

# Tahanto Regional



**MIDDLE SCHOOL  
PROGRAM OF STUDIES  
2020-2021**

# TAHANTO REGIONAL MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

BERLIN, MA

BOYLSTON, MA

**Principal:**

Diane Tucceri

**Vice Principal:**

Sally-Ann Stukuls

**School Counselors:**

Ilene Rodman

Greg Picariello

**Accredited by:**

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges

TELEPHONE: (508) 869-2333

FAX: (508) 869-0175

[www.bbrsd.org](http://www.bbrsd.org)

Berlin-Boylston Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, disability, veteran status, genetic information, homelessness or any other class protected by state or federal law.

## EDUCATION FOR ALL

Chapter 622/Title IX Equity Statement: Tahanto Regional Middle/High School is in compliance with the Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971 and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. Chapter 622 guarantees that all aspects of public school education must be fully open and available to members of sexes, minority groups and handicapped. No student may be excluded from any course, service or resource available in that school because of the race, color, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, or handicap of that student. Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 insures that no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination in any federally assisted program. For information, please contact Karen Molnar, Special Education, at 508/869-2837.

Berlin-Boylston Public Schools is an affirmative action employer, ensuring that its programs and facilities are accessible to the public. We do not discriminate on the basis of

Chapter 622/Title IX Grievance Procedure: Any student or employee of the Berlin-Boylston Public Schools who believes he/she has been discriminated against, denied a benefit, or excluded from participation in any educational program or activity on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national original, or handicap, may file a complaint with Chapter 622/Title IX Coordinator. This may be done though the Superintendent's Office at 215 Main Street, Boylston, MA 01505.

Tahanto Regional Middle/High School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., a non-profit government, nationally recognized organization whose affiliated institutions include elementary through collegiate institutions offering postgraduate instruction.

Accreditation of an institution by the New England Association indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality periodically applied through a peer group review process. An accredited school or college is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purpose through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future.

Tahanto was re-accredited by the NEASC in April 2017. For further information about accreditation, please contact:

NEASC / 209 Burlington Road / Bedford, MA 01730

<http://www.neasc.org>

## **TAHANTO REGIONAL MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Tahanto Regional Middle/High School is a community composed of students, faculty, administration, parents and staff committed to working cooperatively to develop the intellectual and social potential of each student. Mutual trust and respect is encouraged. Students and teachers demonstrate a positive respect for one another.

A varied curriculum is offered to meet the needs of students of all levels of ability. Recognizing the different ways that students learn, we are committed to providing learning experiences using a variety of educational models, such as cooperative learning, debates, group discussions, inquiry and investigation, discovery, open-ended questions and student centered learning.

The class size at Tahanto is small, with an average student to teacher ratio of 19 to 1. Course overviews are distributed by each teacher at the beginning of the school year. These performance objectives are measured by a variety of teacher constructed forms of evaluation and teacher observation. Student assessment is measured in the classroom, and by studying and analyzing the results of standardized testing.

The curricula reflect a comprehensive and sequential development of concepts structured around affective and cognitive objectives. Students are encouraged to strive to the highest level of achievement. The Family and Consumer Science curriculum includes courses in culinary arts. The music and art curricula offerings educate students to appreciate ideas and emotions conveyed in sound and image with the goal that they will understand and know the nature of the creative process and the role of the arts in reflecting and shaping the cultural heritage. The language arts department offers a four-year sequential study of French and Spanish. Advanced Placement courses are offered in biology, chemistry, calculus, U.S. history and English. Library media and technology are used at all levels of instruction.

Tahanto Regional Middle/High School is pleased to offer the Tahanto Pre-School and an Early Childhood Development Program onsite. Participating students are eligible for licensure as private pre-school teachers after graduation. Licensure-eligible students will have completed 4-year long child development courses and a 360-hour practicum with Tahanto Pre-School students.

Tahanto's School Counseling Department supports students by providing classroom guidance, individual student planning, responsive services, system support, and special education services. The school counselors, school adjustment counselor and school psychologist provide a full range of educational, personal, and vocational support. Students are encouraged and assisted with continuing their education beyond high school.

The athletic program provides our students with a variety of interscholastic sports at the middle school and high school levels, and is committed to developing students' scholastic and social skill abilities, in addition to growing their athletic capacities.

Tahanto Regional High School provides a supportive, respectful and challenging environment in which each student can strive to achieve his/her full potential.

## **Tahanto's Mission**

Our mission is to support and to challenge students in achieving personal and academic excellence in a safe, collaborative, student-centered environment.

## **Tahanto's Vision:**

Our vision is to create a tradition of developing responsible and reflective citizens who are college/career ready and life-long learners.

