

# Bala Cynwyd Middle School Program Guide



**2021-2022**



*A* NATIONAL SCHOOL  
*of*  
EXCELLENCE

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## Bala Cynwyd Middle School Program Guide 2021 – 2022

Welcome to Bala Cynwyd Middle School, a nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. This guide is designed to help you and your child plan their academic programming more effectively at our school. The guide is set up chronologically, according to grade and includes descriptions of all our courses as well as our specialized programs. Please take a moment to review this information prior to completing your child’s course registration form.

Should you have any questions about the information in this guide or if you need help in planning your course of study, please contact your child’s school counselor at 610-645-1488. Thank you.

### Grading Scale

Grades are to be an evaluation of a student’s academic work. Student discipline shall have no effect on grades. Student achievement will be reported as a letter grade.

Numeric Average	Alpha Grade	Final Grades
97-100	A+	<p>A final year-long grade is issued in every class. The numeric averages of each of the four quarters are totaled and divided by four, which results in a final grade. In summary, each quarter equates to 25% of a student’s final grade. Also, there is a statistical “floor” of 50% for each of the first two quarters. Students who receive a grade of “F” for the final yearly grade in a course will be expected to re-take the course in Summer School. This is reflected in School Board Policy Number 213.</p>
93-96	A	
90-92	A-	
87-89	B+	
83-86	B	
80-82	B-	
77-79	C+	
73-76	C	
70-72	C-	
67-69	D+	
63-66	D	
60-63	D-	
< 60	F	
> 86.5	O – Outstanding	
64.5-86.4	S – Satisfactory	
< 64.5	U - Unsatisfactory	

### **Scholastic Honors**

To recognize those students who have accomplished a high standard of academic performance, the following “Scholastic Honors” system has been established. Students have the opportunity to earn Honor Roll status every marking period as recognition will be given each quarterly grading period to students who meet the honor roll criteria. A student that earns any grade below a B in any subject has not met the honor roll criteria.

Two-Tiered Honor Roll

- 1) **First Honor Roll** – Awarded to those students who have earned report card grades of all A and O.
- 2) **Second Honor Roll** – Awarded to those students who have earned report card grades of all A, B+, B, O, or S.

**Sequence of Courses, Grades 6 – 9**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Grade 9</b>
Language Arts/ English or Reading	Language Arts/ Reading and Writing	English Reading	English Reading	English I, Honors English I
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
Science	Earth Science	Biology	Physical Science	Biology, Honors Biology
Social Studies	Ancient Civilizations	United States Social Studies, Part I	United States Social Studies, Part II	Global Studies 1, Honors Global Studies 1
World Language or Reading	French or Spanish	French, Spanish, Latin, or Reading	French, Spanish, Latin, or Reading	French, Spanish, Latin
Computers, Arts, Family Consumer Science, Technology and Engineering in Education	Students will be exposed to each of these courses during their stay at Bala Cynwyd Middle School	Students will be exposed to each of these courses during their stay at Bala Cynwyd Middle School	Students will be exposed to each of these courses during their stay at Bala Cynwyd Middle School	Elective
Physical Education/ Health	Physical Education/ Health	Physical Education/ Health	Physical Education/ Health	Physical Education
	General Music or Band, Orchestra, Chorus	General Music or Band, Orchestra, Chorus	General Music or Band, Orchestra, Chorus	Elective

## Language Arts and English

### **Grade 6 – Language Arts: Reading and Writing**

Effective reading requires tools such as strategies, skills, and knowledge. Through experience and practice, students can develop the habits and abilities needed to become successful readers. In order to help students develop as readers and writers, the language arts program includes the following goals:

- Providing a skilled based program that emphasizes reading, writing, speaking and listening
- Exposing students to a variety of genres in reading as well as writing
- Creating an environment that motivates and involves students in their reading and writing
- Presenting lessons that deepen students’ knowledge of how specific reading strategies work and can support their reading
- Supporting developing readers with frameworks that improve reading
- Teaching students how to utilize the writing process with a focus on specific domains: focus, organization, content, style and conventions
- Providing students with standardized test-taking strategies
- Differentiating instruction to support specific student needs

### **Grade 7 - English**

The seventh grade English program is designed to increase students' confidence and skills in reading and writing. Mechanics and grammar are taught within the context of writing and reading programs. Students read and react to different genres of literature (short story, novel, non-fiction, poetry) and write on a variety of self-selected and assigned topics. Interdisciplinary projects also take place during the year. As an example, students read from a variety of historical novels related to the periods studied in Social Studies class.

