

Westlake Middle School

Mt. Pleasant Central School District

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January 26, 2024

Dear 7th Grade Families,

We are beginning the scheduling process for our students for the 2024 - 2025 school year. As part of the transition to 8th grade, we provide *students who are ready* with the opportunity to take advantage of challenging academic courses. In 2024 - 2025, 8th grade students will be able to choose their course of study in science, mathematics, and music. We believe that this decision made collaboratively with your child, is a valuable learning experience that can prepare them for high school and college. **We look forward to seeing you at The Westlake Middle School Course Selection Meeting on January 30, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Westlake Middle School Cafeteria.** For those unable to attend, the slides from the presentation will be emailed to all families on Monday evening.

Accelerated courses are offered as a choice in mathematics and science. To support the decision-making process, your child will be completing a self-assessment with their mathematics and science teachers. The charts list criteria and indicators of success that are important for students to be successful in an accelerated course. Use these charts to guide a discussion about whether or not your child is *ready* for accelerated coursework. Students should meet most or all of these criteria. They should be interested in and motivated to engage in challenging work. This should be reflected in report card grades and other assessment data. In addition, your child's current teachers and counselor will offer *an overall team recommendation* to help guide you.

In the area of science, we are offering *Regents Living Environment* and *Grade 8 Science*. *Living Environment* is a high school level, credit-bearing course that has a mid-term exam and culminates in a Regents examination. **Both the Regents examination score and the final course average are recorded on the student's official high school transcript.** Students enrolled in *Grade 8 Science* will be administered the Grade 8 New York State Science Exam.

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In the area of mathematics, students may choose between *Regents Algebra 1* or *Grade 8 Mathematics*. *Algebra 1*, similar to *Living Environment*, is a high school level, credit-bearing course that has a mid-term exam and culminates in a Regents examination. **Both the Regents examination score and the final course average are recorded on the student's official high school transcript.** Students enrolled in *Grade 8 Mathematics* will be administered the Grade 8 New York State Mathematics Exam.

In the area of electives, students will have a choice between *Band* or *Chorus*. These courses will last the entire school year and will meet two or three times per six-day cycle. Both our *Band* and *Chorus* ensembles will perform at a winter and spring concert.

We recognize that these are important decisions for you and your child, so we encourage you to discuss this with them. Our faculty has compiled course descriptions (pg. 3), possible high school pathways (pg. 4), and a sample selection sheet/team recommendation (pg. 5), which we hope will inform your choice. In addition, we suggest you reach out to your child's guidance counselor and classroom teachers for input about your child's performance, including their strengths and areas for growth. We will be hosting the Westlake Middle School Course Selection meeting on **January 30, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.** in the **Westlake Middle School Cafeteria** to discuss this information in-depth. You will receive the Student Course Selection Sheet, by mail, with recommendations after that meeting. It is due to the main office by Thursday, February 15th.

Thank you,
Anthony Mungoli
Principal

Terri Outhouse
Assistant Principal

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Grade 8 Academic Course Descriptions

Regents Living Environment

The Regents Living Environment is a high school level course focused on biology and ecology. It is the intent of this laboratory oriented course to provide the student with an awareness of the natural world, basic scientific concepts, stimulation of inductive reasoning, and a basic understanding of biological processes and generalizations. The laboratory component consists of a minimum of 30 lab reports (1200 minutes of laboratory work) which must be completed in order for a student to be eligible to take the New York State Regents final examination in June. The Regents exam grade and final course grade appear on the student's high school transcript.

Grade 8 Science

Science 8 course is a laboratory-oriented course that focuses on biology and ecology. There are five science disciplinary core ideas in middle school: 1) From Molecules to Organisms: Structure, Function, and Information Processing, 2) Growth and Development of Organisms, 3) Interactions within Ecosystems, 4) Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits, and 5) Biological Evolution, which they will then study in more depth in their high school Regents course. This course culminates in the New York State Science 8 Exam, which includes a written exam and a lab practical. The final course grade appears on the middle school report card, but not the high school transcript.

Regents Algebra 1

Algebra 1 is a high school level course that introduces students to advanced topics such as expressions and equations, functions, inequalities, quadratics, exponents, systems, and statistics. It targets highly motivated students with a strong work ethic and provides them with an in-depth level of instruction at an accelerated pace. The course encourages the development of algebraic problem-solving skills, enhanced by the use of a graphing calculator. Students will take the Common Core Algebra 1 Regents exam in June. The Regents exam grade and the final course grade appear on the student's high school transcript.