## **Tahanto's core values and beliefs**

Our core values guide our decisions and anchor our actions in the pursuit of learning. We are committed to fostering:

**Determination**- Problem solving; perseverance; desire to succeed; and pride

**Education**- Critical thinking; access to resources; technology; and effective communication

**Enrichment**- Creativity; extra-curricular activities; confidence; and applying knowledge outside of school

**Responsibility**- Strong sense of community; service to others; collaboration; self-reflection; respect and empathy for others; and positive contributions to the community

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

### **Creativity and Innovation**

*Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products.*

- Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes
- Create original works as a means of personal or group expression
- Identify trends and forecast possibilities

### **Communication and Collaboration**

*Students communicate and work collaboratively to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.*

- Interact, collaborate, and publish information and ideas, using effective communication, sometimes employing a variety of digital environments and media
- Develop cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with learners of other cultures
- Contribute to project teams, including distance learning, to produce original works or solve problems

### **Research and Information Fluency**

*Students apply a variety of learning strategies to gather, evaluate, and use information.*

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation
- Gather relevant information from multiple sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information responsibly
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research

### **Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making**

*Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions.*

- Identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation
- Collect and analyze data when identifying problems, exploring solutions, making informed decisions, and completing tasks
- Use multiple processes and diverse perspectives when approaching research, projects, and problem solving

### **Citizenship**

*Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues and practice legal and ethical behavior.*

- Practice active care for the world and for those with whom we share it
- Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning
- Advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology



## **SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

The school demonstrates its commitment to foster and expand community involvement through: The Tahanto Website Newsletter, Community Service Club, Annual Parent-Student Class Overviews and College Seminars, and the School Council.

The school demonstrates its commitment to curriculum development through a five-year review of each curriculum area, setting of annual teacher goals, setting of annual department goals, setting of school goals and setting of system-wide goals, and the use of release time devoted to curriculum development.

The school demonstrates its commitment to make available to all members of the community opportunities to acquire technological skills through the community-school television studio and the public access catalogue.

The school demonstrates its commitment to the need to strive for effective interaction and excellence with the larger community through: The Audubon Society, The Worcester Art Museum, Clark University, The Association of Middle Schools, and The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority.

The school demonstrates its commitment to provide career level educational opportunities through its family and consumer education, industrial technology, work-study, community service and early childhood education/preschool program.

The school demonstrates its commitment to pupil services through a comprehensive school counseling program that includes seminars and Career Awareness Day, College Fair Field Trip, College Information Night, Financial Aid Night, Introduction to Naviance Night, and Job Shadow Day.

The school demonstrates its commitment to the special needs population by its unique programs: the Collaborative High School Program, the Peer Assistance Program, the Oral Interpreter and Speech/Language Pathologist Program, the Assabet Valley Collaborative Middle School Multiply Handicapped Program, the Transitions Program and inclusive education.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES

### CORE ACADEMIC AREAS

The Scheduling Subcommittee offers the following vision for CORE academic areas (CORE academic areas are those courses which are required full year courses that meet five days a week).

### GRADE 6

<b>Required Full Year</b>	<b>Periods Per Six Day Cycle</b>
---------------------------	----------------------------------

English/Language Arts	6
Science	6
Social Studies	6
Math (Math 6 or Advanced Math 6)	6
Physical Education	3
QUEST Block	6

### **One Semester Each Required (opposite PE)**

Reading	3
Music	3

### **Full Year Electives**

Middle School Band	3
Middle School Jazz Band	3
Middle School Chorus	3
Lego Mindstorm Robotics 6	3
Art	3
Film Adaptation	3
World Language- Intro to Spanish	3



## **Grade 7**

### **Required Full Year                      Periods Per Six Day Cycle**

English/Language Arts	6
Science	6
Social Studies	6
Math (Math 7 or Algebra 1-7)	6
Physical Education	3
Technology and Engineering (opposite PE)	3
(Math Lab) **	3
(ELA Lab) **	3

### **Full Year Electives**

Middle School Band	3
Middle School Jazz Band	3
Middle School Chorus	3
Art Elective	3
Lego Mindstorm Robotics 7	3
Music Technology	3
Guitar	3
Art Elective- Drawing	3
Growing Up	3
Biodiversity	3
World Language – Intro. To French	3

\*\*Required support course if student meets eligibility

## **Grade 8**

### **Required Full Year                      Periods Per Six Day Cycle**

English/Language Arts	6
Science	6
Social Studies	6
Math (Intro to Alg., Algebra 1 or Geometry)	6
Physical Education	3
(Math Lab) **	3
(Reading/Writing Lab) **	6

### **One Semester Each Required**

Health/Wellness	3
Technology and Engineering	3

### **Full Year Electives**

Middle School Band	3
Middle School Jazz Band	3
Middle School Chorus	3
Exploratory French and Spanish	
Language and Culture	3
Art Elective	3
Film Adaptation	3

### **Grade 8 Core Electives**

Students will be assigned two different core electives each semester. These classes will meet every other day. The core electives most students will experience include: Horticulture, Civics in Action, Fun with Real World Math, and Forensics Science.

\*\*Required support course if student meets eligibility

# COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Those courses with an \*\* in front of them will not be offered during the 2020-2021 school year.

## CORE ACADEMIC AREAS

### ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

#### Grade 6

Grade 6 Language Arts provides an integrated approach to the study of reading, literature, writing, and language skills. Students study literature including novels, short stories, poetry, drama and nonfiction in order to develop, expand and apply reading skills and strategies. Frequent opportunities for reading at their independent levels provide students with the practice needed to internalize these reading strategies. Instruction in writing emphasizes the thinking, creating and composing processes. Grammar and usage, language mechanics, vocabulary and spelling, listening and speaking are integral parts of the course.