### **Grade 8 - English**

The eighth grade English course encourages development of students' skills in all areas of language use: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Specifically, students study grammatical patterns in text, speculate about author purpose, and practice the writing process in several formats: persuasive, informative, expository, and creative writing assignments.

### **Reading**

The Middle School Reading Program provides students with intervention and support in small group settings. ***The needs of each student inform the delivery of instruction in the class.*** Criteria for placement include, but are not limited to, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), Degrees of Reading Power (DRP), and the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE). Additionally, input from students’ classroom teachers is considered when placing students in the reading program. Reading classes are grouped as homogeneously as possible in order to intensively target students’ specific needs. A reading specialist teaches each section.

The core components of the program are comprehension, vocabulary and word analysis. While working on reading skills, the reading specialists strive to help students make connections between reading, responding to texts, speaking, and listening. Reading specialists expose students to a variety of texts and guide them in the use of strategies necessary for understanding each type of text. In addition, Newsela, a web-based program, is used to further enrich the reading program. This instruction helps students to see different purposes and contexts for reading. The goal of the program is to provide students with reading skills, aligned with the Common Core and for learning in a variety of content areas.

Students are graded on their individual improvement in the following areas: comprehension, vocabulary development, word analysis, test-taking skills, classwork, and homework.

**Grade six** students will meet every day as a major subject in a small group setting. The class takes place during one of the two scheduled language arts reading and writing blocks and is taught by a reading specialist instead of the student's regular classroom teacher.

**Grade seven** students will meet every day as a major subject in a small group setting. The class takes place in lieu of a student's foreign language class.

**Grade eight** students will meet every day as a major subject in a small group setting. The class takes place in lieu of a student's foreign language class.

## Mathematics

### **Math 6**

Aligned with the goals and objectives of the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards for Mathematics and the recommendations of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Math 6 is a grade-level course in which higher order thinking skills are taught through the content areas of the number system, ratios and proportional relationships, geometry, expressions and equations, and statistics and probability. Problem solving, communication and reasoning are pervasive themes through all content areas. Students begin the transition from concrete operations to abstract thinking through the development of problem solving strategies.

### **Math 7**

This course is aligned with the PA Core Standards for 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Topics experienced include proportional reasoning, expressions and equations, the use of variables, properties of 2-D and 3-D geometric figures, angle relationships, surface area, volume, data analysis, and developing statistical inferences and predictions. These topics will be approached with an emphasis on the eight mathematical practices in order to develop real-world connections and understanding.

### **Math 7/8**

This course is aligned with the PA Core Standards for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. It is fast paced and will expose students to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade state standards in one year of time. Topics experienced include proportional reasoning, expressions and equations, the use of variables, properties of 2-D

and 3-D geometric figures, angle relationships, surface area, volume, data analysis, and developing statistical inferences and predictions. Additional topics include irrational numbers, radicals, exponents, graphing linear equations, slope/rate of change, solving multi-step equations, transformations, Pythagorean Theorem, scatter plots, and line of best fit. These topics will be approached with an emphasis on the eight mathematical practices in order to develop real-world connections and understanding.

### **Math 8**

This course is aligned with the PA Core Standards for 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Topics experienced include irrational numbers, radicals, exponents, graphing linear equations, slope/rate of change, solving multi-step equations, transformations, Pythagorean Theorem, scatter plots, and line of best fit. These topics will be approached with an emphasis on the eight mathematical practices in order to develop real-world connections and understanding.

### **Integrated Math 1**

This course is the first in a series of three integrated math courses and is designed to combine some of the basic principles of Algebra, Geometry, and Statistics. Students will deepen and extend their understanding of linear relationships and be introduced to exponential functions, modeled through data. Students will use properties and theorems involving congruent figures to expand and broaden understanding of geometric knowledge. Students will experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that draws on their ability to make sense of problem situations, and will develop the ability to explore and solve mathematical problems, think critically, work cooperatively with other students, and communicate mathematical ideas clearly.

