7th → 8th Grade Course Selections

January 2026

SUPPORTING THE PROCESS

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Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Peter Rufa

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Westlake High School

Administration and Counseling

Carmella Liscio & Tania Greco

School Counselors

Tom Hall & Kate Sullivan

Regents Biology

Lauren McDermott & Vanessa Petruzelli

Science 8

Angelica Barrows and Diana Jativa

Math 8 and Regents Algebra 1

Grade 7 Faculty and 8th Grade Students

Leading reflective conversations with students.

PRESENTATION TOPICS

- NYS Requirements and Definitions of Courses
- Decision Making Information & Process
- Timeline and Next Steps (Deadlines)
- Descriptions of Math and Science Courses
- High School Pathways
- Common Concerns and Questions

NYSED REQUIREMENTS

- Public school students in grade 8 shall have the opportunity to take **high school level courses** in **Mathematics** and in at least one of the following areas:
  - English
  - Social studies
  - Languages other than English
  - Art, music, career and technical education
  - **Science**

WMS COURSES OFFERED

- **Math 8**
  1 ½ periods
- **Science 8**
  1 ½ periods
- **Regents Algebra 1**
  1 ½ periods
- **Regents Biology**
  1 ½ periods

HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL REGENTS COURSES
Algebra and Biology

- Follows the New York State Regents Learning Standards & Curriculum.
- Ends in a Regents Exam & includes a Midterm Exam.
- Satisfies the NYSED graduation requirements.
- **The final course grade appear on a student's high school transcript and impact GPA***

**** When considering 'Course Success' and 'Course Benefit' consider the various factors, including interest, pathway, foundation for future courses and grade on a transcript.***

GRADE 8 COURSES

- Follows the New York State Standards for Grade 8
- Includes a New York State Assessment
  - New York State Science Written & Performance Exam
  - New York State Math Exam
- **Grades ONLY appear on Westlake Middle School Report Cards.**

Readiness Foundation

Decision Making Information

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

FACTORS THAT INDICATE a STRONG FOUNDATION & READINESS

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT And FAMILY DISCUSSIONS

SCHOOL RECOMMENDATION

FACTORS THAT INDICATE a STRONG FOUNDATION & READINESS for ACCELERATED WORK

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Class Grades - Tests and Quizzes

Rigorous/Independent Work

NYS ELA & Math Exam Scores

STAR Benchmark Scores (Growth)

IXL Diagnostic Level

QUALITIES of A LEARNER

Responsible for Work Independently

Thorough, Explains, Shows All Work

Asks Questions, For Help, Goes to Office Hours

Reflects, Uses Feedback, and Sets Goals

Collaborates, Work Well With Others

Expresses Critical Interest, Inquiry, Curiosity

Resilient, Grows When Challenged

Responsible for Commitments

Math Grade Book

Sample Student with an overall average of 86%

Category	Grading Weight	Student Score
Weekly Reviews	5%	76%
Quizzes/Projects	35%	84%
Cumulative Tests/Projects	35%	79%
Homework/ Classwork	25%	100%

Spiral reviews given each week which measure independent understanding. Graded on accuracy.

Tests (cumulative) and quizzes measure independent understanding.

Homework and classwork are graded based on completion and effort and demonstrate understanding based on utilization of resources and teacher supports.