#### Grade 7

The seventh grade English program provides instruction to strengthen skills that students already possess and to introduce new skills. The curriculum consists of reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. Students will acquire and apply new vocabulary skills via the Wordly Wise vocabulary program. Students will read and discuss as a class and with their peers' short stories, poetry, novels, and nonfiction texts in order to hone their comprehension and analysis skills. The fundamentals of writing are developed and emphasized throughout the class in conjunction with reading these texts. Students will practice writing narrative, expository, and argumentative pieces. Students will read for pleasure outside and inside of class (SSR) and will develop critical thinking skills when writing book reviews on each novel read.

#### Grade 8

The eighth grade curriculum is literature, writing, and research based. To increase literacy skills, students review key literary elements before examining them in numerous short stories and novels. Some of the titles students read include: The Outsiders, Animal Farm, Murder on the Orient Express, "The Raven," and "The Cask of Amontillado." Also, students are responsible for reading one book outside of school each quarter.

To increase writing skills, students write in each of the three major writing types (narrative, argumentative, and informational/expository) for a variety of purposes and audiences throughout the year. Students will write a short story, collaboratively produce a script, write a feature article, create a children's storybook, and produce informational and argumentative essays effectively adhering to MLA standards. Students will also review grammar material with special emphasis placed on the parts of speech, sentence structure, voice, and punctuation.

Honors and College Prep Placement: During the second semester, the English Department will

recommend English 9 course level placements to all eighth grade students. The following criteria will be the basis for the English Department recommendations: prior ELA standardized test scores (MCAS/PARCC), MAP scores, 8th grade English course grades (A- average), and 8th grade teacher observations.

### **Grade 7-8 ELA Lab\*\***

The Grade 7-8 ELA Lab courses target word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension skills, writing skills and strategies for students with needs in those areas. Students have opportunities to build fluency through reading appropriately leveled texts. Placement in the ELA Lab course is a result of recommendations from teachers, analysis of standardized testing data, and consultation with the guidance counselor. Students work on individual skills to help them grow and experience success in reading and writing. This course runs every day throughout the year and is in addition to the regular English Language Arts class.

\*\* Required Support course if student meets eligibility

## **SCIENCE**

### **Science 6**

Grade six science begins the spiraling curriculum for Middle School. We begin with scientific method and methods of inquiry and progress to metrics and measurement. Students will learn to use instruments and make scientific mathematical conversions and calculations. The physical science unit is comprised of matter, waves, and light. We will explore different learning methods including interactive notebooks, computer simulations, and classroom laboratory activities. Students will explore space at the beginning of the Earth science unit and progress to the history of Earth learning about rock layers, fossils, and plate tectonics where they will debate scientific method in action. The year concludes with Life science where we study cell theory, the parts of cells and use of microscopes, and body systems where they will teach their peers. Through the course materials students will gain experience reading informational text, writing using evidence, and applications of mathematics. They will learn to construct a variety of models and to communicate their understanding in diverse ways. Massachusetts sixth grade curriculum focuses on structure and function.

### **Grade 7: General Science – Systems and Cycles**

Students in grade 7 focus on systems and cycles using their understanding of structures and functions, connections and relationships in systems, and flow of matter and energy developed in earlier grades. A focus on systems requires students to apply concepts and skills across disciplines, since most natural and designed systems and cycles are complex and interactive. They gain experience with plate tectonics, interactions of humans and Earth processes, organism systems to support and propagate life, ecosystem dynamics, motion and energy systems, and key technological systems used by society. Through grade 7, students begin a process of moving from a more concrete to an abstract perspective, since many of the systems and cycles studied are not directly observable or experienced. This also creates a foundation for exploring cause and effect relationships in more depth in grade 8.

## **Grade 8 Science**

Grade 8 Science is an integration of physical, life and earth sciences. In this lab based course students will be given the opportunity to examine the cause and effect of key natural phenomena and design processes in order to strengthen their ability to explain patterns and make predictions about future events. They will discover that nature can be understood in terms of fundamental rules and models.

Some examples of specific topics that will be covered include:

- The role of gravity in ocean tides, the orbital motions of planets, their moons, and asteroids in the solar system.
- Patterns in air mass interactions and the relationship of those patterns to local weather.
- How environmental and genetic factors influence the growth of organisms.
- Understanding that genes hold the instructions for the production of specific proteins, which in turn affects the traits of an individual.
- The process of natural selection, in which genetic variations of some traits in a population increase some individuals' likelihood of surviving and reproducing in a changing environment.
- The idea that atoms combine in a multitude of ways to produce pure substances which make up all of the living and nonliving things that we encounter.
- Examining Newton's third law involving the motion of two colliding objects.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Grade 6: Human Origins and Ancient Civilizations**

Sixth graders study the development of early civilizations, from the origins of humans through the development of complex society. They examine how geography, religion, organization and unity contributed to the lasting legacies that formed among the civilizations of the Middle East, North Africa, Central America, the Caribbean, South Africa, Southeast Asia and Oceania. Throughout the year they make connections to the past to gain a greater understanding of history and modern civilization. Through reading, writing, speaking, listening and research, they consider how earlier societies have shaped history and how they continue to shape our lives today.