### **Integrated Math 2**

This course is the second in a series of three integrated math courses and is designed to develop an intermediate understanding of the principles of Algebra, Geometry, and Statistics. Students will connect and extend topics from Integrated Math 1 and be introduced to Quadratic Functions, Similarity and Congruence, Circles, Basic Trigonometric Functions and Probability. Students will experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that draws on their ability to make sense of problem situations, and will further develop the ability to explore and solve mathematical problems, think critically, work cooperatively with other students, and communicate mathematical ideas clearly.

### **Math Supplement - Grades 6, 7, and 8**

Math supplement is a general education class designed to support students in the area of mathematics; more specifically to address individual students' areas of need with regard to mathematical foundational skills. Prior student performance assessments as well as current curriculum assessments are used to determine eligibility for the course as well as to determine the areas of need to be addressed. The class is taught by a certified mathematics teacher and is normally scheduled during one of the four days of the cycle.

## Science

### **Grade 6 – Science**

The focus of sixth grade science is the processes that shape the Earth. Hands-on labs provide concrete experiential learning through which students apply scientific skills, scientific inquiry and scientific methodology. Investigations include plate tectonics, volcanoes, earthquakes, rocks and minerals, weather, and composition and features of the planets in the solar system.

During this course, students will examine and understand the relationship between Earth's interior and its features; identify the three major rock groups – igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic – their characteristics and the processes by which they are formed; examine the processes of water and weather in earth systems and demonstrate the cycling of water in and out of the atmosphere; as well as compare and contrast the surface features of the planets and explain how the tilt of the Earth causes seasons and weather patterns.

### **Grade 7 - Biology**

Seventh grade science is an introductory course in biology for students to begin to understand the living world around them. It provides students with an intensive overview of the diversity, variation, interaction, adaptation, and changes among living things.

Living science in seventh grade offers a hands-on, laboratory based approach to the inquiry method of learning. Students are given the opportunity to develop basic lab skills through investigation and experimentation. They are actively involved in research and a variety of presentations and projects.

During this course, students will demonstrate an understanding of the scientific process; investigate the needs and relationships of living things based on biotic and abiotic factors; analyze the components of cells and the processes that occur within them; explain the foundation of modern genetics; explore present day evolutionary theories; detail organisms found within each of the six kingdoms; and explore ecology as it is interwoven throughout life science.

### **Grade 8 - Physical Sciences**

Eighth grade science is an exploratory course involving opportunities to construct knowledge and develop skills through problem-solving, laboratory activities, projects, and inquiry-based learning.

During this course, students will understand concepts of physics, basic chemistry, and astronomy; develop and conduct experiments, critically analyze the process and results, and communicate their findings; apply technology in solving problems, and discuss applications of technology in society; critically analyze problems, and utilize the appropriate mathematical applications required to solve those problems; and recognize that science is data based, subject to revision, and an integral part of their lives.

## Social Studies

### **Grade 6 - Ancient Civilizations**

The social studies curriculum for sixth grade introduces students to the study of six of the world's ancient civilizations. In addition to opportunities for content-area integration, the global nature of the ancient civilizations curriculum, with its focus on key aspects of culture, affords students the chance to explore the development of many diverse cultures. By exploring how ancient people lived day-to-day, governed themselves and solved problems, students begin to see how the past informs our current way of life. While exploring the ancient world cultures in social studies, students learn skills that help them to gather, manipulate, and present information from multiple sources. Reading skills are integrated with the historical concepts through citations of textual evidence, vocabulary development within text, communication of conceptual ideas, and visual literacy. Writing and research skills are integrated through the application of informative writing structures, the exploration of the process of research and inquiry, and the analysis of historical text. Throughout the year and during multiple units, these skills are practiced and honed.

### **Grade 7 - U.S. Social Studies**

The seventh grade social studies program surveys American history chronologically from its colonial foundations to the outbreak of the American Civil War. Students are challenged to “think like historians” by asking analytical questions of the past and applying that knowledge to modern society. An emphasis will be placed upon analyzing primary and secondary sources with the purpose of drawing conclusions about how people and their governments develop over time. Units of study may include, but are not limited to, North American Colonization, War for Empire, Causes of the American Revolution, the American Revolution, American Political Systems, and Westward Expansion. In preparation for eighth grade, students will begin to develop the skills of evidence-based opinions, discussion, and debate.

