

ROCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL
PROGRAM OF STUDIES
2026-2027



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Mission

The mission of Rochester Area School District is to utilize a unique K-12 educational complex by providing all students the opportunity to realize their maximum academic potential in a rapidly changing world.

Belief Statements

- All students can learn.
- Students learn in different ways and at different rates.
- We prepare our students to be lifelong learners.
- The key aspect of education is developing well-rounded students who think creatively and critically to make informed decisions and solve problems.
- Education enables the individual to be a responsible, self-disciplined member of society.
- Educational and cultural diversity enriches the educational experience for students.
- A safe and caring environment is important to students and staff.
- Education is a collaborative partnership with the Board of Education, staff, students, families, and resources in the community.

Academic Program

The Rochester Middle School is composed of students in grades six, seven, and eight. Core classes in English Language Arts, ELA Lab, Mathematics, Math Lab, Science, and Social Studies are taught with an integration of critical thinking and problem solving. Students also have experiences in Art, Music, Chorus, Band, Computers, Family and Consumer Science, Physical Education, and Health. A variety of clubs and activities, sponsored by our faculty, help each student grow and reach their potential.

Course Design

GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
<u>Year Courses</u> • ELA 6 • ELA Lab 6 • Math 6 • Math Lab 6 • Science 6 • Social Studies 6	<u>Year Courses</u> • ELA 7/Honors ELA 7 • ELA Lab 7 • Math 7 • Math Lab 7 • Science 7 • World Geography 7	<u>Year Courses</u> • American History 8 • ELA 8/Honors ELA 8 • ELA Lab 8 • Math 8/Algebra I • Math Lab 8 • Science 8
<u>Specials Rotation</u> • Art 6 • Music 6 • Physical Education 6 • STEAM 6	<u>Specials Rotation</u> • Art 7 • Computers 7 • Family & Consumer Science 7 • Physical Education 7	<u>Specials Rotation</u> • Health 8 • Music 8 • Physical Education 8 • STEM 8
<u>Electives</u> • Middle School Chorus • Middle School Band	<u>Electives</u> • Middle School Chorus • Middle School Band (may also participate in Marching Band)	<u>Electives</u> • Middle School Chorus • Middle School Band (may also participate in Marching Band)
*ELA and Math in 7th and 8th grade may have an honors class depending on the number of students qualifying through the honors criteria.		

***Honors Criteria for Math, ELA, and Algebra 1 in 8th Grade**

To take **Honors English Language Arts in 7th or 8th grade**, you must meet the following prerequisites:

1. Score either proficient or advanced on the ELA PSSA

OR

2. Have at least an 80% average in your ELA class at the conclusion of the second nine weeks AND have written approval from your teacher/administrator

-If you receive a 69% or lower in the third and fourth nine weeks of that school year, you will not be permitted to take Honors ELA the following year, even if the above prerequisites are obtained.

To take **Honors Mathematics in 7th or 8th grade**, you must meet the following prerequisites:

1. Score either proficient or advanced on the Math PSSA

OR

2. Have at least an 80% average in your math class at the conclusion of the second nine weeks AND have written approval from your teacher/administrator

-If you receive a 69% or lower in the third and fourth nine weeks of that school year, you will not be permitted to take Honors Math the following year, even if the above prerequisites are obtained.

To take **Algebra 1 in 8th grade**, you must meet the following prerequisites:

1. Score advanced on the Math PSSA

and

2. Written approval from your teacher/administrator

-If you receive a 69% or lower in the third and fourth nine weeks of that school year, you will not be permitted to take Algebra I the following year, even if the above prerequisites are obtained.

State Testing

PSSA

The Pennsylvania System of State Assessment (PSSA) is administered to all sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade students. Sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade students are required to take the English Language Arts (ELA) and math exams. In addition, eighth-grade students are required to take the science assessment. The PSSA is administered each spring. Student performance on the test is scored and placed into four categories - Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic.

