

WMS

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

SY 2023-2024





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Wilmington Middle School Program of Studies Overview

The Program of Studies reflects that the curriculum of Wilmington Middle School is in alignment with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Curriculum Frameworks. We work diligently to maintain the alignment of our curriculum as the Frameworks continue to evolve.

Wilmington Middle School has a dedicated staff that is committed to working collaboratively to develop strategies and systems that will strengthen our students and prepare them for the next step of their education. These systems and strategies not only include a rigorous curriculum but also a foundation of technology literacy and social emotional skills needed to succeed.

The students are teamed by three houses per grade level. Students attend the four core academic classes of English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Social Studies, and Science based on team placement. Teaming creates a smaller cohort of students within the grade level population that allows interdisciplinary instruction, teacher collaboration, and strong home/school communication.

Students have the opportunity to be in classes with a mix of the entire student population while off team. Students attend classes off team during the Unified Arts blocks and while attending World Language classes. Unified Arts classes provide the students an opportunity to have exposure to curriculum that does not fall in alignment with the core academic standards. Students also have World Language classes.

At Wilmington Middle School our Mission is to provide a safe learning environment for all students and will inspire academic and social confidence, promote citizenship, and encourage responsibility resulting in well-rounded individuals. Our goal is to use this Mission Statement as a guide while providing a rigorous curriculum that will allow all students to succeed.



English Language Arts

Grade 6

Grade 6 English Language Arts classes will include, but not be limited to, novels, nonfiction, poetry, short stories, and grammar. Students will gain an understanding of reading, writing, and speaking as interactive processes. Students will add to their understanding by writing arguments, informational pieces, and narratives, as outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for English Language Arts..

During the students' sixth grade year, students will enhance the following skills to:

- Introduce a topic, and develop that topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, questions, or other information.
- Organize ideas, concepts, and information using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.
- Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.
- Use precise language and related vocabulary.
- Determine the theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details. Create an objective summary of the text.
- Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
- Cite evidence from the text to support analyses of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Integrate information presented in different media or formats to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.



Grade 7

In Grade 7, students will continue to develop the ability to cite relevant evidence when interpreting or analyzing a text or supporting their points in speaking and writing. Students will build academic vocabulary as they read more complex texts, including short stories, plays, historical novels, poems, and informational books and articles.

During the students' seventh grade year, students will enhance the skills to:

- Analyze how particular elements of a short story or novel interact (such as how the setting shapes the characters or plot)
- Determine how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text
- Analyze the importance of the author's tone and mood within literature.
- Research using and citing reliable sources in order to support and argue a claim.
- Engage in a range of classroom discussions on topics and texts expressing ideas clearly and building on the ideas of others
- Identify a speaker's argument and specific claims and evaluate the reasoning and evidence behind these claims as well as acknowledging counterclaims.
- Identify and analyze the theme of a text.
- Identify literary elements in a text and incorporate them into writing.
- Use textual evidence and proper citations in writing to support analysis.
- Write for a range of purposes and audiences



Grade 8

The Grade 8 English/Language Arts curriculum has been developed to prepare students to be able to continue to advance their writing and reading skills at the high school level. Students will explore narrative, argumentative, and expository writing. Teachers across the grade level utilize writing portfolios to assess students' growth throughout the year.

During the students' eighth grade year, students will enhance the skills to:

- Identify and cite strong textual evidence to support a thesis statement
- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of a text
- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts
- Identify and analyze the characteristics of irony and parody in a text
- Analyze and interpret the author's purpose in a wide range of texts
- Identify, interpret, and analyze figurative language in a text and apply skills to original pieces of writing
- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons, relevant evidence, and counterclaims
- Write for a range of purposes and audiences
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions



Mathematics

All Mathematics courses are aligned to the DESE Curriculum Frameworks. Our goal is to provide students an experience that allows them to apply their skills in real world situations through rich math tasks. In grades seven and eight, students have an opportunity to take part in an accelerated mathematics program. Placement into our accelerated program requires a student to rise to the challenge of a rigorous and fast paced math curriculum. Students will be identified for this program through a variety of data points including, but not limited to, performance on a placement test, previous grades in mathematics, and teacher recommendation. It is important to note that if a student is not in our accelerated program. It does NOT mean they cannot take honors level courses at WHS.