### **Grade 8 - U.S. Social Studies**

The eighth grade Social Studies program surveys American social studies chronologically from the mid-19th century through the early 20th century. Topics include: The Civil War, Reconstruction, government and the Constitution, the West, the Industrial Revolution and immigration, involvement in world affairs, World War I, and changing foreign policy, the struggle for civil rights, and America's role in an increasingly interdependent world. More contemporary topics are taught whenever possible to the extent that they relate to more distant social studies and help bring the past to life. A student centered approach to learning will offer students an opportunity to express opinions and involve themselves with social studies in many different ways, including: projects with technology, primary and secondary source investigations with a focus on the PA Core Standards, essay writing, debate, open dialogue, and simulations. Presenting social studies as a compelling story, the teachers help students appreciate the relevance of the past to their present and their future.

## World Language

### **Grade 6 (FLES Bridge)**

Students will participate in the French or Spanish programs as a continuation of their elementary FLES program. They will meet for one period during a four-day cycle. Students will begin to develop skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing through the use of ancillary materials and cultural activities.

### **Grade 7**

While we encourage students to remain with the language they have studied through elementary school, students may indicate a preference to study Latin, French or Spanish in seventh grade. The language studied in seventh grade will continue in eighth grade.

Students who choose Latin will be studying the language for the first time. Students who move from French to Spanish or from Spanish to French will be mixed with students who have studied the language previously. The content learned in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum builds on the vocabulary and phrases learned in the FLES program. 7<sup>th</sup> grade will begin more formal instruction of the language that will focus on structure and communication.

#### **French/Spanish**

The seventh grade curriculum allows students the opportunity to further develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills while broadening their understanding of the target cultures. Students will interact with the language on a daily basis through the use of text, audio, video, computer, music and games. Students will be evaluated based on their ability to interpret and produce language via skits, written assessment, conversations, reading comprehension, projects, daily homework, and class participation. Foreign language classes meet daily, reflecting an increase in frequency from the sixth grade program.

#### **Latin**

Seventh grade Latin introduces the students to the fundamentals of Latin grammar and syntax while they read a continuous story about a Roman family. Latin vocabulary words, and their English derivatives, are a regular feature of each chapter. Being able to read original Latin is the ultimate goal of the program; yet along the way students learn to analyze and understand the English language with clarity and precision. Additionally, students study Mythology, Social studies, Engineering, daily life, and the Roman Republic. They discover the enormous influence the Romans have had on modern literature and civilization.

### **Grade 8**

Students continue their studies in French, Latin and Spanish during their eighth grade year. In modern language courses, students are expected to communicate primarily in the foreign language with a minimum of English while exploring the culture where the target language is spoken. Listening, reading and writing are also emphasized. Latin students continue to perfect their

grammar and syntax skills, while reading stories in Latin. Roman culture, word derivatives and the mythology of heroes continue to be part of the curriculum.

## **Computers, Arts, Family Consumer Science, Technology & Engineering Education**

### **Computers**

The middle school computer course is designed to provide students with a variety of learning experiences in the ever-changing world of technology. The curriculum is designed to encompass the ISTE Standards for Students in which it encourages students to be a: Empowered Learner, Digital Citizen, Knowledge Constructor, Innovative Designer, Computational Thinker, Creative Communicator, and Global Collaborator.

Students will develop comprehensive skills using a variety of computer software, web based tools and technology. Curriculum highlights include: Graphic Design and Photo Editing, Website Design, Video Editing and Movie Production, Intro to Computer Science and Programming, Digital Citizenship and Internet Safety, Using Productivity Tools and Keyboarding. This course is a challenging experience that will provide students with a solid foundation of skills for their middle school years and beyond.

### **Technology & Engineering Education**

Technology is a fundamental part of today's society. In today's rapidly changing world, it is imperative that students develop an understanding of technology and the skills necessary to use, manage, and manipulate technology. Technology & Engineering Education strives to provide students with a solid foundation upon which to build such technological literacy. Technology & Engineering Education at Bala Cynwyd Middle School begins with an examination of what technology means. We define technology as the process whereby human beings use tools, machines, materials, and knowledge to solve problems in order to satisfy needs and wants. Using this definition as a springboard, students then explore core concepts of technology such as; Eras of Technology, Areas of Technology, Exponential Growth, Impacts of Technology, and the Design and Problem Solving Method.

