

Middle School

Program of Studies

2016-2017

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
Middle Schools
Program of Studies 2016-2017**

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 Science, English Language Arts, Mathematics and Social Studies 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 Schools

Anne Carothers

Anne Carothers
Principal
William Diamond Middle School

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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 2011 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, all of the three major writing types are taught: narrative, informational, and opinion. 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 insure 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 long-form nonfiction unit.

In writing, students work on developing expository essay expression. Students write open-response essays supported by specific textual evidence, through paraphrasing and direct quotation. This focus prepares our students to write the long-form composition, on demand, on the MCAS. Students are assigned narrative and poetic writing, but to a lesser degree than in previous grades. Grammar and usage instruction is embedded within writing units.

Eighth-Grade English

Course #080

Eighth-Grade 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 and cohesive organization. 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 powers.

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 skill development and conceptual understanding. Throughout our curriculum, we emphasize these eight Mathematical Practices identified in the *Common Core State Standards and the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics*:

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 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics and incorporate the Common Core State Standards. 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 as a cohesive whole, 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

Placement in mathematics courses receives a great deal of attention throughout middle school. The intent of the mathematics department is to ensure that all parents and students are informed of the criteria used to determine student placement. Teachers, students, and parents should be aware that there is movement across levels in mathematics courses. Throughout the year, students take several grade-wide common assessments which, along with teacher recommendations, are used to determine placement for the following year.

Sixth Grade

Grade 6 Mathematics

Course #262

All 6th-grade students will enroll in Grade 6 Mathematics. In this course, students will examine rational numbers and equivalence in order to solve problems involving ratios. Students will build upon their elementary school experience with fractions and decimals, by exploring the meaning underlying the algorithms, and by applying skills to solve real-world problems. 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. Students will also solidify their skills with operations with integers. In geometry, students will examine properties of polygons in two dimensions and solids in three dimensions. They will solve problems involving various measurements, and extrapolate these measurements on the coordinate plane. In data, students will examine numerical spreads, analyze measures of central tendency, and create graphical representations and plots.

Students who complete this course will enroll in either Grade 7 Mathematics (#271), or Honors Grade 7 Mathematics (#272).

Seventh Grade

Grade 7 Mathematics

Course # 271

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 Grade 8 Math (#281), Math 1 (#282), or Math 1 Honors (#283).

Honors Grade 7 Mathematics

Course # 272

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 an independent learning environment. Students in this course will engage in the same material as that of the Grade 7 Mathematics course in addition to other topics based on students' readiness. Such supplemental topics may include bases, modular arithmetic, combinatorics, and selected lessons in number theory. Students are expected to solve unfamiliar problems with minimal guidance, and will progress at a very fast pace with a greater emphasis on problem solving, exploration, and contest math.

Students who complete this course will enroll in either Math 1 (#282), or Math 1 Honors (#283).

Eighth Grade

Grade 8 Mathematics

Grade 8 Math

Course # 281

Students in this course will learn the foundations of algebra, including algebraic language, concepts, structure, and skills. Students will solve equations, inequalities, 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 also prove and apply the Pythagorean Theorem. In data, students will examine histograms, interpret distributions with outliers, and analyze two-way tables. Throughout the year, students will use tools including graphing calculators and geometry software.

Students who fully meet the goals of this course will enroll in CP1 Math, or CP2 Math 1 (Algebra/Geometry/Statistics) at the High School.

Math I

Course # 282

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 also prove and apply the Pythagorean Theorem. In data, students will examine histograms, 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. Throughout the year, students will use tools including graphing calculators and geometry software.

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

Math I Honors

Course # 283

This course is designed to meet the needs of learners who have thoroughly mastered all the concepts and skills from prior courses and who thrive in an independent learning environment. Students in this course will engage in the same material as that of the Math 1 course in addition to other topics based on students' readiness. Students are expected to solve unfamiliar problems with minimal guidance, and progress at a very fast pace with a greater emphasis on problem solving, exploration, and higher order thinking skills. Students learn functions (linear, quadratic, polynomial, exponential, rational, and function transformations), equations and inequalities with graphing, systems of equations and inequalities (and

related word problems), geometry concepts, combinatorics, and topics from number theory (such as Euclid's algorithm in various rings, bases). Throughout the year, students will use tools including graphing calculators and geometry software.