### **Grade 7: Geography/World Cultures**

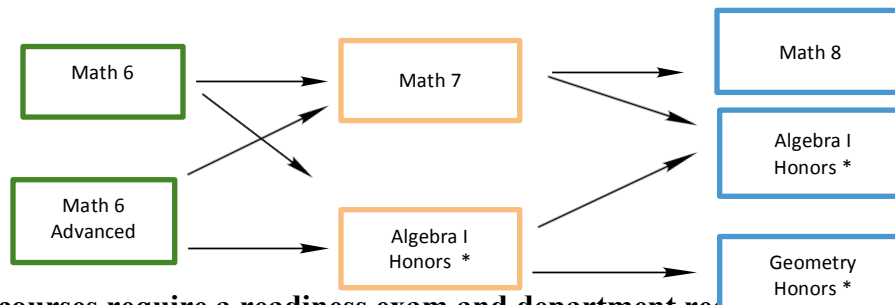
The grade seven social studies curriculum is a continuation of what students began in grade six. We will continue to study the physical geography of important regions of the world. This year students will explore sub-Saharan Africa, south and east Asia, and Europe. Students will learn how physical characteristics such as climate, natural resources, and bodies of water influenced the development of the modern nations in these regions. In addition, we will examine the ancient civilizations that existed in these regions. Analytical techniques, skill development and interpretation are stressed.

## Grade 8: United States and Massachusetts Government and Civic Life

Students study the roots and foundations of democratic government through primary documents, such as the United States and Massachusetts Constitutions; how and why government institutions developed; how government evolves through legislation and court decisions; and how individuals exercise their rights and civic responsibilities to maintain a healthy democracy in the nation and the Commonwealth.

## MATHEMATICS

The mathematics program in the middle school is focused on ensuring that all students develop the foundational skills necessary to be successful in higher-level mathematics courses. Mathematics placement is therefore dependent on a student's foundational skills which are determined by student performance in courses and a readiness exam. All students are required to take a readiness exam for placement into their next math course in all grades. Note that students completing advanced courses such as Algebra 1 and Geometry in middle school will still be required to complete 4 full years of math in high school to meet graduation requirements.



**\*These courses require a readiness exam and department recommendation**

### Math (Gr. 6)

In the sixth grade mathematics program, students continue to develop number sense and apply it to real world situations. They apply and extend previous understandings of all operations involving decimals and fractions, and the relationships between fractions, decimals and percents. The concepts of ratio, scale and proportion are introduced, as well as central tendency and graphing. Students will use variables and begin to study algebraic equations and patterns. They will investigate and use positive and negative integers, and build on previous understandings of area and perimeter, surface area, and volume.

### Math Grade 6- Advanced

This rigorous introductory course builds a strong foundation for algebra and geometry. Upon successful completion, the student should be able to perform and understand the necessary manipulative skills needed for more advanced math and science courses, with the intention of progressing into Algebra I in grade 7. The material in this course includes all of the required sixth grade math standards with the addition of pre-algebra concepts such as operations with integers, solving multi-step equations, solving and representing inequalities, functions, graphing relationships, etc.

Prerequisites: Readiness exam and sixth grade teacher recommendation

**Math 7:**

This course builds a strong foundation for understanding algebra and geometry. Instructional time is focused on developing four critical areas: (a) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (b) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; (c) solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two and three dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; (d) and drawing inferences about populations based on samples. Topics include: ratios and proportional relationships, the number system, expressions and equations, linear equations, geometry, statistics and probability.

**Algebra 1 Honors (Gr. 7, or 8)**

This course provides an intensive study of algebra using practical problems, decision making, and technology to help students communicate mathematically. This rigorous course will prepare students with a firm background for higher math, science and computer courses. More material will be covered than in the College Prep course. NOTE: Any student who takes Algebra I in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade should be aware of the new college entrance requirement of taking 4 years of high school mathematics including a math course in the senior year. Students will take high school mid-term and final exams for this course.

Prerequisites: Department Recommendation /Readiness Exam

Assessment: Student progress and achievement are based on the following: class work and participation, homework, cooperative group work, tests, quizzes, projects, presentations and mid-term and final exams.

**Math 8:**

The objective of this course is to give students an understanding of algebra by emphasizing concepts, structure, and applications. Topics include the real number system, integers and rational numbers, algebraic expressions and sentences, algebraic inequalities, basic statistical concepts, linear equations, exponents and polynomials, and factoring. Graphing calculators are integrated throughout the course and are required.

**Geometry, Honors (5 Credits):** This high school course helps students develop inductive and deductive reasoning skills. Students' progress from informal arguments to more formal presentations of proof. Algebraic concepts are interwoven in the geometry by means of coordinate and transformational geometry. Hands-on activities and the use of technology allow students to discover and explore geometric concepts. Note that this course is offered in the high school for exceptionally motivated and capable middle school students only. High school credit will be awarded towards graduation requirements. Students will take high school mid-term and final exams for this course.