After working through the core concepts, we move into the body of the course. During this phase, students split their time between two facilities – The Research and Development Lab and the Design and Prototyping Lab. Working both collaboratively and independently, students will use their problem solving skills to design and construct solutions to relevant, authentic, real-world problems. Students will have myriad opportunities to apply and reinforce their content knowledge within the framework of the design and problem solving process.

The core Areas of Technology: Power and Energy, Biotechnology, Construction, Transportation, Manufacturing, and Communication will be addressed. Students will use a variety of tools, including

but not limited to computers, hand tools, multimedia equipment, and power tools. Throughout the entire course, we stress the idea that Technology & Engineering Education does not simply equate to computers or woodshop but rather encompasses these things.

### **Art**

The art program advances the students' understanding and skills in drawing, painting, and three-dimensional form through a studio experience. Elements of design, principles of organization, art styles, art history, and art criticism are explored by the students as media skills and techniques refine and blossom creatively at this pivotal age. Sketch books and skill building art and writing activities are used extensively. The art program continues to provide experiences consistent with the interests and the intellectual, social and aesthetic maturity of the students. The course provides experience in enhancing artistic development, self-awareness and confidence in one's ability. By increasing their understanding of art heritage and recognizing artistic styles and achievements, the students grow in their awareness of the art world. Exploration of additional units may include interdisciplinary approaches and multi-cultural perspectives. Students who wish to continue in art at the high school level are encouraged and given guidance.

### **Family and Consumer Sciences**

The Family and Consumer Sciences program focuses on encouraging students to become responsible contributors to family and community. Family and peer relationships are examined, along with ways to become a better communicator. Students will gain nutrition awareness from the program after learning the benefits of good health and wellness. Students will learn the basics of cooking and baking, as well as the importance of safety and sanitation in the kitchen. The foods prepared in class are nutritious, as well as appealing to the teenage palate. Fabric care and repair, textile design and construction are another piece of the curriculum. In eighth grade, students will take part in a consumer education unit to gain self-awareness and personal management skills for the future.

## **Physical Education, Health**

### **Physical Education – 6th, 7th and 8th**

The Physical Education program at Bala Cynwyd Middle School is focused on maintaining and improving the fitness of all our students. Through carefully designed and coordinated lessons, the components of health and skill related fitness are assessed for each student. It is our goal for students to experience a (1) wide variety of activities, (2) enjoy their physical education experience, and (3) leave Bala Cynwyd with the knowledge and skills to incorporate fitness into everyday life.

### **Health**

The health education program at Bala Cynwyd Middle School is a coordinated, planned, and sequential curriculum in which each lesson builds upon the previous lesson. It is designed to influence positively the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of all our students. State and national standards are evaluated by using informal and formal assessments. The students are armed with the

knowledge and skills to assist them in making healthy choices. Areas of study include decision making, nutrition, substance abuse, disease control and prevention, first aid, puberty, anatomy, relationships, dating, birth control, abstinence, pregnancy, labor childbirth, sexually transmitted diseases, drug use, stress management, nutrition, and eating disorders. It is our goal to empower the students with knowledge and skills to confidently live a healthy life style as they mature through their adolescent years. When examining their own health, students will become aware of not only the physical component of health but also the mental/emotional and social side. By keeping these three areas in balance, students will be on a path toward living a healthy lifestyle.

## Music

### **General Music**

Areas of study include melody, harmony, meter, form and texture. Music in history is explored. Our textbook, Silver Burdett's Making Music, surveys myriad musical styles, cultures, genres and venues in an extraordinarily comprehensive manner. Lessons are accompanied by professionally produced digital recordings. Students who are not in chorus, band or orchestra take this General Music course.

### **Chorus**

Repertoire reflects a broad variety of styles. Emphases include individual vocal technique, breath control, head voice development and part singing. Unison, two and three-part music will be performed. The chorus curriculum also includes much of the General Music program described above.