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

Math Intervention

Grades 6, 7, 8

This course is for students who need additional time and support to solidify their conceptual understanding and procedural skills in mathematics. Placement into this course is determined by a combination of teacher recommendation and student performance on standards-based assessments (e.g., MCAS). Please note that while enrolled in these courses all students continue with their regular mathematics course and instruction. The course is focused on meeting the individual needs of students and includes review and preview of current material, as well as remedial work on key foundational skills and understandings.

Science

The middle school science program emphasizes instruction in basic science principles and skills. Students explore scientific concepts by conducting laboratory and field studies, reading pertinent material, and participating in project based learning activities.

All students study science each year during their middle school experience. Science topics are selected from earth, life and physical science along with integrated topics in technology and engineering.

The following practices are introduced and used in science and engineering courses throughout middle school:

- 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 science program also includes components of the engineering design process. Engineering skills are introduced in sixth grade and continue through the eighth grade. Students make connections on how science knowledge informs the engineering and design of products in the man-made world.

Sixth-Grade Science

Course# 360

In addition to science practices and inquiry skills, the sixth grade program emphasizes earth science topics that include Earth's structure; geologic changes of Earth's surface; heat transfer; local weather; global climate; the sun, Earth, moon systems including seasons; and the solar system. Science concepts are developed with laboratory and inquiry activities grounded in students' experiences.

Seventh-Grade Science

Course # 370

The focus of seventh grade is life science. The program includes the study of life processes, cells, the diversity of life, evolution, genetics, ecology and human body systems. Among the laboratory experiences are instruction in microscope use, selected dissections, and collection of data and/or specimens representative of a local group of organisms.

Eighth-Grade Science

Course # 380

The course of study in the eighth grade is physical science. Topics are composed of chemistry and physics concepts. The course includes the study of matter, interactions among forms of matter, forces, motion, energy and conservation of matter and energy. Students acquire skills in science and technology that prepare them for high school. In the spring, grade 8 students participate in the Science/Technology and Engineering MCAS test.

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. The Massachusetts Science, Technology and Engineering frameworks drive the course curriculum.

Sixth-Grade Engineering and Design Course # 361

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

Students are introduced to the engineering design process as a method for solving real-world problems. Students use the design process to engineer solutions to particular problems. Throughout the course, students identify the problem, design possible solutions, construct prototypes, test and evaluate their designs, redesign the prototype, and communicate their solutions.

Eighth-Grade Engineering and Design Course # 381

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

The second year of the course continues to address the MA state frameworks. The challenges presented to students require them to solve problems by researching various scientific concepts, drawing blueprints, using tools to build prototypes, testing the prototypes and redesigning or rebuilding to improve their product. Students have the opportunity to use software programs to model real-life objects and create electronic design diagrams. The topics in the class prepare students for taking the Massachusetts Science, Technology and Engineering MCAS test.

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 – Ancient Civilization

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 – World Geography

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 – U.S. History

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 goal of the middle school World Languages Program is to enable students to communicate in French, Spanish or Mandarin. Students pursue the study of their chosen language in grades 6, 7 and 8. When students choose a world language, they study that language for the three-year middle school sequence. Students learn grammatical structures and vocabulary that will help them talk about their own needs and interests. They learn also about the diverse cultures of the French-, Spanish-, and Mandarin-speaking worlds. Activities include group work, projects, peer learning, video presentations, conversational practice and situational dialogs. The world language curriculum is further enriched by the regular use of technology. Students also take advantage of cultural events and field trips which offer real life opportunities to speak in the language which they are studying. Students are evaluated frequently in all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They are expected to do written or oral homework each evening as a reinforcement of the day’s work. The middle school program provides a strong basis for world language study at Lexington High School.

French

French – Grade Six

Course # 460

Students in grade six will develop listening and speaking skills as they become acquainted with a new language and culture. They will use these skills to introduce themselves, describe their family and friends and speak of their daily activities and interests. Students begin to read and write about these topics. Through frequent oral exercises and active learning techniques, they establish the proficiency needed to continue French in grade seven. Students study the geography and culture of French-speaking countries. Students will utilize an online textbook with a wide variety of online interactive resources.

