The background is light blue with various decorative elements: a large teal ring in the top left, a yellow-green ring in the bottom right, and several smaller solid circles in teal, yellow-green, orange, and pink. Dashed lines in teal and yellow-green form arcs across the page.

Getting Ready for Middle School?

We Are Getting Ready for You!

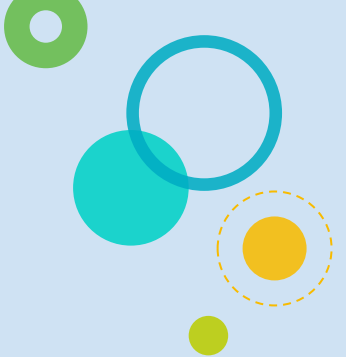
H.B. Thompson and South Woods Program
2026-2027

Planning



It's Time to Build Your Middle School Program!

We are excited to begin planning your middle school program. We have lots of exciting transition events and activities planned for this spring. One of the first things we do is begin to plan your schedule, and we need your input. You have options in **World Language** and **Music**!



Please read the next slides carefully in order to learn about your choices. After the program descriptions you will see how to use the Campus Portal to make your own choices directly in our computer system. Follow the links provided for instructions and a tutorial.

Please take time to talk as a family about what choices are right for you. Remember, you are choosing the courses you will enjoy for the next three years or even longer!

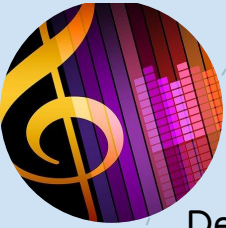
A light blue background decorated with various colorful circles and arcs. There are large yellow, orange, and teal circles, as well as smaller green, blue, and pink ones. A dashed grey line forms a large circle around the central text. A teal circle containing a white quotation mark is positioned above the main text.

“

Why Music? Why World Language?

“An effective middle level curriculum is distinguished by learning activities that appeal to young adolescents and create opportunities to pose and answer questions that are important to them. The curriculum of a successful middle school must be relevant, challenging, integrative and exploratory.”

-Association for Middle Level Education



A Word from the Coordinator for Fine and Performing Arts, Dr. Hale:

Dear Fifth Grade Musicians,

Welcome to Middle School! We are enormously proud of our middle school music program and look forward to welcoming you as you begin the next stage of your music education. We welcome you to select **one** music course in middle school. If you choose **Band, Orchestra** , or **Chorus** you should currently be taking lessons and/or be in the ensemble at your elementary school. If you do not have experience in a performing ensemble and wish to pursue that course in middle school, please contact the teacher in your elementary school immediately so that you can get started right away. It is challenging to start as a beginner and prior experience is highly recommended.

Music is a required middle school course. If you elect not to participate in **Band, Chorus** , or **Orchestra** in middle school, **Music 6** is a non-performance class that engages learners in aspects of music that are outlined in the following slides. Please contact one of your child's elementary music teachers if you would like their assistance in choosing a music course, or contact me if you would like more information about our program.

Musically,

Christopher Hale Coordinator of Fine and Performing Arts, K-12 chale@syossetschools.org

Music Course Options

- © Middle school students are scheduled for ONE music class that meets on alternating days for the full year within the school day.
 - There are also many, varied optional music clubs available by audition.
- © Students typically stay in the music they choose when starting middle school for all three years.
- © Performing Ensembles have required performances including concerts two times a year:
 - Band 6
 - Chorus 6
 - Orchestra 6
- © General Music 6
 - Provides an engaging musical learning experience without the requirement of formal performances or outside work/practice.

Planning to Perform?

Performance Ensembles include Band, Chorus, OR Orchestra in all three grades

- Provide students with an opportunity to learn music through active participation as performing musicians.
- Students may also study solos and work in small ensembles.
- Student musicians attend sectional lessons on a pull-out schedule that rotates throughout the school day. Students learn technical exercises, study individual instruments and play in small ensembles.
- Music students are required to perform with their groups in evening concerts as well as in-school programs.