### **Band**

Band is for all grade levels and open to all woodwind, brass and selected percussion players who have completed at least one year of lessons. Entrance is based on the recommendation of their former music teacher and the assessment by the middle school instrumental music teacher. Emphasis will be placed on improving technical skills and ensemble playing. Specific requirements must be met throughout the year to complete each quarter successfully. Group pullout lessons are required and scheduled on a rotating basis to avoid interference with any specific class. Full band meets as a scheduled class once per cycle. Representative literature of varying musical periods and styles is presented in progressive levels of difficulty throughout the year. Band is a year-long commitment; therefore, careful consideration should be made prior to registering for this course. Students will be expected to attend all performances scheduled throughout the year.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Orchestra**

Sixth Grade Orchestra is open to all sixth grade string players who have completed at least two years of lessons, sufficient music reading ability is necessary for success in 6<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra. Entrance is based on the recommendation of their former music teacher and the assessment by the middle school instrumental music teacher. Representative literature of varying musical periods and styles is presented in progressive levels of difficulty throughout the year to prepare the students adequately

for orchestral experiences outside of school. Specific requirements must be met throughout the year to complete each quarter successfully.

All string players will be expected to attend weekly group lessons that will rotate to avoid interference with the same class period. In addition, students will be expected to attend all performances scheduled throughout the year. Full orchestra meets once per cycle as a scheduled class. Orchestra is a year-long commitment; therefore, careful consideration should be made prior to registering for this course.

### **7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Orchestra**

The seventh and eighth grade Orchestra is a curricular extension of the orchestra school class that takes place during the school day. This group is open to all seventh and eighth grade string players who have reached a sufficient level of preparation to enable them to participate successfully. Representative literature of varying musical periods and styles is presented in progressive levels of difficulty throughout the year to prepare the students adequately for orchestral experiences outside of school. Specific requirements must be met throughout the year to complete each quarter successfully. All woodwind, brass and percussion students will be expected to attend one sectional every other week that will rotate to avoid interference with the same class period. In addition, full orchestra meets once per cycle as a scheduled class. Orchestra is a year- long commitment; therefore, careful consideration should be made prior to registering for this course.

### **Extracurricular Instrumental Music Ensembles**

#### **Chamber Orchestra**

Chamber Orchestra is an advanced string orchestra. Any 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade student who is enrolled in orchestra may audition for Chamber Orchestra. Auditions take place in September. A limited number of students will be selected to maintain the desired instrumentation and balance of ensemble. Chamber Orchestra rehearses once a week before school. Because of the difficulty of the music, most Chamber Orchestra participants study privately.

#### **Junior Jazz Band/Senior Jazz Band**

Any student who is enrolled in band or orchestra may audition for junior and senior jazz band. Auditions will take place in September. A limited number of students will be selected based on the accepted standard instrumentation. Junior Jazz Band and Senior Jazz Band rehearsals will be held before school on two days each week from 7:30 – 8:15 a.m. Members of either jazz band will be expected to attend all performances scheduled throughout the year. More information will be given out to interested students at the beginning of the school year.

#### **Grade 6 - eVOLVE**

eVOLVE is a cross-curricular program for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. eVOLVE's mission is to empower students to explore the evolution of academic, societal, and personal topics through the acquisition and application of skills, experiential learning, guided investigations, and regular reflection. The ultimate

goal of the eVOLVE program is to foster a confident sense of self as a capable lifelong learner. Each individual is a responsible member of a dynamic close community, enjoying and learning from each other.

The program partially compacts the 6<sup>th</sup> grade's science and social studies curricular concepts over the course of the school year. Throughout this time we alternate between science and history providing more focused learning. Additionally, we work through two inquiry units that are highly structured with skill lessons, but open to student choice of topics. Language arts skills (reading and writing) are taught and practiced throughout the year.

eVOLVE teachers visit each elementary school to introduce the program to the 5th graders, then present it again to interested students and parents at an evening Prospective Student & Parent Meeting in the eVOLVE classroom. Students are chosen by lottery from the pool of applicants. If you have any questions please contact Mr. Jamie Gaffga or Ms. Jennifer Nates at [evolve@lmsd.org](mailto:evolve@lmsd.org).

### **Grade 7 - Communiqué**

The Communiqué program teaches the same curriculum as found on all seventh grade teams but utilizes a block of time to integrate language arts, social studies, science, health, art, and music into the theme of communication. Communiqué provides students with hands-on experiences that emphasize critical thinking, using a variety of teaching modes to stimulate all students' learning styles. Project-based and content-driven videography, publishing, advertising, journalism, technology, and research are integrated into the program. Students will leave the Communiqué classrooms (and may integrate with the other seventh grade teams) for math, foreign language, technology education, band, chorus, and orchestra instructions.