French (Continuing) – Grade Seven

Course # 470

Students in grade seven continue to improve their listening and speaking abilities, while increasing the time spent on reading and writing. They learn to talk about and take part in situations concerning getting around the city, sports, music and games, food and dining out. The basic goal of the course is to continue to develop speaking proficiency and to give students confidence as they continue to learn to read and write. Frequent use of technology and authentic materials bring language and culture to the classroom. Students study the geography and culture of French-speaking countries. Students will utilize an online textbook with a wide variety of online interactive resources.

French (Continuing) – Grade Eight

Course # 480

Students in grade eight continue to improve their language proficiency. They learn to speak about and take part in situations concerning shopping, chores, home, family, furniture, and travel. Students will continue to study the geography and culture of French-speaking countries. Students are expected to use the vocabulary, structures and situations presented in sixth and seventh grade. Students will demonstrate comprehension of the past tense, master many new irregular verbs, and begin to use the target language in a more personally meaningful way. Students will utilize an online textbook and a wide variety of online interactive resources.

Advanced French – Grade Eight

Course # 481

This course is conducted primarily in French. Students who demonstrate excellence in the skills of speaking, listening comprehension, writing and reading, independent learning, and who have been recommended for this class, continue to improve proficiency at a rapid pace. They learn to speak about and take part in situations concerning shopping, chores, home, family, furniture, and travel. Students will continue to study the geography and culture of French-speaking countries. Students will demonstrate comprehension of past and future tenses, master many new irregular verbs, and begin to use the target language in a more personally meaningful way. Students read selections which complement the themes of their textbook and begin to write directed compositions. They begin to use more complex structures in speaking and writing. Students will utilize an online textbook and a wide variety of online interactive resources. Additionally, they participate in the National French contest.

Mandarin

Mandarin (Beginning) – Grade Six

Course # 461

This beginning course introduces the pinyin system of pronunciation of Chinese sounds and tones, and the stroke order and characters of about 300 words. Students will be able to ask questions and carry on simple conversations about family, school and the calendar. Students will also learn basic aspects of Chinese culture.

Mandarin (Continuing) – Grade Seven

Course # 471

Students review communicative tasks as well as characters learned from grade six, and learn about another 300 words with emphasis on radical part recognition for reading and writing. Students will exhibit increased comprehension of meaning by recognizing key characters in selected authentic materials, and demonstrate moderate ease and accuracy in pronouncing Chinese sounds and tones. Curriculum will include weather, transportation, location, food and sports.

Mandarin (Continuing) – Grade Eight

Course # 482

Building on content learned in grades 6 and 7, students continue to improve their proficiency in this class where Mandarin speaking is essential. Themes include school life, travel, food, shopping, etc. The goals for the year include high accuracy for pronunciation, improved interpersonal communication and the development of writing skills.

Spanish

Spanish – Grade Six

Course # 466

Students in grade six will develop listening and speaking skills as they become acquainted with a new language. They use vocabulary and grammatical structures to enable them to describe and to take part in situations concerning basic introductions describing themselves and others, talking about everyday activities, likes and dislikes, and telling time. They begin to read and write about these topics, but the basic goal of the year's work is to develop aural/oral proficiency. Students study the geography and culture of Spanish-speaking countries. Students will utilize an online textbook with a wide variety of online interactive resources.

Spanish (Continuing) – Grade Seven

Course # 475

Students review and reinforce structures and situations presented in grade six. Through frequent speaking and listening activities, they develop the communication skills with which to discuss student life, school and classes, family and home, food and dining out. Students will continue to study the geography and culture of Spanish-speaking countries. While the emphasis of the course is on strengthening oral proficiency, students will begin to increase the time spent on reading and writing. Students will utilize an online textbook with a wide variety of online interactive resources

Spanish (Continuing) – Grade Eight

Course # 485

Students continue to improve their language proficiency. They speak about daily routines, health and fitness, clothing and shopping, holidays and celebrations and travel. Students will continue to study the geography and culture of Spanish-speaking countries. Students are expected to use the vocabulary, structures and situations presented in grades six and seven. They begin to use more irregular verbs and the preterit tense. Students focus more on reading and writing. Students will utilize an online textbook with a wide variety of online interactive resources

Advanced Spanish – Grade Eight

Course # 486

This course is conducted primarily in Spanish. Students who demonstrate excellence in the skills of speaking, listening, comprehension, writing, and reading have been recommended for this class and continue to improve their proficiency. They speak about daily routines, health and fitness, clothing and shopping, holidays and celebrations and travel. Students will continue to study the geography and culture of Spanish-speaking countries. They read passages which complement the work they are doing in their text and write short, directed compositions. They examine grammatical points in more depth and begin to use more complex structures as they speak and write, including many irregular verbs and the preterit tense. Students read a variety of genres. They participate in the National Spanish Contest. Students will utilize an online textbook with a wide variety of online interactive resources.

