate for the entire year.

Chorus

Sixth Grade – Chorus

Course # 861

Students who have a strong desire to sing should select these full-year courses. They will work on developing singing posture, breath control, listening across the ensemble, more mature vowels and resonance. Ear training and music literacy skills, including pitch and rhythm reading, will be navigated using Solfège and rhythm syllables. Students will be expected to demonstrate their singing and music literacy techniques independently and in small groups. Choral repertoire will represent a diversity of various genres, cultures, styles, and languages. Attendance at both concerts is required.

Seventh Grade – Chorus

Course # 871

Students who have a strong desire to sing should select these full-year courses. They will work on developing singing posture, breath control, listening across the ensemble, more mature vowels and resonance. Ear training and music literacy skills, including pitch and rhythm reading, will be navigated using Solfège and rhythm syllables. Students will be expected to demonstrate their singing and music literacy techniques independently and in small groups. Choral repertoire will represent a diversity of various genres, cultures, styles, and languages. Attendance at both concerts is required.

Eighth Grade – Chorus

Course # 881

Students who have a strong desire to sing should select these full-year courses. They will work on developing singing posture, breath control, listening across the ensemble, more mature vowels and resonance. Ear training and music literacy skills, including pitch and rhythm reading, will be navigated using Solfège and rhythm syllables. Students will be expected to demonstrate their singing and music literacy techniques independently and in small groups. Choral repertoire will represent a diversity of various genres, cultures, styles, and languages. Attendance at both concerts is required.

Eighth Grade – Treble Choir

Course # 884

Students who are comfortable with soprano and alto parts should select this choir. Students will continue learning the choral curriculum through quality repertoire appropriate for treble voices.

Eighth Grade – Cambiata Choir

Course # 885

Students who are comfortable with tenor/baritone/bass or unchanged voices should select this choir. Students will continue learning the choral curriculum through quality repertoire appropriate for their individual voices

Band

All three levels of Middle School Band are graded; full-year courses that meet twice per week. The bands perform three to four times per year. Concert attendance is mandatory. Members are expected to practice their instruments regularly at home. Instruments that are accepted in band are flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, euphonium, tuba, and percussion (percussionists will be expected to play mallet instruments in addition to drums). Band students in grade seven and grade eight selected to play with the orchestra will rehearse with both ensembles, playing one period per week with each group. It is expected that members are to practice their parts between rehearsals.

Sixth Grade – Band

Course # 862

Open to students who have completed at least one year of school lessons on a band instrument (or the equivalent in private instruction). This class continues with the coursework from the 5th grade elementary winds and percussion lessons. Students will be required to submit quarterly playing assignments, prepare their concert music, practice regularly, and attend all concerts.

Seventh Grade – Band

Course # 872

Open to students who have participated in Sixth Grade Band, or who have the equivalent of two years' playing experience. Students will be required to submit quarterly playing assignments, prepare their concert music, practice regularly, and attend all concerts.

Eighth Grade – Band

Course # 882

Open to students who have participated in Seventh Grade Band, or who have the equivalent of three years' playing experience. Students will be required to submit quarterly playing assignments, prepare their concert music, practice regularly, and attend all concerts.

Orchestra

All three levels of Middle School Orchestras are graded, full-year courses that meet twice per week. The orchestras perform three to four times per year and often participate in either a festival or outreach concert. Members are expected to practice their parts between rehearsals and perform in all concerts.

Sixth Grade – Orchestra

Course # 863

Open to string players who have completed at least two years of school lessons on a string instrument (or the equivalent in private instruction). The orchestra class is designed to be a bridge between school lessons and ensemble rehearsals. Students will have quarterly playing and written assignments in addition to preparing their concert music.

Seventh Grade – Orchestra

Course # 873

Open to students who have participated in Sixth Grade Orchestra, or who have the equivalent of three years' playing experience. In the first semester, the ensemble meets twice a week as a string orchestra. In the second semester, wind, brass, and percussion players are added to the group for one of the two rehearsals each week. Repertoire includes baroque and classical arrangements, as well as modern and popular works.

Eighth Grade – Orchestra

Course # 883

Open to students who have participated in Seventh Grade Orchestra, or who have the equivalent of four years' playing experience. This ensemble rehearses as a full orchestra once a week with string, winds, brass and percussion, and one rehearsal a week with strings only. Repertoire includes baroque and classical arrangements, as well as modern and popular works.

Visual Arts

The Middle School Visual Arts curriculum is a sequential program based on the National Standards for the Visual Arts and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Students are challenged to develop their technical, critical and creative thinking skills by solving visual problems using a variety of two- and three-dimensional media. They will develop a foundation of knowledge by learning about art, by making judgments, and by making art from formal, experiential, cultural and historical contexts.