To consider:

- Admission to individual performing groups is by audition or recommendation of the director.
- Prior participation in the elementary school performance ensemble is strongly recommended.

Classroom Music Course Progression

MUSIC 6

- Elements of music notation, rhythm patterns, melody, harmony, style, and form.
- Emphasis on musical instruments, musical theater, and music related careers.
- Drums, hand chimes and the computer-based music applications enable student to study music reading and performance.

MUSIC 7

- Elements of music, notation, rhythm patterns, melody, harmony, style, and form.
- Emphasis on electronic and computer music, classical music and composers, non-western music, and musical theater.
- Extensive use of computer-based music applications and/or the World Drumming curriculum.

MUSIC 8

- Advanced instruction in the elements of music, notation, rhythm patterns, melody, harmony, style, and form.
- Emphasis is on American musical genres.
- An exploration of the science of sound with electronic and computer-based music applications.
- Instruction in basic music skills is continued.



A Message from World Language Coordinator, Dr. Balsamo:

Dear 5th Grade Students and Parents,

Congratulations! You have reached a milestone in your education - the transition from elementary to middle school. One of the most exciting aspects of your studies in 6th grade will be learning a world language, a process that will continue throughout middle and high school. The time has come for you to select which language you would like to pursue. You have five language options: **Chinese**, **French**, **Italian**, **Korean** or **Spanish**. In 6th grade your schedule will include world language for one period, every other day. From 7th grade on, you will have a world language class every day.

There are many reasons for choosing a language. Some of the myths you may have heard about different languages, like one being “hard” and another being “easy,” are probably not true. Our best advice is to select the language you are *most interested in learning*. Students are more successful when they study a language that interests them, so let motivation be your guide.

We look forward to all that you will learn in our language program in middle school and send our best wishes for success! Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

诚挚 / Cordialement / Cordiali saluti / 진정으로 / Sinceramente / Sincerely,

Dr. David Balsamo, dbalsamo@syossetschools.org



World Language Options

- ◎ Chinese
- ◎ French
- ◎ Italian
- ◎ Korean
- ◎ Spanish

The language you choose in Grade 6 is typically your language of study through Grade 12.

Middle School World Language- Program Outline

Grade 6 to 8	All students in middle school take three years of World Language classes
Grade 6	One period, every other day
Grades 7 and 8:	One period, every day. Students who successfully complete 8th grade World Language course and the Checkpoint A assessment in June earn one unit of high school credit.

How Do I Sign Up?

Just click the links below.

Steps to Register in the Campus Portal

[Campus Portal](#)

[Parent Instruction PDF](#)



When Do I Sign Up?

Course Registration in the Campus
Portal is open.

**Please complete your requests by
Tuesday, December 23rd, 2025**

There will be a chance to review and confirm requests after winter

break.

What Happens Next?

March 10th:

Grade 5-6
Parent
Orientation

8:00 PM at
your home
middle
school.

May -June:

Incoming 6th
graders take
trips to their
home middle
schools.

**Late
August:**

Optional
Sixth Grade
Summer
Orientation -
time TBD.

Questions?

World Language


Dr. David Balsamo
K-12 Coordinator for
World Language
516-364-5751

Music

Dr. Christopher Hale
K-12 Coordinator for Fine
and Performing Arts
516-364-5724

HBT Guidance Office
516-364-5767

SW Guidance Office
516-364-5638



**South Woods
Leadership Team:**

Principal - Michelle L. Burget

Assistant Principal - Elizabeth Burke

Assistant Principal - Theresa Berke

Assistant Principal - Jessica Tam



**H.B. Thompson
Leadership Team:**

Principal - Kevin Bonanno

Assistant Principal - Christian Harrigan

Assistant Principal - Joanna Waters

Assistant Principal - Paul Naraine