Visual and 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 Standards for the Arts 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.

Drama 6

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.

Drama 7

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.

Drama 8

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

The middle school curriculum provides a variety of authentic experiences which respond to the National Standards for the Arts and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The primary goals are:

- to involve actively all students in music
- to enhance the students' knowledge of their musical heritage
- to explore interdisciplinary and multicultural activities

These objectives are addressed through improvisation, composition, listening, singing, playing instruments, and performances both within and outside the classroom setting.

Sixth Grade*

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 *either* a general Music class **or** a performing group.

* See Page 23 (Performing Groups).

Seventh Grade

Course # 870

Students will learn to play the acoustic guitar (supplied by the school). They will learn strumming techniques, how to tune, and will also play and sing folk and popular songs.

Eighth Grade (Additional Courses)*

*Enrollment dependent.

Women's Choir

Course # 855

Women's Choir for eighth-grade girls provides the opportunity for students to sing in small vocal ensembles. Students will experience performing different styles such as a cappella, '50s Doo Wop, vocal jazz, madrigals and traditional choral pieces written for treble voices.

Enrollment in Eighth-Grade Chorus is preferred, although not required.

Men's Choir

Course # 857

Men's Choir, an elective for eighth-grade boys, provides the opportunity for students to sing in small vocal ensembles. Students will experience performing different styles such as a cappella, '50s Doo Wop, vocal jazz, madrigals and traditional choral pieces written for treble voices.

Enrollment in Eighth-Grade Chorus is preferred, although not required.

Students as Composers

Course # 889

Students will explore the techniques and practices composers have used and continue to use today through class discussion, extensive listening and composition. Study of tonality, harmonic progression and musical form prepare students for writing compositions based on tonal cell, block chord chorale or anthem, and melodies with various ostinato accompaniments. As has been done throughout history, students will keep a sketchbook and journal to record musical ideas and observations. Composition and instrument technologies will also be introduced in this class.

Performing Groups – Clarke and Diamond

Chorus, Band, and Orchestra are the three primary performing organizations open to all middle school students. The instrumental groups are open to those students who have had at least one year of school or private instruction. These performing ensembles may be taken as an elective or to fulfill a music requirement. Students may participate in all concerts, clinics and festivals. A letter grade for the course will be assigned to each student, each quarter, for their efforts. All students in the performing ensembles are expected to participate for the entire year.

Band

There are two band offerings—Sixth-grade band and Seventh/Eighth-Grade Band. Participation in grade six band requires that the student has completed at least one year of private or school lessons on their woodwind, brass or percussion instrument. Band students 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.

Orchestra

Grade Six and Grade Seven/Eight Orchestras are graded, full-year courses that meet twice per week. Grade Six Orchestra is open to all string players who have completed at least two years of school lessons on a string instrument (or the equivalent in private instruction). Grade Seven/Eight Orchestra is open to students who have participated in Grade Six Orchestra (or who have the equivalent of three years of playing experience).

Grade Seven/Eight Orchestra is a full orchestra with one string rehearsal and one rehearsal with strings, winds, brass and percussion each week. Repertoire includes baroque and classical arrangements as well as modern and popular works.

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.

Chorus

Sixth-Grade Chorus and Seventh/Eighth-Grade Chorus are full-year courses which meet twice a week. This course may be selected by those students who have a strong desire to sing. Students will be encouraged to develop singing posture, breathing techniques, and an understanding of phrasing principles and word-stress concepts. Emphasis will be placed on both reading the octavo and developing the ear. Choral literature studies will be in a variety of styles and in a number of languages. Along with the required participation in each public concert, students will have occasional in-class individual and/or small group performance assessments (singing parts, matching pitches, etc.).