Prerequisites: Department Recommendation/Algebra I-Honors-- Grade: B+/Readiness Exam

Assessment: Student progress and achievement are based on the following: class work and participation, homework, cooperative group work, tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, mid-term and final exams.

### **Math Lab (Gr. 7, 8) \*\***

The Math Workshop provides extra support to students who are enrolled in a regular (everyday) mathematics course. It targets computational skills and foundational concepts in math for students with significant needs in those areas. Students have opportunities to build skills proficiency and strong conceptual understanding of fundamental mathematical ideas through a variety of classroom and computer-based activities. Placement in this course is by recommendation of the classroom teacher in consultation with specialists, the guidance counselor and parents. This course meets every other day, and is in addition to the grade level mathematics course.

\*\* Required Support course if student meets eligibility

### **SPEECH & LANGUAGE PROGRAM (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

The Speech/Language Program is an inclusive program for students in grades 6-12 dealing with disorders of articulation, language, auditory, memory, voice, and/or fluency. Services are provided through consultation, in class support, small group support and individualized programs, as needed. Curriculum materials are used as the basis for intervention whenever possible.

Assessment: Daily assessment is based on “time on task,” organization, effort, completion of daily agenda, and participation in small study groups.

### **ACADEMIC SUPPORT (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

Academic Support is a Special Education Service that is recommended by a student’s Team to deliver specialized instruction facilitating progress towards IEP goals and objectives. Essential to the course’s design is the belief that the academic support must address individual learning trajectories and the capacity to access the full educational experience available to all students. Participants are also taught how to leverage their learning styles to best shift the focus of control from the instructor to the student, an important factor in becoming a more self-reliant, self-directed individual. Assignments may be used as a vehicle for accessing core academic content; teaching skills such as organization, time management, task completion and transition activities. Students in the class are expected to utilize access services available to all students at Tahanto (e.g. see after-school help, access online supplemental learning supports, attend state assessment preparation sessions).

### **INTENSIVE LANGUAGE (Gr. 6,7,8)**

This course teaches basic language skills to those students with a diagnosed language/learning disability in phonology, syntax, semantics, reading comprehension or written composition. Structured multi-sensory language training and curriculum materials are combined to facilitate growth in skill areas and simultaneously provide tutorial support for classroom goals.

Assessment: Because students enrolled in ILA have been diagnosed with a language/learning disorder, and all have individual, specific language goals, assessment includes a combination of standardized and informal measures. Standardized testing includes an initial evaluation to determine eligibility for the class and subsequent 3 year re-evaluations. Informal measures



include mastery of concepts taught, which occurs all year long, as well as a yearly assessment of progress made toward individual goals determined for each student as his/her last team meeting.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

Physical Education is an integral part of our educational system and is designed to supplement the classroom work by education through action. The aim of the Physical Education Program is the optimum development of the physically, mentally and socially integrated and adjusted individual through guided instruction and participation in selected activities.

<b>Fall (1<sup>st</sup> Term)</b>	<b>Winter (2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> term)</b>	<b>Spring (4<sup>th</sup> Term)</b>
Fitness Testing	Badminton	Archery
Field Hockey	Basketball	Fitness Testing
Lacrosse	Floor Hockey	Baseball
Soccer	Fitness Training	Softball
Flag Football	Yoga	Team Building Activities
Frisbee	Team Handball	Conditioning
Conditioning	Volleyball	Cross-Country Skiing
	Zumba	

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL WELLNESS**

The topics listed below will be covered during physical education classes throughout the year in addition to regular physical education requirements.

Fitness and Health lessons in the physical education program encourage students to develop healthy decision making skills through participation in a variety of health and activity modules. Students will accomplish this by:

- Practicing strategies for healthy decision making
- Discussing consequences of decision making (positive and negative)
- Analyzing correct, up-to-date information
- Relating decision making to team building and life-long fitness

Health modules stress making responsible, healthy decisions. Health modules include:

- Substance Abuse and Resistance
- Sports Nutrition
- Self-Esteem
- Growing Human Relationships

The Growing Human Relationships unit provides students with information they need to understand the changes in their bodies and feelings. The class is designed to encourage discussion about such topics as friendship, dating, love and sexual development. Students

will study the influences on their day-to-day decisions such as family and personal values, friends and the media. They will practice making informed decisions by role playing the decision-making process.

The goals of the unit are to help students:

- Acquire accurate health information
- Develop lifelong health practices
- Understand and act wisely on matters of health and safety
- Practice applying problem solving decision-making strategies to real life

**Grade 8:** Family and Consumer Health, Stress Management/Suicide Prevention, Violence Prevention, Nutrition and Fitness, Human Growth and Sexuality.

## **EXPLORATORY AND GENERAL ELECTIVE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Grade 6**

#### **Chorus (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

All students are encouraged to join the middle school chorus, even if they have not sung in the elementary school. The chorus program is designed to offer an introduction to a wide variety of music and appropriate singing styles. Information is also given about proper tone and breath.