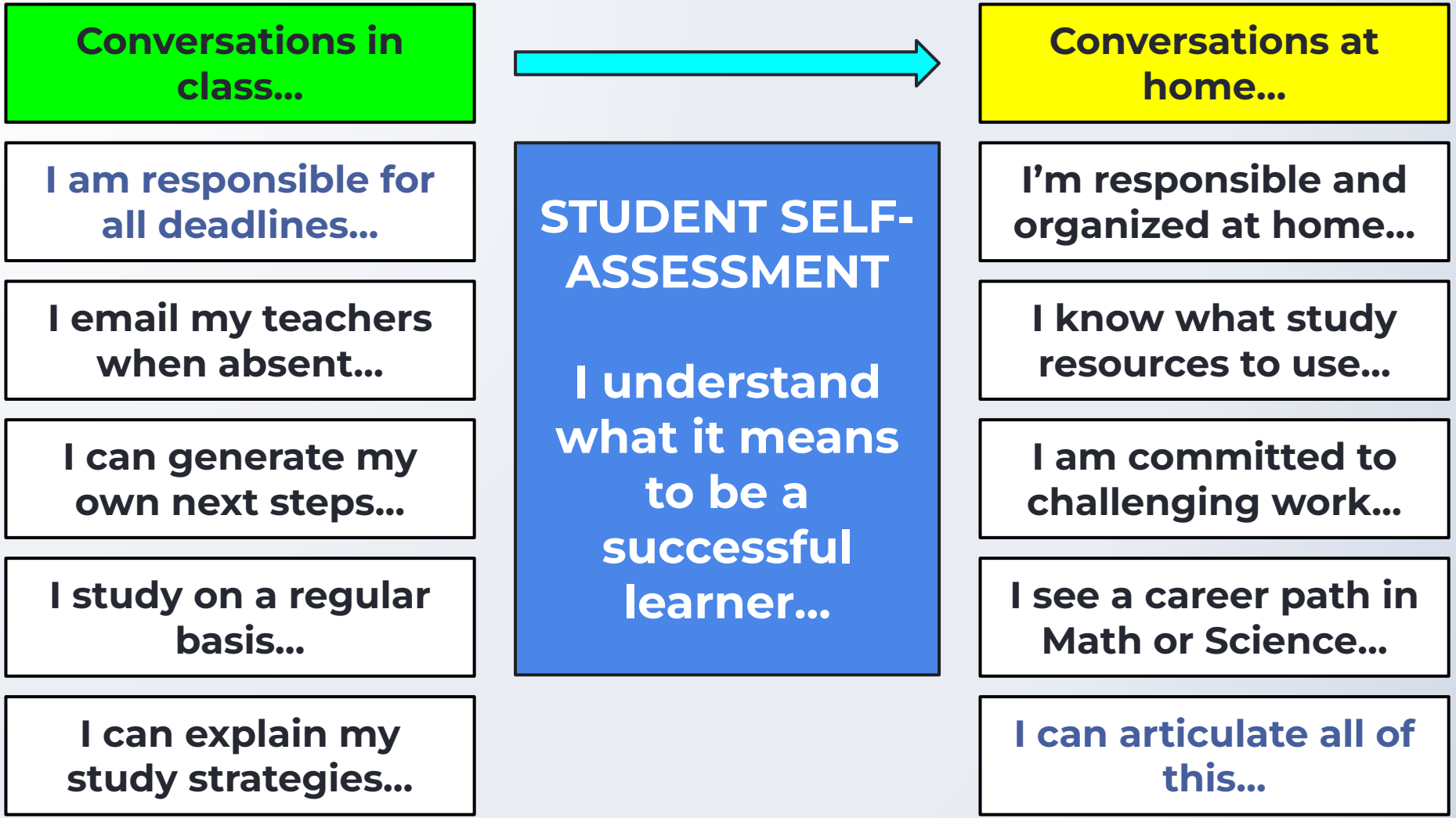
Science Grade Book

Example Student with an overall average of 81%

Category	Grading Weight	Student Score
Classwork	10%	95%
Homework	10%	100%
Projects/Labs	25%	92%
Tests/Quizzes	55%	70%

Classwork, homework, & labs are graded based on effort, completion, and demonstrate understanding based on utilization of resources and teacher supports.

Tests and quizzes measure independent understanding.


Conversations in class...
Conversations at home...
I am responsible for all deadlines...
I email my teachers when absent...
I can generate my own next steps...
I study on a regular basis...
I can explain my study strategies...
STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT
I understand what it means to be a successful learner...
I'm responsible and organized at home...
I know what study resources to use...
I am committed to challenging work...
I see a career path in Math or Science...
I can articulate all of this...