Students in the Communiqué program experience a rigorous, challenging curriculum with the benefits of flexible blocks of time, a small team with fewer teachers, connectedness to curriculum and classmates, and project-based learning with emphasis on critical thinking, group work, and personal management. Communiqué students are chosen by lottery from the pool of applicants. If you have any questions please contact Mrs. Messick ([messicm@lmsd.org](mailto:messicm@lmsd.org)) or Dr. Tom Ricker ([ricker@lmsd.org](mailto:ricker@lmsd.org)) at 610 645-1480 or by e-mail.

### **N.O.W. (New Options Work)**

N.O.W. (New Options Work) is a district wide, seventh and eighth grade alternative education learning community at Bala Cynwyd Middle School. NOW covers the same curriculum as the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams. This student-centered program values a diversity of learning styles. With challenging academic standards, students of both grades take part in a thematic humanities curriculum, with interdisciplinary units, which emphasizes diversity and multiculturalism in the United States. Students are nominated for this program by counselors and teachers. The small class size and co-teaching allows for a personal learning experience, where the uniqueness of each student is valued and nourished.

## **EXCEL Program**

EXCEL is a highly individualized general education class based on the needs of students with an emphasis on reading and the development and improvement of skills across the curriculum. It is designed to guide and support regular education students toward high achievement. It grows directly out of several of our District's Strategic Beliefs:

- All individuals can be successful learners.
- People learn in different ways and at different rates.
- Excellence demands sustained effort.
- High expectations yield high results. EXCEL is a regular education intervention.

Students will:

- Make connections among ideas and between texts, with a focus on textual evidence and non-fiction reading.
- Acquire and utilize grade appropriate organizational and study habits.
- Develop an understanding of their learning style and self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.

EXCEL support will be scheduled flexibly dependent upon individual needs. Students are identified for EXCEL based on standardized assessments, record review, and teacher and parent input. Students may be scheduled to receive instruction and support during specials. The EXCEL teacher will also communicate with parents and provide help and support to parents as needed. A grade level counselor will work with the EXCEL teacher to provide additional support and to extend the school-home connection.

## **Guidance Program**

### **School Guidance Curriculum:**

School counselors deliver the guidance curriculum to all students through classroom lessons. The lessons are based on ASCA Student Competencies.

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Students learn about their personal *learning styles*

7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Students learn *resume building & sexual harassment prevention*

8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Students explore their *interests and careers & Annual Career Fair*

### **Our comprehensive school counseling program at BCMS will:**

- ◆ Be based on specified goals and developmental student competencies for grades 6-8
- ◆ Be planned and coordinated by school counseling staff with input from other school, parent, and community representatives
- ◆ Incorporate community resources
- ◆ Be evaluated and developed by using measurable data
- ◆ Actively involve counseling representatives to monitor students' outcomes and progress

**Individual Student Planning:**

Transition Activities: All school counselors are involved in transition activities assisting students and families adjusting to BCMS and each subsequent grade level. Some transition activities include:

- ◆ Multiple visits to all three feeder elementary schools to meet with students
- ◆ Coordinating transition activities/tour for all three feeder schools
- ◆ Meeting with all sending and receiving school counselors to share vital student concerns

**Responsive Services:**

School counselors provide responsive services through brief individual school counseling, providing community resources, and implementing crisis response.

- ◆ Small Group Curriculum: Group Counseling is an excellent opportunity for students to gain personal insight, give and receive feedback from other students, and learn specific skills. The school counselors facilitate several groups as part of the School Counseling Program. Groups are developed based on student needs and interests.

**System Support:**

- ◆ Consultation: Our school counselors routinely consult with parents, staff, and administration to help students achieve academic and social / personal success in school.
- ◆ Advisory Council: We meet bi-annually with our advisory council comprised of parents, professional staff, and administrators to share information about our Program and receive feedback from our stakeholders.

### **Youth Experiencing Success Summer Program**

A stimulating and thematic approach to learning will be the basis of this summer program, so that skills are strengthened as students are learning and involved with topics that are engaging and highly interesting. The overall goal of this program will be to strengthen and maintain students' reading, writing, and mathematical skills so that they can reach proficiency in these areas. Experienced teachers who currently teach in Lower Merion will teach in this program. Eligible sixth and seventh graders are selected and invited based upon their previous performance on PSSA reading and mathematics tests and/or other standardized assessments, along with a review of their individual achievement during the school year.