Inspiring Excellence
Upper Merion Area School District
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Upper Merion Area School District
Curriculum Information for Parents and Community

Grade 7

Seventh Grade is the middle year of the middle grades (Gr. 6-8) but the first year in our middle school upper house (Gr. 7-8). Beginning in seventh grade, students' teachers have subject-specific certification in four core subject areas (English, math, science, social studies). Throughout students' middle school experience, we are sure to provide a rich, supportive learning environment for the whole child: academically, socially, and emotionally.

Students in Seventh Grade participate in four blocks of academic classes each day: English, math, science, and social studies. Each student is assigned to a team of teachers who teach the same students. In Seventh Grade, most students begin their first formal year of world language instruction (Spanish, French, or German). In addition to their world language course, students also have one Unified Arts class each day. Which Unified Arts class a student attends changes periodically over the course of the school year. Students are invited to participate in Orchestra and/or Band on a pull-out basis.

If you have any questions regarding your child's educational program, please contact your child's team of teachers or school counselor for more information.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)
The secondary English department in Upper Merion aims to foster a love of critically reading a wide range of texts and to develop smooth and clear writing skills in our students. Digital text, visuals, and video are integrated into our English course of studies.

In Seventh Grade, students read both fiction and non-fiction novels, excerpts, and short stories with exposure to a variety of literary writers and styles; analyze elements of text through literature circles and reading workshop; Study grammar, including parts of speech; acquire vocabulary through the study of Greek and Latin root words, prefixes and suffixes; conduct research and engage in formal presentations; and produce narrative, argumentative, and informational writing.
Seventh-grade students read *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech and *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. Students select a book related to civil rights for a book club study. An emphasis is on non-fiction passages to complement these novels. Critical literary analysis of plot, setting, character, theme, and point of view is emphasized. Students are instructed in using the Six Signposts for close reading as presented in *Notice and Note* by Beers and Probst. Students have access to digital resources through *Actively Learn*. Overall, our teachers instruct students toward the mastery of the Pennsylvania Core Standards.

MATHEMATICS

Seventh grade students will be energized by discovering how prior learning has created a solid base for higher level mathematics as they delve into a multitude of Algebraic concepts in their Pre-Algebra class. Students will focus on developing an understanding of proportional relationships; working with expressions and equations; solving problems involving area, surface area, and volume; and using statistics to draw inferences about populations based on samples. Pre-Algebra is the first of a series of classes involving complex analytical concepts. In addition, students will have an opportunity to accelerate in mathematics by taking Algebra 1 in 7th

grade. This course represents a two-year acceleration in mathematics and will lead to taking Calculus in high school during the 11th grade year.

SCIENCE
In 7th grade science students will learn through a combination of hands-on activities, labs, and conceptual learning. Students start the year learning about Aquaponics through the use of a classroom Aquaponics system. Throughout the school year students will learn concepts from the Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Earth & Space Science. Students explore concepts around chemical reactions, matter, cells, using fossils to determine changes in anatomy, genetics, phases of the moon, the cause of seasons on the Earth, and a study of our Solar System.

SOCIAL STUDIES
The secondary Social Studies department in Upper Merion instructs students in history, geography, government, and economics. Students investigate primary and secondary sources, as well as visuals and multimedia in the course of their studies.
In Seventh Grade, Geography is the backbone of our seventh-grade social studies course. Students in this course begin with thorough development of map skills and geographic literacy. Units of study include land use, population, climate change, economics. Students study current events related to geography and participate in debates in this seventh-grade course.

UNIFIED ARTS
The following courses run for consecutive days for a full marking period:
Art - In Seventh Grade, students focus on Elements of Art and Principles of Design with an emphasis on science and math connections, art styles, and critical responses to art.
Computer Science - In Seventh Grade, students use their prior knowledge to increase their abilities in coding. The comprehensive Everyone Can Code curriculum introduces students to core coding concepts using the Swift programming language. Students use real Swift code to solve puzzles and create projects in the fun, interactive Swift Playgrounds app. The app comes with a complete set of Apple-designed lessons called Learn to Code, as well additional coding challenges and playgrounds to program robots and connected devices.
Music - Musical theatre is the focus in Seventh Grade with a focus on choreographed dance. Students analyze Fiddler on the Roof, Music Man, and West Side Story.
Health - The 7th grade health curriculum covers a variety of areas including: Healthy Relationships, Drug and Alcohol Education/Prevention strategies and decision making skills, and Diseases (HIV/AIDS is discussed in this unit). Parents/Guardians/Caregivers can contact their child's teacher if they would like specifics on what is being taught in each unit.
Physical Education - The Physical education curriculum covers: Fitness, Cooperative Games, and Tactical Sports. Students will participate in a variety of sports including: Soccer, basketball, floor hockey, volleyball, aerobics, flag football, and softball. In addition, students will engage in a swimming unit where they will either learn to swim or understand different components of aquatic fitness.

The following courses run on either a 13-day or 26-day cycle:
STEM and Engineering - The Technology and Engineering Education program is an exploratory program that focuses on developing technology problem solving skills, technological literacy, and 21st century skills through hands-on activities integrating Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). In 7th grade students take Invention and Innovation (Applying Technology), an activity-based course that introduces students to technology by exploring Systems of Technology, Design, and Engineering using an integrated

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) approach to instruction. Students will study computer aided design, aerospace technology, robotics systems, and problem solving procedure, and engineering design process. Students will work in teams and individually to complete required classroom and lab assignments. Example Projects include: T-shirt graphics, 3D printing - duplicating objects in the classroom, Advanced Robotics, Engineering Challenges, Solid fuelled rockets, and Standard and Metric measurement practice.

Family and Consumer Science (FCS) - In 7th and 8th grade students will learn the principles of all types of foods, utensil and equipment use, kitchen safety, sanitation, nutrition, and food preparation techniques including participating in hands-on cooking and baking labs. During these labs, students will apply what they have learned and feel more confident while working in the kitchen, including enjoying eating their food creations. Students will learn how to safely participate in classroom activities, use a variety of culinary utensils, and complete cooking labs.

Digital Media Studies - Students learn how to navigate the internet effectively and verify that the information they are reading, watching, or listening to is reliable or not. Students continue to become critical consumers of internet information in Digital Media.

Leadership - The upper house Leadership course explores academic and social/emotional skill areas, such as neuroplasticity, empathy, career investigation, teamwork, mindfulness, and service-learning.

Physical Education - In addition to marking-period Physical Education, students have an additional short cycle of PE.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSAs)

In Seventh Grade, students take PSSA tests in ELA and math. The Text Dependent Analysis (TDA) essay makes up 25% of a student's ELA score.