Timeline and Next Steps

January: Student-led discussions by 8th graders with the current 7th grade

February: Parent information and 7th to 8th grade transition meeting

February: Course selection sheets mailed out

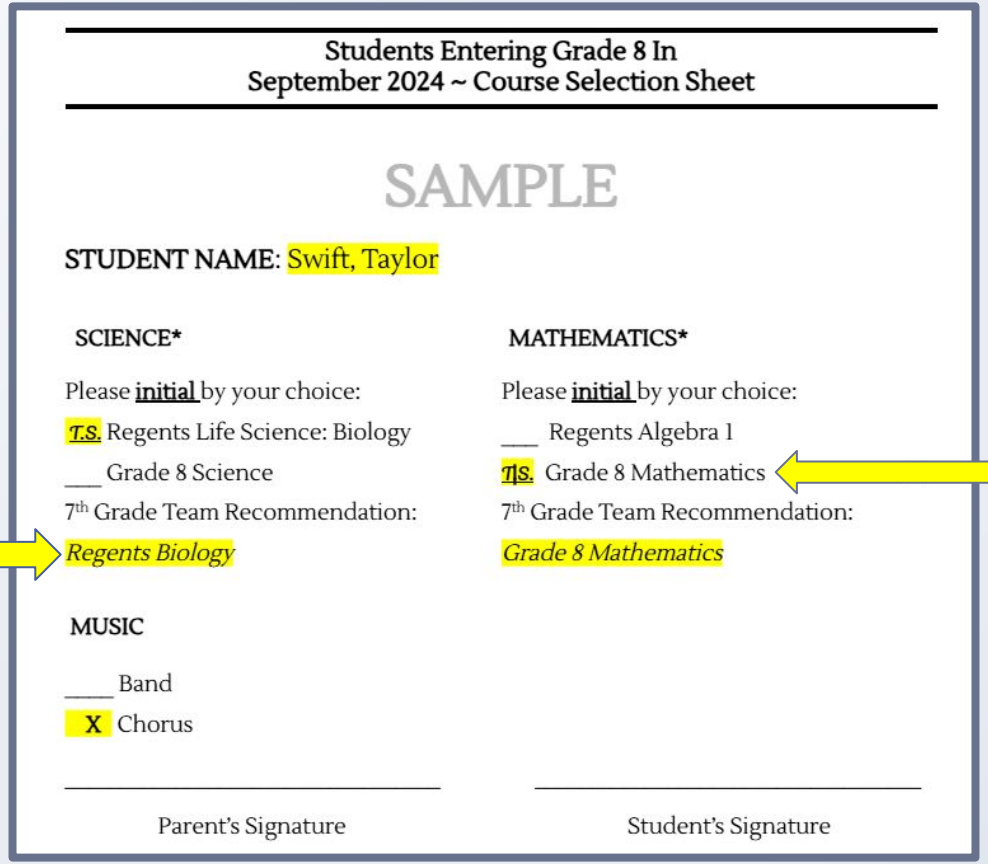
February: Family conversations with teachers, counselor, and at home

February 13: Course selections sheets due back to the WMS Main Office

Spring: Budget vote & implications for course offerings based upon enrollment

Course Selection Sheet

Only the recommendation is shared



Students Entering Grade 8 In
September 2024 ~ Course Selection Sheet

SAMPLE

STUDENT NAME: Swift, Taylor

SCIENCE*

Please initial by your choice:

T.S. Regents Life Science: Biology

___ Grade 8 Science

7th Grade Team Recommendation:

Regents Biology

MATHEMATICS*

Please initial by your choice:

___ Regents Algebra 1

T.S. Grade 8 Mathematics

7th Grade Team Recommendation:

Grade 8 Mathematics

MUSIC

____ Band

X Chorus

_____ Parent's Signature

_____ Student's Signature

Families make the selections

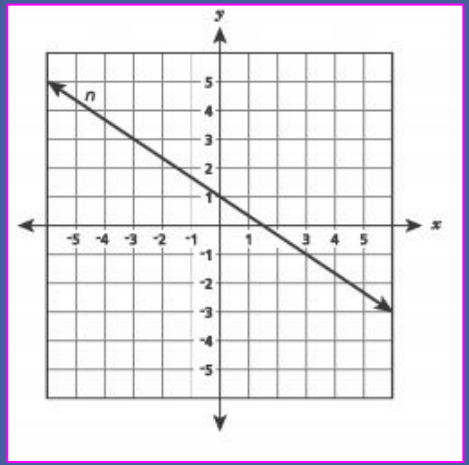
Mathematics Comparison

Math 8	Algebra 1
CCCS. MATH.CONTENT.8.EE.C.8.B Solve systems of two linear equations in two variables algebraically, and estimate solutions by graphing the equations.	**CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSA.REI.C.6** Solve systems of linear equations exactly and approximately, focusing on pairs of linear equations in two variables. **CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSA.CED.A.2** Create equations in two or more variables to represent relationships between quantities; graph equations on coordinate axes with labels and scales. Represent constraints by systems of equations and interpret solutions as viable options.