Sixth Grade – Visual Arts

Course # 560

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

The basics of design and technique are taught using a variety of art materials. Students will develop their skills in observational drawing, painting and hand-building techniques in clay. Students begin to analyze their own work and the work of others. They are taught that their own artistic expression is at the same time unique and also part of a greater multicultural artistic heritage.

Seventh Grade – Visual Arts

Course # 570

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

Students will continue to develop their skills in drawing, painting and sculpture. However, there will be more emphasis on applying the elements of art (line, shape, form, space, texture value and color) and the principles of design (scale, proportion, unity, balance, direction and emphasis) expressively.

Eighth Grade

Students may choose from four semester-long art electives: Eighth Grade Art, Introduction to Illustration, Art of Asia, and/or Digital Art & Design.

Eighth Grade – Art

Course # 583

Elective - Semester Course (meets twice a week for half a year)

Students will learn essential art and design media and techniques in 8th Grade Art. Students will work in two- and three-dimensional art forms such as drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed-media and sculpture. Students will explore themes universal to artistic and creative expression and be encouraged to take risks, critically problem solve, refine skills, and develop a personal voice as artists.

Eighth Grade – Introduction to Illustration

Course # 584

Elective - Semester Course (meets twice a week for half a year)

In this course students will sharpen their ability to visually convey a narrative through their artwork. Students will use a variety of media to express and explain ideas, stories, and opinions. Students will try their hand at children's book art, comics, and commercial illustration and more.

Eighth Grade – Art of Asia

Course # 581

Elective- Semester Course (meets twice a week for half a year)

Students in Art of Asia will learn about Asia through the lens of visual art and design. Students will engage in hands on experiences and study the art and culture of Asia and the Asian diaspora from the ancient to the contemporary. Students in this studio art course will use a variety of 2D and 3D art materials, media, and techniques to explore topics of identity, culture, and self through the lens of personal expression.

Eighth Grade – Digital Art & Design

Course # 582

Elective- Semester Course (meets twice a week for half a year)

Digital Art & Design is all around us, on our devices, in our entertainment, and in art and product design. In this course, students will put their understanding of the traditional elements of art and principles of design into action using new media and software. Students will be using Photoshop Elements, making animated Gifs, and trying their hands at Illustration and Graphic Design.

Physical Education, Health, and Wellness

The Physical Education and Wellness program is aligned with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Framework and national (NASPE) standards. This includes topics of:

- Growth and Development
- Physical Activity and Fitness
- Nutrition
- Reproduction and Sexuality
- Mental Health
- Family Life, Interpersonal Relationships
- Disease Prevention and Control
- Safety and Injury Prevention
- Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Substance Use/Abuse Prevention
- Violence Prevention
- Consumer Health and Resource Management
- Ecological Health, and
- Community and Public Health

The Wellness Model seeks to educate and support practice in the balance of its six dimensions. Physical Wellness prepares students for an active life that prevents diseases of sedentary living. Emotional Wellness includes physical activity and mental health resources that support a positive attitude and reduce stress. Intellectual learning is a foundation for knowing how to live well. Spiritual Wellness assures time for reflections, rest, and calm. Environmental Wellness includes having balance and health in careers and workplaces. Social Wellness supports interpersonal relationships and connections. A collaborative, coordinated school health model infuses the concept of wellness into the daily life of schools. Our goal is to provide and support a positive, proactive, dynamic wellness model that supports physical activity and health. A copy of the Physical Education and Wellness curriculum is available at the LPS Curriculum Office or from the Coordinator of Physical Education and Wellness.

Health Education

Health/Wellness Education offers a comprehensive K-12 curriculum grounded in active learning that is designed to positively influence the health knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of students by increasing their abilities to make informed decisions. The goal of the program is to promote healthy choices by teaching skills that students need to help them address the social, physical and emotional challenges they will face throughout their lives.

Seventh Grade – Health Education (Required)

Course # 671

In grade seven students participate in a curriculum that was designed and developed by Lexington's Health Education staff. The curriculum incorporates the special issues and concerns of adolescents and builds upon health education concepts developed in previous grades.

The seventh-grade curriculum focuses on the following areas:

Module 1 – Circle of Wellness

Module 2 – Healthy Relationships

Module 3 – Threats to Health and Wellness

Eighth Grade – Health Education: Safe, Smart and Secure (Required)

Course # 681

In grade eight students participate in a Wellness curriculum that was designed and developed by Lexington's Health and Physical Education teachers. The curriculum incorporates CPR and First Aid safety, promotes smart decision making and refusal skills relating to current adolescent challenges, and addresses a variety of security perspectives, including: self-confidence, secure and healthy relationships, and internet safety.