The PSSA is administered during school hours to all students. There is no advance registration or cost to students associated with the PSSA.

The school district uses the results obtained from the PSSA to help determine courses for the next grade level.

Keystone Exams

Keystone exams are administered as end-of-course exams in Algebra I, Literature, and Biology. At Rochester, we administer the Literature test after the tenth-grade English course. All students enrolled in these courses will be required to take these exams to fulfill state and federal requirements. Students are required to achieve a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra and Literature exams to meet a state graduation pathway. Keystone exams are scheduled in the winter, spring, and summer according to the state schedule.

Middle School Courses

Core Classes

English Language Arts

English Language Arts 6
English Language Arts Lab 6
English Language Arts 7
English Language Arts Lab 7
English Language Arts Honors 7*
English Language Arts 8
English Language Arts Lab 8
English Language Arts Honors 8*

Science

Science 6
Science 7
Science 8

Mathematics

Math 6 Math Lab 6
Math 7 Math Lab 7
Math 8 Math Lab 8
Honors Math 7*
Honors Math 8*
Algebra I*

Social Studies

Social Studies 6
World Geography 7
American History 8

Specials

Sixth Grade Specials

Art 6
Music 6
Physical Education 6
STEAM 6

Seventh Grade Specials

Art 7
Computers 7
Family & Consumer Science 7
Physical Education 7

Eighth Grade Specials

Health 8
Music 8
Physical Education 8
STEM 8

Electives

Chorus

Band

Chorus/Band

Course Descriptions

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COURSES

English Language Arts 6

This course consists of standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students will practice various reading comprehension skills in both literature and non-fiction texts. Students may be required to read books independently and complete projects to demonstrate their understanding of the text. In addition, students will read three novels in class. In English, students will practice grammar skills, which will, in turn, enhance their writing skills. Students will practice different styles of writing, which include argumentative, expository, and narrative pieces. Students will study the components of writing, which include the conventions of grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. With this instruction, students will be strengthening their written communication skills.

English Language Arts Lab 6

This course focuses on the same components and standards as ELA 6. Students will complete independent work in this course.

English Language Arts 7

This course consists of academic elements that enhance or strengthen reading, writing, vocabulary, and communication skills. It focuses on concepts of English grammar and writing, listening/speaking skills, presentation and collaboration skills, and the critical examination of literature (including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama). Each area of study plays an important role in language development and is presented through a variety of teaching methods.

English Language Arts Lab 7

This course is designed to provide intervention and enrichment in the area of English Language Arts. This class coincides with the content being taught in the English Language Arts curriculum to provide extra support in meeting the seventh-grade Pennsylvania Core Standards.

***English Language Arts Honors 7**

This course is an enriched course designed for advanced learners who demonstrate strong reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Students engage with complex literary and informational texts across genres, including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama, while developing skills in analysis, interpretation, and evidence-based reasoning. The course emphasizes close reading, annotation, and thoughtful discussion, often through collaborative activities. Instruction incorporates differentiated strategies, technology integration, and opportunities for enrichment, while assessments include essays, projects, and participation.

English Language Arts 8

This course combines the study of reading, writing, speaking, and listening to prepare students for success in high school. The course content reviews previous skills and emphasizes application of old and new skills. The course includes Text Dependent Analysis writing combined with MLA research-based formatting, project preparation and presentation, exposure to a variety of literary forms (including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama) and techniques, vocabulary development, and instruction in and application of grammar mechanics.

English Language Arts Lab 8

This course is designed to provide intervention and enrichment in the area of English Language Arts. This class coincides with the content being taught in the English Language Arts curriculum to provide extra support in meeting the eighth-grade Pennsylvania Core Standards.