Grade 6

The sixth grade curriculum instructional time is focused on four critical areas:

- Connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division, and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems;
- Completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers;
- Writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations;
- Developing understanding of statistical thinking

Grade 7

The seventh grade curriculum instructional time is focused on four critical areas:

- Developing understanding of number systems through operations with rational numbers.
- Developing understanding of proportional relationships and applying proportional relationships to real-world percent problems
- Developing understanding of expressions and equations using rational numbers and applying them to real-world situations.
- Drawing inferences about populations based on samples. Calculating probabilities of compound events.



- Solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions. Understanding angle relationships and working with the two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume;

The accelerated seventh grade curriculum instructional time is focused on the following critical areas in addition to the grade 7 curriculum:

- Extending understanding of number systems to include real numbers.
- Understanding linear equations in the form $y=mx+b$.
- Analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using surface area, volume, angles, similarity, and congruence.

Grade 8

The eighth grade curriculum instructional time is focused on three critical areas:

- Formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations;
- Grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships;
- Analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem

Algebra 1

In Algebra 1, instructional time is focused on four critical areas:

- To deepen and extend understanding of linear and exponential relationships
- To contrast linear and exponential relationships with each other and engage in methods of analyzing, solving, and using quadratic functions;
- To extend the laws of exponents to square and cube roots;
- To apply linear models to data that exhibit a linear trend.



Science

All Science courses are aligned to the DESE Curriculum Frameworks. The standards for grades 6 through 8 integrate all eight science and engineering practices. Students will gain the skills necessary to engage in scientific and technical reasoning that is critical in the success in secondary education.

Grade 6

The sixth grade curriculum integrates the topics of Earth and space, life and physical sciences with technology/engineering. The curriculum provides the students with relevant problem solving and hands-on opportunities. Students will use models and provide evidence to make claims and explanations about relationships in the different science domains.

Grade 7

The middle school science curriculum involves an integrated approach to science. Priority is given to the three domains issued by the MA Curriculum Frameworks. These areas include: Life, Earth & Space, and Physical science. The seventh grade curriculum will highlight systems and cycles utilizing the students' understanding of structures and functions. Grade 7 will have an overarching theme of Watershed Systems & Cycles with an emphasis on science process skills. The students leave the school year with a basic knowledge of all of these areas. Grade 7 will continue working with the latest Savvas Interactive Science textbook series aligned to the standards.

Grade 8

Eighth grade students will use abstract thinking skills to explain complex concepts that are not immediately or physically visible to them. They will utilize the concepts of cause and effect to explain important patterns and predictions. The desired outcome for 8th grade is being able to use evidence to conceptualize and describe causes and processes that often cannot be seen.



Social Studies

Grade 6: World Geography & Ancient Civilizations I

World Geography and Ancient Civilizations I will start the year with reviewing important basic concepts in history and geography skills. Students will study the origins of human beings in Africa and the early civilizations that flourished in the Mediterranean area. Students will learn about the religions, governments, trade, and art of these civilizations as well as the powerful ideas that arose in the ancient world and profoundly shaped the course of world history. Some of these ideas include types of governments, the alphabetic principle for a writing system, and scientific discoveries. We will address the geography and history of different parts of the modern and ancient world in lands such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel, and Africa.

Grade 7: World Geography & Ancient Civilizations II

Students will continue their exploration of Ancient Civilizations and World Cultures. Students will study the development of ancient and classical civilizations and physical geography of Asia, Europe, and Oceania. They will study the religions, governments, trade, philosophies, and art of these civilizations as well as the powerful ideas that arose in the ancient world and profoundly shaped the course of world history. Students study these topics by exploring guiding questions such as, *“How have human societies differed from one another across time and regions?”* and *“Why do empires rise and fall?”*

Grade 8: Civics

Students will study the roots and foundations of U.S. democracy, how and why it has developed over time, and the role of individuals in maintaining a healthy democracy. They study these topics by exploring guiding questions such as, *“How have the concepts of liberty and justice affected the United States democratic system of government?”* and *“What rights and responsibilities do citizens of the United States have?”* Specific topics include: influences and structures of the American Colonies, the Constitution and Bill of Rights, branches of government, rights and responsibilities of citizens, and Massachusetts and local government. As part of the eighth grade curriculum students will also complete a community centered civics project. During this project students will examine themselves and their communities, identify community based resources and issues, and develop and implement an action plan to address the issue.