#### **Band (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

The middle school band meets every other day for rehearsal. Students perform popular jazz and classical music. There are three required performances as well as many other activities. While most middle school band members have played their instruments throughout elementary school, beginners are encouraged to join. Students who elect this course should give strong consideration to continuing band into the senior high.

#### **Jazz Band (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

Middle School Jazz Band is an elective offered three days per week to those students with an exceptional interest in improvisation and jazz style composition. Students will explore various genres including swing, Latin, rock and blues through repertoire designed for the Jazz Big Band. Class work will include scale and chord study, listening, improvisation practice and performance repertoire. Elementary Jazz Band experience is preferred but not necessary.

#### **Introduction to Spanish (Gr. 6)**

This course will focus on vocabulary and conversational expressions through speaking, listening, reading and writing. Students will also examine culture from Spanish speaking countries and will practice skills through peer communication. This course is Pass/Fail.

### **Lego Mindstorm Robotics (Gr. 6)**

In this course middle school students will develop problem solving and computational thinking skills as they are introduced to the world of engineering, robotics and computer science. Through the use of the Lego Mindstorm robotics platform, students will engage in mechanical design and software programming as they create robots that sense the environment and respond to user defined commands. This course is hands-on and develops critical thinking skills in a project-based learning environment.

### **Grade 6 Art Elective**

This course provides an introduction to visual arts while studying a variety of art tools and materials. Students will work on a variety of projects in both 2D and 3D. Projects will center on a particular artist or style. Grading will be based on weekly sketch assignments, projects, and quizzes. Assessment: Students will maintain a portfolio and complete self-assessments on each project. Teacher assessment will be based on technique and craftsmanship. Students' performance will be assessed on how well they make use of their time, materials, and the care put into each project.

### **Quest Block (Gr 6, required)**

Quest block is a required 6th grade transition course that is designed to meet the needs of all students at all levels. It allows for flexible grouping and specialized instruction to accommodate the various challenges created by the transition to middle school. Students are supported in the development of social, emotional, and academic skills necessary for a successful transition to the middle school environment. Quest block acts as a support period as well as a time for intervention and enrichment that addresses individual learning trajectories and the capacity to access the full educational experience. Its tailored instruction works to meet both the needs of the individual student as well as the entire 6th grade community. Students are assessed on daily performance tasks, time on task, extension activities, participation in whole or small group lessons and growth and improvement in strategy/skill utilization. **This course is pass/fail**

### **Literacy Support 6**

Literacy Support 6 is a course for sixth grade students who require extra support in reading and writing, beyond the core curriculum, in order to strengthen literacy skills upon entering middle school. Direct instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics is provided as needed. The course is focused on strategies that develop fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Students' strengths and weaknesses are addressed through whole group and small group guided reading instruction. **This course is pass/fail**

**Music (Gr. 6, required)** In this mandatory semester course, students will learn about what makes music sound the way it does. Popular, jazz, Broadway, and classical music are explored. They also learn about music from other cultures and about rhythm and harmony. Students learn how to write music down on paper and even make up their own songs with the aid of a computer.

## **Film Adaptation (Gr.6)**

In this course, students will examine the interaction of film and literary texts and the qualities of each. They will consider what happens when literary texts are made into films and how their views of a text may be altered by the way it was portrayed in the film. Students will read, write, complete projects, and have multiple class discussions.

## **Grade 7**

### **Chorus (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

All students are encouraged to join the middle school chorus, even if they have not sung in the elementary school. The chorus program is designed to offer an introduction to a wide variety of music and appropriate singing styles. Information is also given about proper tone and breath.

### **Band (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

The middle school band meets every other day for rehearsal. Students perform popular jazz and classical music. There are three required performances as well as many other activities. While most middle school band members have played their instruments throughout elementary school, beginners are encouraged to join. Students who elect this course should give strong consideration to continuing band into the senior high.

### **Jazz Band (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

Middle School Jazz Band is an elective offered three days per week to those students with an exceptional interest in improvisation and jazz style composition. Students will explore various genres including swing, Latin, rock and blues through repertoire designed for the Jazz Big Band. Class work will include scale and chord study, listening, improvisation practice and performance repertoire. Elementary Jazz Band experience is preferred but not necessary.

### **Music Technology (Gr. 7)**

This is a new elective we are offering this year for those students who enjoy and want to be3 involved with music but not necessarily want to sing or play an instrument. In music technology students will learn the basics of recording as well as producing live events such as concerts, lectures, or dances. Students will be introduced to the basics of Garage Band, ProTools mixing boards, MIDI, Sibelius, and more as they establish a student run live production and recording studio.

### **Guitar Class (Gr. 7)**

This class is for anyone and everyone who has either played or wants to play guitar. Students will learn first how to play chords on the guitar as well as basic music theory and its applications in chord progressions. Students will learn how to play songs from a variety of genres and styles but will also learn about the resources available at their disposal and how they can use these resources to learn songs of their choice as well as begin to use this information to write their own music. From the basics of the guitar, students can then branch out to any number of fretted instruments that they would like to learn how to play. This includes bass, ukulele, mandolin, banjo, electric guitar and more.