Mathematics Comparison

Math 8

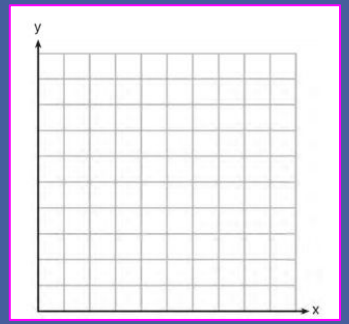
Line q will be graphed on the same grid. The only solution to the system of linear equations formed by lines n and q occurs when $x = \frac{3}{2}$ and $y = 0$. Which equation could represent line q?



Algebra 1

Franco and Caryl went to a bakery to buy desserts. Franco bought 3 packages of cupcakes and 2 packages of brownies for $19. Caryl bought 2 packages of cupcakes and 4 packages of brownies for $24. Let x equal the price of one package of cupcakes and y equal the price of one package of brownies. Write a system of equations that describes the given situation. On the set of axes below, graph the system of equations.

Determine the exact cost of one package of cupcakes and the exact cost of one package of brownies in dollars and cents. Justify your solution.



Mathematics Comparison

Math 8	Algebra 1
CCCS. MATH.CONTENT.8.EE.C.7 Solve linear equations in one variable.	**CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSA.REI.B.3** Solve linear equations in one variable, including equations with coefficient represented by letters.

Mathematics Comparison

Math 8	Algebra 1
Determine the solution to the equation below. $-3.1x + 7 - 7.4x = 1.5x - 6\left(x - \frac{3}{2}\right)$	Solve the equation below for x in terms of a. $4(ax + 3) - 3ax = 25 + 3a$

Science Comparison

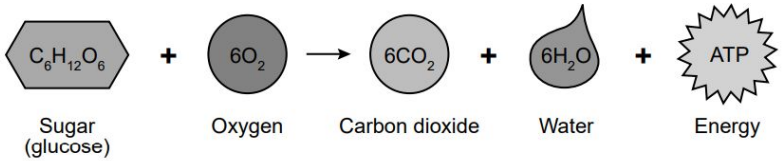
Science 8	Regents Biology
MS-LS2-3. Develop a model to describe the cycling of matter and flow of energy among living and nonliving parts of an ecosystem.	HS-LS2-4. Use mathematical representations to support claims for the cycling of matter and flow of energy among organisms in an ecosystem.

Science 8

Regents Biology

Respiration

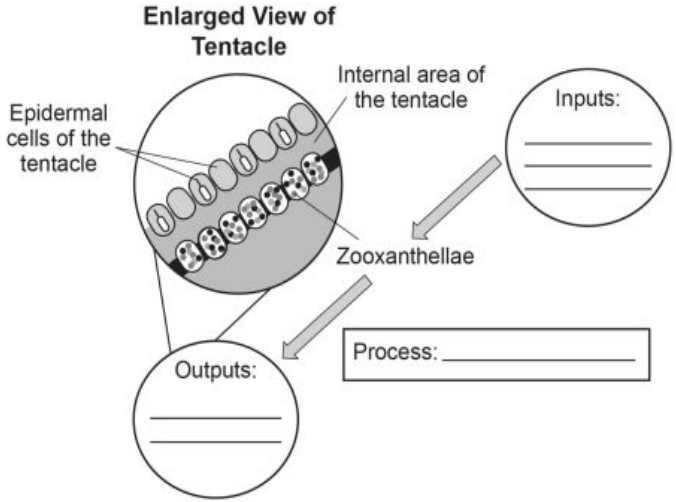
In order for athletes to run, bike, or hike long distances, more oxygen needs to be delivered to their cells. Athletes also need energy from food. Foods high in carbohydrates, such as sugar, provide this energy when the sugar and oxygen react to produce carbon dioxide, water, and energy during cellular respiration. The chemical reaction for this process is modeled below.