WORLD LANGUAGES

Our World Languages program is an opportunity for students to explore languages and experience cultures from around the world. Oral language proficiency is emphasized so that students can apply what they learn in a conversation. Grade 6, 7 & 8 World Languages is a three year program, covering the first year of the WHS World Language Curriculum.

Grade 6

In the study of world languages in grade six, students recognize, produce, and comprehend all sounds in the target language. Grammatical concepts including informal and formal pronouns, as well as grammatical gender, are studied. This will include study of oral and written communication to convey information about alphabet, cognates, greetings, colors, numbers, geography and descriptions. Students also compare and contrast linguistic and cultural norms between the United States and countries where the target language is spoken. Target Proficiency Level according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines: Novice Low-Novice Mid.

Grade 7

In the study of world languages in grade seven, students recognize, produce, and comprehend all sounds in the target language. Grammatical concepts including regular and irregular verb conjugation are studied. Oral and written communication to convey information about geography, descriptions, house and family. Students also compare and contrast culture in the United States with the cultures of the countries where the target language is spoken. Target Proficiency Level according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines: Novice Mid.

Grade 8

Students studying world languages in grade eight demonstrate knowledge of all noun/adjective and verb agreements in all written and oral work, understand the concept of reflexive verbs and use them to express daily routines, and conjugate verbs in the present tense. Oral and written communication in the target language is used to describe sports and other leisure activities, air and train travel, food, and clothing. Students also compare and contrast culture in the United States with the cultures of the countries where the target language is spoken. Target Proficiency Level according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines: Novice High.



Unified Arts

The Unified Arts allow students the opportunity to discover academic areas that they are passionate about outside of the core content. Both Physical Education and Health are required courses in grades six, seven, and eight. Students may also choose one of two tracks: performing arts or non-performing arts. A performing arts student will choose either band, strings, or chorus as their area of performance. A non-performing arts student will enroll in the exploratory music course. All students may choose electives from the following Unified Arts courses: technology education, computer literacy, and visual arts.

Physical Education

Middle School Physical Education is focused on physical education concepts that are taught using different team and individual sports, fitness activities, and cooperative games. Each student will have the opportunity to explore their abilities, enjoy movement, and learn how to lead a lifelong healthy lifestyle. The Physical Education Department strives to provide all children with a quality instructional program in a safe, secure, caring, and inclusive environment. During physical education, we endeavor to also build self-confidence, communication, and positive cooperation skills.

Reading

Reading classes are designed to improve the reading skills of those students who need reading reinforcement. Emphasis is placed on strengthening vocabulary and comprehension skills using a variety of materials and instructional strategies. Exercises are given to students to help them strengthen their written responses to a variety of comprehension questions. Daily discussions about the reading material will enable the students to learn from their peers. Vocabulary building exercises are reinforced through context clues. Students are encouraged to read aloud on a daily basis. This course is assigned by teacher/principal recommendation only.

Health

Each year Wilmington Middle School students in grades six to eight participate in Health Education classes. Class content is based on the Massachusetts Health Framework and the most recent health data. Skill-building lessons revolve around making healthy choices regarding alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, nutrition, sexuality education, communication skills, fitness, sleep, stress management, sun safety, and mental health.