### **\*\*Literary Circle (Gr. 7)**

This course will be reading, writing and class discussion based. An emphasis will be placed on discussion via Socratic Seminar (a type of student led discussion), along with a variety of written assessments, both expository and creative. Group projects based on the important themes of the novels will be assigned. The novels in this course will be primarily fiction novels. This course is designed for the student who wants to augment and enhance his or her middle school English experience at Tahanto.

### **\*\*Ghosts, Goblins and Mythic Beasts (Gr. 7)**

This class will explore the origins of mythological and other worldly creatures. Through both fictional texts and non-fiction research, students will seek the answers to many questions regarding the mystery of these creatures that have crawled through literature for centuries!

### **Biodiversity (Gr. 7)**

With an emphasis on research, the purpose of this course is to provide students with a basic understanding of the concept of biodiversity, applied to their surroundings and connected to the Massachusetts Common Core science standards. During this course, students will study the biodiversity that we are lucky to have in our very own backyard. Through research, models, experiments, and fieldwork students will learn just how important biodiversity is, not only for ecosystems, but for humans too!

### **\*\*Skills for Living (Gr. 7)**

This every other day semester class will help students know ways to care for themselves. Students will learn hand sewing techniques in creating crafts and performing simple repairs on their clothes. Students will learn to cook basic foods with an eye to economy and taste.

### **Lego Mindstorm Robotics (Gr. 7)**

In this course, which is a continuation of Lego Mindstorm Robotics I, students will develop problem solving and computational thinking skills as they continue to explore the world of engineering, robotics and computer science. Through the use of the Lego Mindstorm EV3 robotics platform, students will engage in mechanical design and software programming as they create robots that sense the environment and respond to user defined commands. This course is hands-on and develops critical thinking skills in a project-based learning environment.

### **Grade 7 Art Elective**

This course will focus on the elements of art (line, shape, value, color, form, space, texture) and the acknowledgement that all art is created with one or more of these elements. Projects will center around a particular artist and element. Students will work on 2D and 3D projects in a variety of mediums. Grading will be based on weekly sketch assignments, projects, and quizzes. Assessment: Students will maintain a portfolio and complete self-assessments on each project. Teacher assessment will be based on technique and craftsmanship. Student's performance will be assessed on how well they make use of their time, materials, and the care put into each project. Class size limited to 24 students.

### **Grade 7 Art Elective- Drawing**

Have you ever wanted to improve your drawing skills? This course will focus on drawing skills for both the beginner and experienced student. A variety of media will be explored including pencil, pen, color pencil, charcoal, and oil pastel. Students will create many types of drawings including perspective, landscape, still life, and portraits. Assessment: Students will maintain a portfolio and

complete self-assessments on each project. Teacher assessment will be based on technique and craftsmanship. Student performance will be assessed on how well they make use of their time, materials, and the care put into each project. Class size limited to 12 students.

### **\*\*Grade 7 Drama**

Introduces students to the basics of Drama. Students will study plays, scenes, and monologues and learn how to create emotion, project their voices, and evoke responses from their audience. By meeting in the auditorium, students will truly be immersed in the dramatic atmosphere. They will also deal with staging, blocking scenes, costuming, and the history of theater. By looking back on drama through the years, students will learn how and why drama has evolved into what it is today. This elective will also give students a chance to express their creativity and strengthen their dramatic skills and talents. The end result for such a class would be some kind of play or scenes or dramatic festival for an audience of teachers and students.

### **Technology/Engineering (Gr 7 and 8)**

Full year required course in grade 7, required semester course in grade 8. Technology is defined as the human-made world. Engineering is the action of inventing and innovating technologies to provide a way of life for our society. In this course, which spans the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students will develop an understanding of the engineering design process as they explore communication, construction, manufacturing, transportation, bioengineering, materials, tools and machines in a hands-on, project-based learning environment. Evaluation of each student will be based on completion of engineering projects, note-taking, effort and formal testing.

### **Introduction to French (Gr. 7)**

This course will focus on vocabulary and conversational expressions through speaking, listening, reading and writing. Students will also examine French culture and will practice skills through peer communication.

### **Growing Up (Gr 7)**

In this class, we will study novels, short stories, poems, songs and nonfiction pieces that tackle the joy and sadness of growing up. Students will be expected to read inside and outside of class, participate in class discussions, and complete assignments such as essays, projects, and class presentations. There will be an emphasis on group work.

## Grade 8

### **Chorus (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

All students are encouraged to join the middle school chorus, even if they have not sung in the elementary school. The chorus program is designed to offer an introduction to a wide variety of music and appropriate singing styles. Information is also given about proper tone and breath.

### **Band (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

The middle school band meets every other day for rehearsal. Students perform popular jazz and classical music. There are three required performances as well as many other activities. While most middle school band members have played their instruments throughout elementary school, beginners are encouraged to join. Students who elect this course should give strong consideration to continuing band into the senior high.

### **Jazz Band (Gr. 6, 7, 8)**

Middle School Jazz Band is an elective offered three days per week to those students with an exceptional interest in improvisation and jazz style composition. Students will explore various genres including swing, Latin, rock and blues through repertoire designed for the Jazz Big Band. Class work will include scale and chord study, listening, improvisation practice and performance repertoire. Elementary Jazz Band experience is preferred but not necessary.