***English Language Arts Honors 8**

This is an advanced, comprehensive course designed to challenge students to think critically, read analytically, and communicate effectively at a high level of rigor. Students engage with a diverse range of complex texts, including classic and contemporary literature, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Through close reading, annotation, and in-depth discussions, students develop the ability to construct and articulate sophisticated interpretations supported by strong textual evidence, through oral presentations and writing. Students also conduct research using credible sources, analyze arguments, and present findings through both written and multimedia formats. Instruction includes differentiated and enrichment opportunities, as well as technology integration to support learning. Assessments include analytical essays, projects, presentations, and active participation.

MATHEMATICS COURSES

Mathematics 6

This course focuses on concepts and skills aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards for Mathematics at the 6th-grade level. Major topics include Ratios and Proportional Relationships, The Number System, Expressions and Equations, Geometry, and Statistics and Probability.

In addition to Mathematics 6 instruction, students will participate in Mathematics 6 Lab. During this course, students will reinforce and extend their understanding of grade-level standards through hands-on activities, targeted practice, online learning programs, and spiral review. These sessions are designed to support skill development, promote problem-solving, and provide opportunities for both remediation and enrichment based on individual student needs.

Math Lab 6

Math 6 focuses on concepts and skills aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards for Mathematics at the 6th-grade level. Major topics include Ratios and Proportional Relationships, The Number System, Expressions and Equations, Geometry, and Statistics and Probability.

In addition to instruction in Mathematics 6, students will participate in Mathematics Lab . During these labs, students will reinforce and extend their understanding of grade-level standards through hands-on activities, targeted practice, online learning programs, and spiral review. Mathematics Lab is designed to support skill development, promote problem-solving, and provide opportunities for both remediation and enrichment based on individual student needs.

Mathematics 7

This course will focus on concepts and skills that are aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards for Mathematics at the 7th grade level. Topics will include Numbers and Operations, Measurement, Basic Geometry Concepts, Calculating Perimeter, Area, Surface Area, and Volume, Algebraic Concepts, Data Analysis, Probability, Ratios, and Percent problems.

Math Lab 7

This course is designed to provide intervention and enrichment in the area of Mathematics. This class coincides with the content being taught in the Math curriculum to provide extra support in meeting the seventh-grade Pennsylvania Core Standards.

***Honors Math 7**

Honors Mathematics 7 is an accelerated, rigorous course aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards for Mathematics. This course is designed for highly motivated students who demonstrate strong computational skills, conceptual understanding, and the ability to think critically and independently. The curriculum deepens and extends Grade 7 content while incorporating select Grade 8 concepts to prepare students for advanced mathematics pathways. Major topics include operations with rational numbers, proportional relationships, expressions and equations, inequalities, geometry, and statistics and probability. Students engage in complex problem solving tasks, mathematical modeling, and real world applications that require perseverance and precision. Students are expected to work both independently and collaboratively, justify their thinking, and apply concepts in unfamiliar contexts. The pace of the course is accelerated, and a high level of academic responsibility is expected.

Successful completion of Honors Mathematics 7 prepares students for Algebra I or Honors Math 8, depending on district criteria.

Mathematics 8

This course will focus on concepts and skills that are aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards for Mathematics at the 8th grade level. This main focus is an introduction to problem solving involving unknown variables. Topics will include Order of Operations, Integers, Exponents, and Solving Simple Equations with unknown variables. Scientific Notation, Rational and Real Numbers, Collecting and Analyzing Data, Basic Geometry Concepts, Calculating Volume, Ratios, Percent problems, Graphing, Scatter Plots, Line of best fit, and frequency.

Math Lab 8

This course is designed to provide intervention and enrichment in the area of Mathematics. This class coincides with the content being taught in the Math curriculum to provide extra support in meeting the eighth-grade Pennsylvania Core Standards.