The eighth grade curriculum focuses on the following areas:

Module 1 – Safe/Standard First Aid and CPR

Module 2 – Smart/Adolescent Challenges

Module 3 – Secure/Personal Safety

Physical Education

The physical education program provides the child with an educational experience which uses movement as a medium of learning and expression. A correlation exists between the development of a sound body, which is one product of the physical education process, and the ability to experience a fuller, more satisfying life in the school, home, and community environment.

This program emphasizes the importance of physical activity and wellness. A child who has a proper foundation in physical education is more likely to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle.

The goals of the program are:

- Students will be encouraged to obtain a level of fitness appropriate to their own capabilities.
- Students will be provided opportunities to show mental, social and emotional growth through physical activities.
- Students will attain a basic workable knowledge and understanding of various sports and activities.
- Students will be encouraged to participate in carry-over activities as well as to appreciate sports activities from a spectator's point of view.
- Students will participate in a safe and healthful environment which supports the philosophy of the Lexington Public Schools.

Program Description

All students are assigned two periods of physical education a week according to grade level. Classes are co-educational and consist of instruction and participation in the following activities:

Team Sports

Basketball
Hockey
Flag Football
Floor Hockey
Soccer
Speedball
Volleyball

Individual Activities

Physical Fitness/Strength Training
Rhythms
Obstacle Course
Individual/Group Challenge Activities
Racket Skills
Track and Field
Project Adventure
Cooperative Games
Fitness Testing

Students are provided with opportunities to learn basic skills and to understand concepts of the activities. This introduction will provide a sound basis for selection of activities offered in the selective physical education program at the high school level.

Sixth Grade – Physical Education

Course # 660

Seventh Grade – Physical Education

Course # 670

Eighth Grade – Physical Education

Course # 680

Additional Courses

Technology Applications
Economics
Journalism
Reading
Speech and Debate

Technology Applications

Sixth Grade – Technology Applications

Course # 363

Students gain proficiency with essential productivity tools for word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations. Responsible use of technology is developed through lessons on digital citizenship, online safety and online research. Through block-based coding, students gain basic computer programming skills.

Seventh Grade – Technology Applications

Course # 373

Computational thinking and computer science skills are developed through hands-on programming and physical computing activities. Students are inspired to build their own websites, apps, games and physical computing devices.

Eighth Grade – Technology Applications (Clarke only)

Course # 383

Students will develop and expand their computer science skills through programming and physical computing activities. Utilizing computer science as a medium for creativity, problem solving and communication will be explored.

Economics

Eighth Grade – Economics (Diamond only)

Course # 186

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

Everyone is an ECONOMIST. In fact, throughout one's entire life he or she will be dealing with economics. The basic topics of scarcity of resources, specialization, production and flow of goods and services, wages, credit and banking are part of everyday life.

This course will introduce basic economic terms. Case studies are used to explore a variety of economic situations. Students will learn about choices that affect our environment, about our banking system and how to be a careful and safe consumer. Students will also use The Boston Globe's Stock Market Simulation to demonstrate how our economy functions. Technology is used to enhance the course, using various economic websites and programs.

Journalism

Seventh Grade – Journalism

Course # 072

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

In journalism, students will regularly read, discuss, and analyze complex informational articles about current events and topics of interest, selected from newspapers and periodicals. By reading and studying the various types of writing styles that journalists use, students will create their own informational writing and videos, developing their writing and research skills in the process. A major goal of the course is to help students revise and edit their work so it is clear, concise, and compelling for readers. Students are also introduced to online resources that support growth in vocabulary, written expression, and content knowledge.

Reading

In the middle school years, students increasingly “read to learn.” Their subject teachers expect reading to play a greater role in the mastery of skills and knowledge. One goal of the middle school reading program is that students use reading effectively to learn math, literature, science, and social studies, as well as other areas. The strategies needed to draw meaning from text are emphasized, not only in specific reading classes, but also with the assistance of the reading specialist, within the subject classes themselves.

The other goal, which continues from the elementary school and follows through twelfth grade, is to have the students develop a lifelong habit of reading for pleasure.

Sixth Grade – Reading

Course # 061

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

As the complexity of both narrative and expository text increases as students enter the middle school, it is imperative to equip these readers with effective strategies that enable them to become competent, independent learners.