Identify the carbon-based molecule that is formed when a sugar molecule is rearranged during cellular respiration. [1]

_____

Complete the model below to illustrate the process occurring in the zooxanthellae located in the cells of the coral polyp. Your model should include all inputs of both matter and energy and identify the process involved. [1]



Science Comparison

Science 8	Regents Biology
MS-LS1-3. Use argument supported by evidence for how the body is a system of interacting subsystems composed of groups of cells.	**HS-LS1-2.** Develop and use a model to illustrate the hierarchical organization of interacting systems that provide specific functions within multicellular organisms.

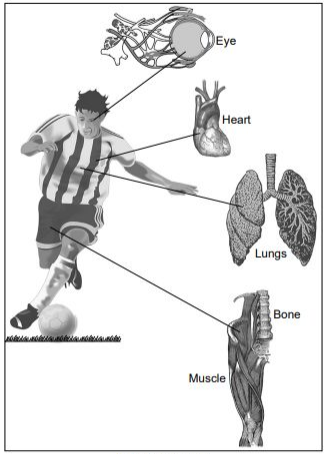
Science Comparison

Science 8

Base your answers to questions 19 through 23 on the information below and on your knowledge of science.

Organ Systems and Responses

On the field, a soccer player responds to stimuli in various ways. Coordinated responses are a result of the player's body systems working together. These responses are intended to help the body maintain homeostasis or are learned behaviors performed by the player.



(Not drawn to scale)

19 The player's coach always encourages all participants to work together as a team. The player claims that the human body works similarly because the body consists of interacting systems. Which piece of evidence supports this claim?

A Cells in the human body contain a nuclei, cell membrane, and vacuoles.

B Organs in the human body are composed of different types of tissue.

C The mouth, stomach, and intestines are organs of the human digestive system.

D The tissues of the muscular system move the human skeletal system.

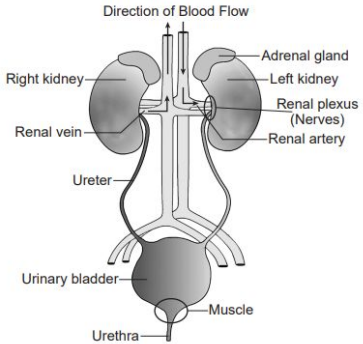
Regents Biology

Base your answers to questions 6 through 10 on the information below and on your knowledge of biology.

Drinking Water Is Just The Beginning!

The amount of water taken in must be in balance with the amount lost. The urinary system is involved in maintaining the salt and water balances within the body.

Human Urinary System



6 Which statement describes how the organization of the urinary system and *one* other system interact to maintain homeostasis in the human body?

(1) The adrenal gland, part of the endocrine system, delivers nutrients to the cells of the urinary system to remove carbon dioxide from the blood.

(2) The internal urethral sphincter muscle, part of the muscular system, contracts to signal the cells of the urinary system to regulate blood sugar.

(3) The brain, part of the nervous system, sends messages to the renal plexus (nerves) to signal the cells of the urinary system to deliver oxygen to the blood.

(4) The arteries, part of the circulatory system, deliver unfiltered blood to the cells of the urinary system to remove wastes.

COURSE PATHWAYS - Grades 8 through 12

- Consult the **2025 - 2026 Westlake High School Course Catalog.**
- Multiple course pathways for Math and Science.
- Continue to consider foundation and ***readiness*** for all subjects.
- The right level of rigor at the right time.
- If a student DOES NOT take accelerated courses in Grade 8 it does not preclude them from taking advanced level course work later in the pathway.
- If the student is excelling at a particular level, they may be given the option to move to a higher level in subsequent years.

Final Thoughts

- Grade 8 Math and Science are not *easy* or *watered down*
- Strongly consider school recommendations - we want the right fit
- Connect with your child's current teachers, counselors, and 8th grade teachers
- Avoid social pressures and parental expectations driving the decision
- Consider whether rigor and challenge result in unproductive anxiety
- It is ok to focus on the foundation that can help a student go farther
- Understand that the and final accelerated course grade appear on a transcript
- Being challenged may mean that grades do not come easy and are not guaranteed
- Establish a routine and process for course selections each year

QUESTIONS