***Honors Math 8**

Mathematics 8 is aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards for Mathematics and builds upon foundational skills developed in previous grades while preparing students for high school mathematics. The course focuses on three critical areas: understanding linear relationships, analyzing and solving equations, and exploring functions. Additional topics include systems of equations, geometry (including the Pythagorean Theorem and transformations), and introductory statistics. Students develop fluency with algebraic reasoning and learn to represent relationships using tables, graphs, equations, and verbal descriptions. Emphasis is placed on conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application of mathematical practices. Students solve real world problems, interpret data, and communicate mathematical reasoning clearly.

This course prepares students for Algebra I by strengthening their ability to analyze relationships, think abstractly, and apply mathematical concepts in a variety of contexts.

***Algebra I**

This course is a one-year course of Algebra I. This course examines the basic structure of real numbers, algebraic expressions, and functions. The topics studied are linear equations, inequalities, functions and systems, quadratic equations and functions, polynomial expressions, data analysis, probability, and the elementary properties of functions. Mathematical modeling of real-life problems and problem solving are major themes of the course. Concepts and skills in this course are aligned to the PA state standards.

SCIENCE COURSES

Science 6

This science program will focus on a variety of topics that will teach the students to evaluate, analyze, and apply what they are learning. The three topics will include Water and the Atmosphere, Atmosphere and Space Science, and Science and Technology. Information is presented in short, condensed sections, which makes it easier to absorb. Interactive Science provides students with a solid foundation. A combination of technology, laboratories, projects, research, homework, and class work will be used to evaluate the student's grade. Students are given text workbooks that will be theirs to keep and have access to online lessons.

Science 7

This science program is to develop critical and analytical skills through exposure to a variety of scientific areas. The content of the science units include: the scientific method, properties of matter, atomic properties, force and motion. A combination of technology enriched lessons, laboratory sessions, projects, research, and class work will be used to evaluate a student's performance.

Science 8

This science program will have its emphasis on the food webs, ecosystems, cycles in nature, biodiversity, and ecology. Students in all classes will focus on skill development, receiving many opportunities for drill and practice, develop a basic understanding of science concepts, and illustrate learning through projects, technology, labs and activities.

SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES

Social Studies 6

This course covers the history of the United States from the Civil War to the present. The goal of the course is for students to understand United States history and see how it has changed significantly over the years. Students will learn about people, places, activities, and geography, and understand the important role this has played throughout history. They will learn important reading, study skills, and academic vocabulary through the Social Studies curriculum. Students will develop thinking skills that support the ability to challenge expectations to think productively.

World Geography 7

This course is designed to provide a thorough introduction to geography and a regional approach to exploring the world. Students will learn about people, places, and cultures around the world and understand the important role that geography has played throughout history. They will see how geography influences their life on a daily basis and recognize connections between geography and other disciplines. This course will also build a solid Social Studies and academic vocabulary and develop thinking skills that support the ability to challenge assumptions, think creatively, and solve real-life problems.

American History 8

This course will examine the history of the United States from the first Americans through to 1877 and the end of Reconstruction. The goal of the course is for students to develop a strong understanding and appreciation of early United States history and see how United States history fits into the larger scope of world history. In addition, they will understand how early United States history influences life today and recognize connections between United States history and other disciplines. This course will also build a solid Social Studies and academic vocabulary and develop thinking skills that support the ability to challenge assumptions, think creatively, and solve real-life problems.

SPECIALS ROTATION COURSES

Art 6

This 6th grade art course invites students to explore a variety of artistic processes, including drawing, painting, collage, and sculpture. Through hands-on projects, students will experiment with different materials and techniques while developing their creativity, problem-solving skills, and personal artistic voice. Emphasis is placed on exploration, choice, and growth, encouraging students to take risks, reflect on their work, and build confidence as young artists.

Art 7

This course will encourage students to experiment with a variety of media to create 2D and 3D artwork. The course will be split between Drawing/Graphic Design, Painting, and 3D Art. Artists and art movements throughout history will be discussed and students will learn to identify styles and to interpret different pieces of art.