This course is designed to teach self-monitoring strategies for reading a variety of texts using content area and supplemental materials. Students will learn such skills as: relating prior knowledge and experience to text, previewing, finding information (both stated and unstated) to answer questions, note-taking, paraphrasing, summarizing and building vocabulary through structure and context. Students will also practice finding the basic elements of fiction such as setting, plot, characterization, conflict and theme. In addition, this course will expand students’ opportunity to read books and informative articles for pleasure.

Visits to the Library Media Center help support the goal of enjoying reading and building its pleasures into lifelong habits.

Speech and Debate

Eighth Grade – Speech and Debate (Clarke Only)

Course # 887

Do oral presentations give you sweaty palms or knots in your stomach?

This introductory course is designed to demonstrate a variety of oral presentation techniques which are intended to help the student feel comfortable and secure when speaking in front of a group. Students will gain experience in both formal speaking, such as oratory and expository, as well as informal impromptu and extemporaneous speaking. Dramatic interpretation of plays and short stories will also be included.

Communication skills will be further enhanced through the preparation and presentation of a policy debate.

Overall, the students should learn to view public speaking as a positive experience.

Academic Supports

English Language Learning

This program is open to all students who qualify as English learners according to a language assessment that measures academic English proficiency, which is vital to classroom achievement. The program is designed to help students succeed in their content classes, even as they are learning the language.

In this course, students of all English proficiency levels learn content-based vocabulary, grammatical structures, comprehension skills and multiple genres of writing through the use of academic texts, using both fiction (literature, a novel excerpt, short story, poetry) and non-fiction (science articles, history, and biography) text. Classroom discussions allow students to practice using academic language, which is necessary for academic success.

Once students demonstrate native-like proficiency on standards-based assessments (ACCESS, MCAS) and academic performance in class, they are ready to exit the program.

Guided Learning Supports

Education support services are designed to ensure that students will develop the skills and disposition to be successful in every class. These supports provide an enriching environment to meet the developmental needs of students who are not on Individual Education Plans, but could benefit from individualized or small-group instruction in organizational and study skills.

These supports provide an opportunity for students to review, refine and build the skills necessary to “unpack the curriculum” in the major content areas.

Special Education

Special Education and related services (speech, OT, PT, etc.) are provided for students on Individual Education Programs (IEP) at the middle schools. These services are provided for students who have been found eligible for special education services and have an IEP that is reviewed at least annually. Requests for an eligibility determination for special education services can be made through the Evaluation Team Supervisor in each middle school.

Library and Information Technology Program

The mission of the Library and Information Technology Program is to prepare our students to be informed, productive and concerned citizens in an information-driven society. We encourage students to continue learning throughout their lives, to become ethical users of information and supporters of intellectual freedom, to develop an appreciation for literature and a love of reading, to appreciate diversity, and to develop a tolerance for differing points of view. We help them acquire the necessary critical thinking strategies and evaluative skills to do so.

Our middle school libraries are learning centers where students and teachers gather for a variety of purposes including classroom assignments, small group projects, individual work, extracurricular clubs, and professional development activities. Our school librarian is an integral part of the middle school curriculum, collaborating with classroom teachers, supporting student research and learning by teaching information literacy skills (strategies for selecting, retrieving, analyzing, and evaluating information in multiple formats using a wide variety of resources), and providing individual instruction as needed. In addition, our school librarian consults with faculty about instructional strategies, curriculum, and the information needs of students, and recommends instructional and professional materials designed to enhance the curriculum. Our school librarian promotes the love of reading and recommends appropriate reading materials from a well-developed collection of fiction and nonfiction. The library and its staff support students and teachers as both consumers and producers of information.

Student Community Development and Support

It is essential to provide for and address numerous development and adjustment issues that are important in the world of a pre-adolescent. Each school maintains a program within a format designed to allow teachers and students to build trusting and supportive relationships around non-academic concerns. Such programs offer activities that promote a stronger sense of student community with each other, the staff, and the school as a whole. These activities may be executed on the level of the individual, class, team, or grade.

Further, these programs are flexible in nature and maintain the capacity to respond to emerging issues as necessary. The strength of these programs is derived primarily from the structured, academic team setting, which also has the latitude to accommodate the social and emotional concerns of the students. This union of structure and responsiveness provided by such programs enables the middle school student to more successfully navigate the passage between the elementary years and high school.

Counseling

During the middle school years, students are assigned to a counselor to help them to navigate challenges and to utilize the opportunities at the middle school in order to feel more competent and successful.