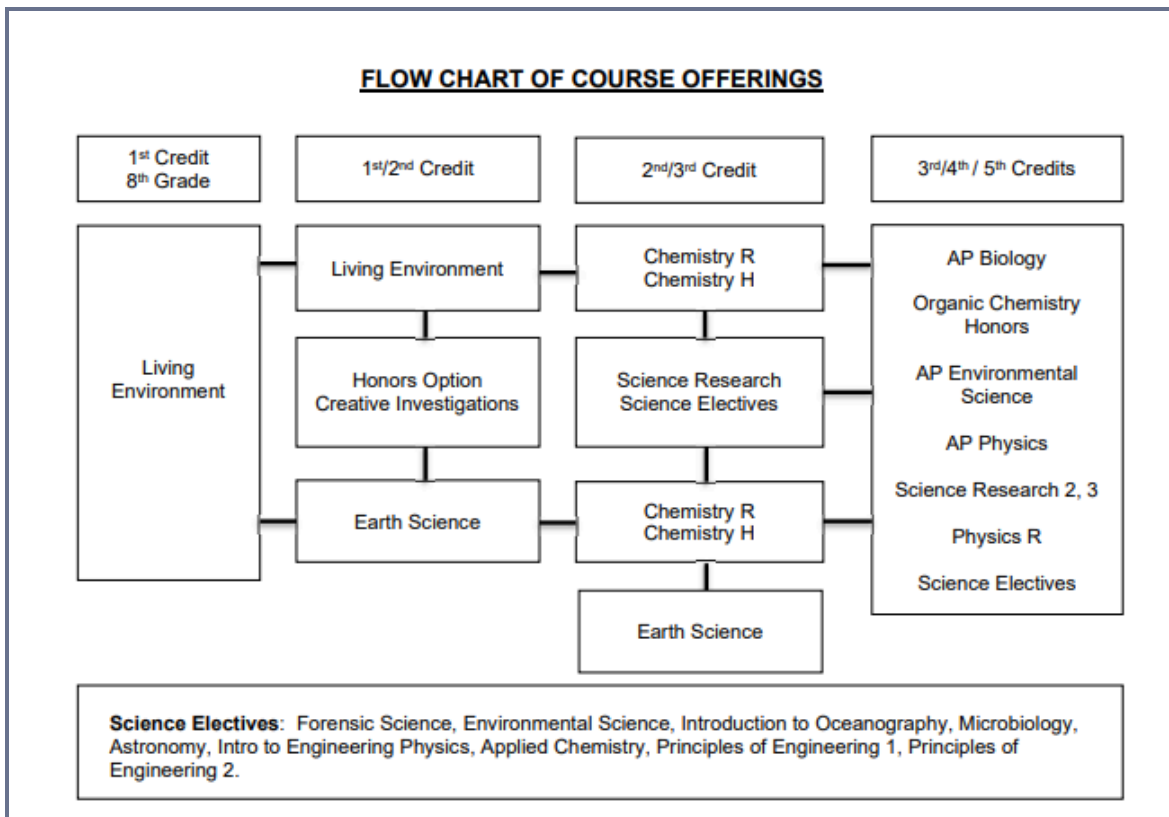
Grade 8 Mathematics

The primary focus of the Mathematics 8 course is to build the foundation necessary for success in Algebra. Topics covered will concentrate on the skills and applications of the following: The Number System, Expressions & Equations, Functions, Geometry, and Statistics. In addition, students will be introduced to operations with polynomials, which they will then study in more depth in their high school math courses. Students will take the Grade 8 New York State Mathematics Assessment in the spring and a final assessment in June. The final course grade appears on the middle school report card, but not the high school transcript.

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	GRADE 8	GRADE 9	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12
HONORS AP PROGRAM		Geometry Honors 	Algebra 2 and Trigonometry Honors AP Computer Science Principles	Pre-Calculus H and/or AP Statistics AP Computer Science A	AP Calculus AP Computer Science A
ACCELERATED PROGRAM	Algebra 	Geometry	Algebra 2 and Trigonometry	Pre-Calculus and/or AP Statistics	Calculus AP Statistics Statistics
COLLEGE PREPARATORY PROGRAM			Geometry	Algebra 2 and Trigonometry	Pre-Calculus Statistics
	Math 8 	Algebra	Principles of Algebra & Geometry	Algebra 2	Pre-Calculus Statistics
			Career Math	Geometry	Algebra 2
				Financial Algebra	Financial Algebra



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WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL

Students Entering Grade 8 In
September 2024 ~ Course Selection Sheet

SAMPLE

STUDENT NAME: **Smith, John**

SCIENCE*

Please initial by your choice:

7.S. Regents Living Environment

Grade 8 Science

7th Grade Team Recommendation:

Regents Living Environment

MATHEMATICS*

Please initial by your choice:

_____ Regents Algebra 1

7.S. Grade 8 Mathematics

7th Grade Team Recommendation:

Grade 8 Mathematics

MUSIC

_____ Band

X Chorus

Parent's Signature

Student's Signature

*Return this form to the
Westlake Middle School Main Office
by Thursday, February 15th*

SAMPLE

wms.mtplcsd.org