Computers 7

In this 45-day cycle course, students will explore the Google Suite Applications (primarily Docs, Sheets, Slides, Forms) and Canva to communicate ideas effectively. Furthermore, students will learn about internet safety and digital citizenship that is important in the world we live in today. This course also includes a career exploration unit that will help students identify individual goals and career interests. Finally, students will participate in STEAM and coding activities that encourage creativity, collaboration, and problem solving.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FaCS) 7

This is a 9 week exploratory course that covers areas of eating disorders, and nutrition along with nutrition and cooking labs, money management (savings and checking), and balancing family, work and community responsibilities (family life cycle and space planning), in addition clothing care, consumer rights and responsibilities (advertising/complaint letters), and career education are explored.

Health 8

This course will give students an education covering basic health and body knowledge, as well as health and fitness topics that pertain to your age group. Topics include, but are not limited to: hygiene, self-esteem, safety, drugs and addiction, puberty, communicable diseases, personal and social skills, decision making, goal setting, sexual education and prevention of disease, stress management, and overall fitness and nutrition. The goal of this class is to build upon personal knowledge to make appropriate decisions regarding your body, mind and goals for the future.

Music 6

Students will gain knowledge of how to read and perform basic notes and rhythms. Students in this course will be introduced to the ukulele. Students will learn how to perform songs using 3 chords.

Music 8

Students will continue to study musical concepts introduced in Music 6. Topics covered in this class include how to read treble and bass clef notes, exploring careers in music, studying a variety of music genres, and learning the basics of digital music creation. This course is primarily project-based, giving students the opportunity to apply what they learn through hands-on and creative assignments.

Physical Education 6

During this course, students are introduced to a variety of sport skills and activities. Through these activities, students will gain the knowledge to select activities that will evolve into lifetime skills.

Physical Education 7

During this course, students are introduced to a variety of sport skills and activities. Through these activities, students will gain the knowledge to select activities that will evolve into lifetime skills.

Physical Education 8

During this course, students are introduced to a variety of sport skills and activities. Through these activities, students will gain the knowledge to select activities that will evolve into lifetime skills.

STEAM 6

STEAM 6 integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics through hands-on, project-based learning to foster innovation and critical thinking. The curriculum typically covers robotics, coding, architectural design, environmental science, and digital art, using tools like iPads and maker spaces to solve real-world problems.

STEM 8

STEM 8 is a hands-on collaborative class with a focus on science and the engineering process. Students will learn to work productively in a group on both individual and group goals. Students will focus on creating prototypes within a project's criteria and constraints while both giving and receiving high-quality feedback. Students will be asked to research, document, design, build, test, calculate, and improve throughout the course. Some topics that may be covered are: bio-inspiration, circuits, polymers, adaptations, architecture, and forces.

ELECTIVES

Middle School Band

This course is for all instrumental musicians. Students interested in learning to play a woodwind, brass, or percussion instrument are encouraged to register for this course. The main goal of Middle School Band will be learning to improve as a musician. Students will perform for two evening concerts. Participation in Marching Band, which is highly recommended, is an optional activity for 7th and 8th grade band students.

Middle School Chorus

Students will learn to sing different styles of music and improve their singing voices. There are two concerts a year. Attendance at all events is a mandatory requirement unless approved by the director and/or Administration. Middle School Chorus is for students in grades 6, 7, and 8 who show an interest in music and enjoy singing.

Middle School Band/Chorus

This course is designed for students who wish to enroll in both Band and Chorus. Students will alternate between both Band and Chorus.

Advisory

Advisory 7 and Advisory 8

Advisory for 7th and 8th grade is a student-centered period during which students will get support for academic, social, and emotional growth of middle school students. During advisory, students will participate in activities that promote social emotional skills, goal setting, communication, teamwork, monitor academic progress, celebrate achievements, and many skills needed for success now and in the future. The goal is to help every student feel connected, supported, and prepared for the challenges of middle school while developing the skills needed for future success.