With the counselor they may

- discuss concerns about life either in or out of school
- explore strengths, challenges, and interests
- reflect about current responsibilities and future goals
- develop strategies to become effective personally and socially
- plan educational programs
- and/or deal with other pertinent issues

These interactions may take place in a variety of ways:

Individually, in small groups, during class visits, and/or in other settings. Also, designated programs may be used to explore counseling-related issues.

In addition to working with students, counselors interact with other significant adults who affect students' lives. Counselors meet with school staff members, parents, administrators, and professionals from outside the school in order to evaluate student functioning, consult about them and coordinate helping efforts on their behalf.

Parents should call or email and make an appointment with the counselor whenever they have any questions or concerns about their children. Parents are encouraged to contact the counselor whenever there is an illness, death, separation, divorce, or other family crisis. The Counseling Department periodically collaborates with middle school PTOs to present workshops designed to give parents some additional understanding of child and adolescent development, school success strategies, and other relevant topics. Additionally, counselors are an important resource for families in need of referral resources or information.

Lexington Public Schools Annual Notice

The Family Education and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Massachusetts Student Records Regulations

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations (“Regulations”) together provide parents and eligible students (those who have reached the age of 14 or who have entered ninth grade) certain rights with respect to the student's education records. A general overview of those rights is provided below. Parents and students may obtain a complete copy of their rights under the Massachusetts Student Record Regulations by contacting the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning at 781- 861-2580.

(a) **The right to access the student's education records.** Parents or eligible students should submit their request for access to the school principal. Access is generally provided within ten days of a request. However, Massachusetts General Laws c. 71, §34H (“Section 37H”) law provides specific procedures that must be followed prior to release of records to a parent who does not have physical custody of a child. Information about these procedures can be obtained from the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning at 781- 861-2580.

(b) **The right to request amendment of the student's education records.** Parents or eligible students should direct their request to the principal, clearly identifying the part of the record they wish to have amended, and why.

(c) **The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and the Massachusetts regulations authorize disclosure without consent.** One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests in the records. Such school officials include professional, administrative and clerical staff who are employed by or under agreement with the Lexington Public Schools and who need access to a record in order to fulfill their duties.

Such school officials may also include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with regard to the use and maintenance of education records. The Lexington Public Schools also discloses student records without parent/eligible student consent to officials of other elementary or secondary schools in which a student enrolls, or seeks, intends, or is instructed to enroll upon receipt of a request from such school officials, so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student’s enrollment or transfer.

In addition, the Lexington Public Schools may release-directory information. Directory information is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Directory information, as defined by the Lexington Public Schools, includes the following: student name, parent/guardian name, homeroom, street address, phone number, email address, date of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class/year of graduation, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans. The school/district may include this information in certain school publications, such as a yearbook, newsletter, playbill, or honor roll, as appropriate. Occasionally, family contact information may be provided to outside agencies and community groups, such as the PTO/PTA or the Lexington Education Fund (LEF), at their request. This information is generally used to create family directories for outreach.

The district reserves the right to withhold any information if the district believes it is in the best interest of our students. However, the district will disclose information as required by law.

The district may release student directory information without written consent; unless you indicate that you do not want this information released. Each school will provide an online permission form to complete each year when your child/ren begins school.

As required by law, the Lexington Public Schools routinely releases the name, address and telephone listing of secondary school students to military recruiters and to institutions of higher learning upon request. In the event a parent or eligible student objects to the release of any of the above information, the parent/eligible student may state that objection in writing to the school principal.

(d) The **right to file a complaint** concerning alleged failures by the Lexington Public Schools to comply with the regulations and laws governing student records. Complaints may be filed at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street Malden, MA 02148. In addition, complaints relative to federal statutes and regulations governing student records may be filed with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington DC.

Policy of Non-Discrimination

Lexington Public Schools does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1974 (Age Discrimination Act), or on the basis of sexual orientation or religion in accordance with Mass. Gen. Laws chs. 71 and 151B.

Any student or employee who believes that the Lexington Public Schools has discriminated against or harassed her/him because of her/his race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or age in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, and activities may file a complaint with the Director of Human Resources. If the Director of Human Resources is the person who is alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment, the complaint may be filed with the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance. The individuals listed below are "Grievance Administrators." To file a student complaint, contact the Director of K-12 Counseling. To file a staff complaint, contact the Director of Human Resources.

Director for Human Resources
146 Maple Street
Lexington, MA 02420
781.861.2580, ext. 68046

Director of K-12 Counseling
146 Maple Street
Lexington, MA 02420
781.861.2580, ext. 68077

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Jane McLaughlin, for editing; and to the Lexington Public Schools Print Center, for production.