Sixth-Grade Chorus.....Course # 861
Sixth-Grade Band.....Course # 862
Sixth-Grade Orchestra.....Course # 863

Seventh-Grade Chorus.....Course # 871
Seventh-Grade Band.....Course # 872
Seventh-Grade Orchestra.....Course # 873

Eighth-Grade Chorus.....Course # 881
Eighth-Grade Band.....Course # 882
Eighth-Grade Orchestra.....Course # 883

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

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

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 Additional Courses*

*Enrollment dependent

Semester Course

In the eighth grade, students may choose a Visual Arts course. Each course meets twice a week.

2D Art Forms

Course # 588

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

In this course, students will explore two dimensional art forms such as: drawing, painting, printmaking and mixed-media. The three major themes are human figure, still life, and landscape. Students will be encouraged to take risks, critically problem solve, develop techniques, and become more autonomous as artists.

3D Art Forms

Course # 589

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

Students will use 3-D media to make sculptural pieces in clay, wire, paper, and found materials. Students will acquire knowledge, refine skills, and think critically in response to design challenges. Students will look at artists who work in 3-D to gain a better understanding of the art making process and to learn about art produced at different times and cultures.

Art of Asia

Course # 590

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

In this studio course students will have the opportunity to explore Asia through the lens of visual art and design. The class will dive into different two-dimensional and three-dimensional techniques and make work inspired by Asian artists and innovators spanning from the ancient to the contemporary.

Digital Art & Design

Course # 591

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

Through new media and software, students will demonstrate their understanding of the traditional Elements of Arts and Principles of Design. Students will be exposed to Photoshop, animated GIFs, conceptual illustration, and design. 8

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 Wellness 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 Wellness 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.

Grade 6 – Course # 660

Grade 7 – Course # 670

Grade 8 – Course # 680

Additional Courses

Technology Applications
Economics
Journalism
Reading
Speech and Debate

Technology Applications

Technology Applications – Grade Six Course # 961

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

This course begins with correct, efficient techniques and basic operations of 21st century technology skills. The students will apply these skills and learn formatting tools to create school reports, correspondence, spreadsheets, presentations and desktop publishing. Students will be introduced to Internet safety, digital citizenship, and responsibility.

Technology Applications – Grade Seven Course # 971

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

This course will reinforce and enrich the students' technology skills, using the more advanced features of Microsoft Word, Excel, Desktop Publishing, and PowerPoint and related Web 2.0 applications. Searching the Web more efficiently and computer organizational skills will also be covered. Students will delve more deeply into learning about digital citizenship and responsibility.

Technology Applications – Grade Eight (Clarke only) Course # 918

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

Students will expand on their technology skills and be able to demonstrate how to use digital media to effectively communicate information and ideas to multiple audiences and use critical thinking skills to develop innovative products using technology. Continued emphasis will be placed on issues related to technology and digital citizenship and responsibility.

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. Another approach is the use of 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

Journalism – Grade 7

Course # 075

Semester Course (meets twice per week)

This self-paced course is run as a writing workshop. Students will regularly read and understand complex informational articles selected from newspapers and periodicals in order to "discuss" them in their own writing. In addition, students create original narrative essays and short stories in first and third person. 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 briefly introduced to key websites that support growth in vocabulary, written expression, and 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

Course # 962

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

Speech and Debate – Grade 8 (Clarke Only)

Course # 086

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 Study and Learning Center 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

A range of Special Education and related services are available to eligible students with disabilities in the middle schools. However, before the services can be provided, the student must have an evaluation (please contact your school Evaluation Team Supervisor for more information on the evaluation process). If the evaluation process reveals a need for special education services, the student’s program will be determined in keeping with the recommendations made in the child’s Individual Educational Plan (I.E.P.) by the Evaluation Team and approved by the parent.

Summary

All of the services are extensions of what is offered at the elementary level in special education. These services, for eligible students with disabilities, may continue until high school graduation or the age of 22. For further information about special education services and eligibility, please contact your child’s school Evaluation Team Supervisor.

Libraries and Information Technologies Program

The mission of the Libraries and Information Technologies 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. Our staff supports students and teachers as information consumers and producers.

As the production and consumption of information evolves, the middle school Library and Information Technologies Program will continue to provide students and teachers with instruction and support for their emerging information and literary needs.

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.

Guidance and 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, weaknesses, interests and aptitudes
- 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 guidance- and 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 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.

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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). Nor does it discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or religion, in accordance with Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971 (M.G.L.c.76,§5) and Chapter 151B of the General Laws.

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