### **Deer Time (Gr. 8)**

The 8th grade team will schedule DEER time monthly. These sessions will provide students opportunities to participate in advisory, sustained silent reading, and other team activities.

### **Horticulture (Gr. 8)**

This quarterly 8<sup>th</sup> grade elective is a hybrid class of hands-on applications and research assignments addressing numerous horticultural topics. Topics covered may include: carnivorous plants, succulents, houseplants, trees, invasive pests, dairy farming, maple syrup production, plant propagation, the history of seeds, pollinators, and bonsai. In addition to classroom instruction and activities, students will be responsible for the maintenance of the school gardens.

### **Civics in Action (Gr. 8)**

Students will be challenged to practice civic engagement as they identify an issue in need of attention or change. As a class, we will work together to research, discuss, and learn more about the selected issue. Most importantly, we will determine a path of action to bring the necessary attention or change forward in our communities. Finally, students will reflect on their efforts and consider ways to continue such engaged citizenship. This quarterly elective has been developed in connection with state law requiring eighth grade students to participate in an active civics project.

### **Forensic Science (Gr. 8)**

Forensic Science is the application of science to law. In this course students will be given the opportunity to develop an understanding of biological, chemical and physical concepts as they relate to law. Students will also learn how to observe, collect, analyze and evaluate evidence found at crime scenes. Some of the many topics that students will explore include:

- Processing a crime scene
- Forgery and Document analysis
- Forensic Anthropology
- Fingerprint analysis
- Trace evidence
- Forensic Serology
- DNA Fingerprinting
- Hair and Fiber analysis

### **Exploratory French and Spanish Language and Culture (Gr. 8)**

Students will meet every other day for one semester in each language. This course will focus on vocabulary and conversational expressions through speaking, listening, reading and writing. The cultural rich program includes texts, activities and audio from a variety of online resources, books and teacher created materials. Students will also examine culture from both French and Spanish speaking countries and will practice skills through peer communication. **Assessment:** Students will be assessed on their Spanish/French listening, speaking, reading and writing skills as well as cultural knowledge. The teacher will use quizzes, short compositions, dialogues, presentations, projects, homework and class participation to evaluate the students. This is a pass/fail course.

### **Fun with Real World Math (Gr.8)**

In this quarterly math elective, students will explore applications of math in everyday situations. Through project based learning, topics discussed may include math and its connection to food, budgeting, music, the stock market, toys, architecture, sports, and art.

### **Technology and Engineering (Gr. 8)**

Industrial Technologies in a comprehensive middle/high school is a program of controlled exposure into the many areas of the industrial society. The middle school program provides an exploratory approach into the applications of principles – methods – designs – development – and function of the many technologies of the world around us. Through this program, we are able to show how our society does, and will in the future, apply knowledge, experience, research and development, materials and equipment to provide a “way of life” for our society. Evaluation of each student will be done through their ability to develop an idea, process concepts through group and individual work, attitudes, effort and formal testing.



### **\*\*Mind, Body & Soul (Gr. 8)**

This course combines exercise and stress management through the exploration of a variety of yoga disciplines and meditation methods. In order to promote health and encourage mindfulness, topics covered will include postures, regulated breathing techniques and relaxation methods. Students will experience the benefits of increased muscular strength, endurance and flexibility while becoming more inwardly aware. This course will be mentally relaxing but physically challenging.

### **School of Rock (Gr. 8)**

This course will explore the history of rock music from its early jazz and blues roots to today's computer influenced songs. Students will learn the roles of vocals, guitar, bass, drums, and keyboards in the rock genre. Popular rock tunes will be studied and performed. Basic music theory will be introduced with the purpose of reinforcing the students' understanding of rock music. Students will be expected to perform at Stag's Lounge as well as the winter and spring concerts. This class is open to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Some knowledge of rock instrumentation and the ability to play basic progressions is preferred. Students will be performing. Assessment is based on individual improvement and effort, class participation and successful performances.

### **Grade 8 Art Elective**

This course will be a continuation of 7<sup>th</sup> grade art. There will be an overview of the concepts presented previously and more advanced concepts will be introduced. Once familiar with the elements of art, students learn how the principles of design (balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, unity, rhythm) can make their artwork better. Projects will center around a particular artist and principle. Students will work on 2D and 3D projects in a variety of mediums. Grading will be based on weekly sketch assignments, projects, and quizzes. Assessment: Students will maintain a portfolio and complete self-assessments on each project. Teacher assessment will be based on technique and craftsmanship. Students' performance will be assessed on how well they make use of their time, materials, and the care put into each project.

### **Technology/Engineering (Gr 7 and 8)**

Full year required course in grade 7, required semester course in grade 8. Technology is defined as the human-made world. Engineering is the action of inventing and innovating technologies to provide a way of life for our society. In this course, which spans the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students will develop an understanding of the engineering design process as they explore communication, construction, manufacturing, transportation, bioengineering, materials, tools and machines in a hands-on, project-based learning environment. Evaluation of each student will be based on completion of engineering projects, note-taking, effort and formal testing.