Computer Literacy

Computer Literacy provides a foundation for basic computer literacy and digital skills. In this class, students learn the fundamentals of computer hardware and software, including how to navigate operating systems, use productivity software such as Microsoft Office, and browse the internet safely and responsibly. They also learn basic coding concepts and programming languages, such as Scratch or Python, to develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Additionally, this class focuses on technology and its impact on our daily lives, which can include discussions on cybersecurity, digital citizenship, and online communication and etiquette. This class will equip middle school students with essential digital skills and prepares them for future academic and professional pursuits in a technology-driven world. Proper keyboarding skills are also emphasized in each class.

Art

Students will be provided with knowledge, skills, and understanding of Visual Arts education in a structured and sequential program which encourages students to develop physically, creatively, socially and perceptually. The Visual Arts program promotes creative problem-solving which helps to develop the whole intellect. Development in this area can contribute to the promotion and integration of concepts common to all academic areas.

Math Lab

Math Lab classes are an intervention class to help students to reach a higher potential with their fundamental math skills, as well as, assistance with math topics in their current grade level math classes.

Technology Education (STEM Lab)

The middle school Technology Education and STEM Lab curriculum connects science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to support the middle school science curriculum. The STEM lab curriculum engages students by promoting curiosity, analytical thinking, and excitement for learning and problem-solving. The goal is to create real-world interdisciplinary connections, promote deeper learning and enable students to apply, transfer, and adapt their learning to new situations and problems. Among various topics covered, the curriculum highlights humanities' place in the universe, current NASA aeronautics, Newtonian physics, material science, robotics, CAD, and 3D printing. By providing our students with relevant and engaging opportunities for STEM investigations and thinking, we introduce them to the nature of the engineering design process, increase their understanding of scientific and



technological concepts, and promote skill development. We also recognize the importance of social interactions and communication skills in advancing our students' STEM learning and strive to provide opportunities for collaboration and effective communication in preparation for students to thrive in the modern workplace.

Band

Sixth Grade Band students use the knowledge and skills that they developed during their elementary band lessons for practical application in a performance-based setting. Students have the opportunity to not only refine their technical music skills, but to further explore the expressive qualities of music, which include music theory and conducting. Seventh and Eighth Grade Band students will continue to expand their technical grasp while learning and performing more difficult and challenging music. Several students will be given the opportunity to mentor younger musicians by acting as section leaders and coaches for the 6th Grade Band. All Band students will perform at least twice a year at winter and spring concerts.

Chorus

Students participating in Chorus develop vocal performance skills through the use of targeted singing activities, which consist of a variety of skills and concepts established by the National Arts Framework for Music. Building upon the elementary school vocal program, the goal of the Wilmington Middle School Choral Music program is to offer students (grades 6 – 8) an opportunity to (1) learn, memorize and perform a variety of choral repertoire appropriate to the grade level and developmental ability, (2) perform simple to complex rhythmic, melodic and harmonic patterns through sight-singing and performance literature, (3) learn and apply musical elements and theory to all choral literature, and (4) perform in a variety of concerts and state venues.

Orchestra (Strings)

Middle School Orchestra (Strings) is a continuation of the elementary program that focuses on the technique and theory of playing a stringed instrument. Students continue to learn to read music, basic music theory, composition, and sight reading skills as they apply to their instrument and the larger orchestral ensemble. Students meet every other day for a full period, and are grouped by grade-level. Students also learn to tune their own instruments and complete basic instrument repair/maintenance.



General Music

The Wilmington Middle School General Music curriculum consists of a developmentally appropriate exploration in music that expands students' musical knowledge and experiences acquired at the elementary level. Students in grade 6 – 8 are enrolled in general music classes as an elective and utilize multifunctional music & technology. Through the integration of 21st Century technologies, collaborative learning environments, and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, students engage in various forms and concepts in singing, reading & notation, playing instruments, improvisation and composition, as well as critical response activities through listening analysis. Students enrolled in general music can expect to learn about music in media, music technology, world music, theater, history of popular music, and perform on a variety of instruments like the acoustic guitar, electronic midi-keyboard, and percussive instruments. The Wilmington Middle School general music program adheres to the National Arts Framework and broadens students' understanding of musical concepts and global connections by increasing their sensitivity to the power of music and helping them better understand how music relates to art, history, math, technology, world sciences, and multiculturalism using an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning.