



Tenaflly Public Schools

Middle School

PROGRAM OF

STUDIES



2026-2027

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A Message from Our Administration

Dear TMS Families,

The Middle School fulfills a unique purpose within our school system. We are the bridge between the primary years at our four neighborhood elementary schools and the young adult years at Tenaflly High School where our students finish their K-12 education. Our students experience many changes over their three years with us. They expand social circles, experience puberty and physical changes, and start to become independent teenagers. We work on strengthening their basic skills while helping them see the relevance of our complex curriculum.

Many of our students experience failure for the first time while at middle school, so we understand the importance of embracing failure and developing a growth mindset. We expect our students to have strong moral character and to understand the difference between right and wrong. We also know that our children's success hinges on the bond between home and school. Your help and support are critical to this success. The TMS staff is skilled in dealing with the many intellectual, physical, emotional, and social changes early adolescents experience. One way we handle these challenges is to have our school organized by teams to nurture our students as they grow. The cross-curricular team teachers meet weekly to coordinate instruction and discuss the needs of individual students. Our guidance counselors attend these meetings and follow the students all three years, so they get to know each and every student very well.

This Program of Studies will give you an overview of our academic program. If you have any questions, feel free to contact one of us directly. We are confident that your child's middle school years will be both academically enriching and personally rewarding.

Sincerely,

[Mr. Patrick E. Comey](#), Principal

[Ms. Cathy Paz](#), Vice Principal

[Ms. Allie Slane](#), Vice Principal

Affirmative Action Program for School and Classroom Practices

The Tenaflly Public School District prohibits discrimination based on the following protected categories: race; creed; religion; color; national origin/nationality; ancestry; age; sex/gender (including pregnancy); marital status/civil union partnership; familial status; affectional or sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; domestic partnership status; atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait; genetic information; disability (including perceived disability, physical, mental and/or intellectual disabilities); or liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States. This includes equality of educational opportunities including classroom programs, curriculum development and instructional materials. The statement confirms compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1954, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Age Discrimination Act of 1975. (See Board of Education Policy Nos. 1140, 2260). In accordance with Board of Education Policy No. 2260, the Board shall provide equal and bias-free access for all pupils to all school facilities, courses, programs, activities, and services, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomic status. The Board of Education shall ensure that the district's curriculum and instruction are aligned to the State's Student Learning Standards and address the elimination of discrimination by narrowing the achievement gap, by providing equity in education programs and by providing opportunities for pupils to interact positively with others regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomic status.

The Board of Education shall ensure all pupils have access to adequate and appropriate counseling services. When informing pupils about possible careers, professional or vocational opportunities, the Board shall not restrict or limit the options presented to pupils on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status. The district will not use tests, guidance, or counseling materials which are biased or stereotyped on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status. The Board of Education shall ensure that the district's physical education program and its athletic programs are equitable, co-educational, and do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status.

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Choosing a Program

Registration for each of the Middle School grades is a cooperative effort by students, parents, teachers, school counselors, and administrators. The school administration asks each student and parent to read this booklet for a complete understanding of what is required for the middle school years, what choices are available, and how students are assigned to individual classes. It is expected that once choices are made, students will remain in those classes for the entire term. Therefore, thoughtful choices are necessary.

Most regular education students will follow the same program at each grade level in heterogeneous classes. There are a few classes that have been developed to accommodate variations in achievement levels. These include Math 7 Advanced, Algebra Grade 7 or 8, Geometry Grade 8, Math 8, and Beginning Spanish and French 7/8. For students entering Grades 7 and 8, team and department teachers recommend students for these classes. Parents will be notified when their child is selected for such a class. Students entering Grade 6 are assigned to classes and teams after discussions with their elementary school teachers, school counselor and a review of their elective choices. Parents of students entering Grade six will be notified of any special placements in the summer. This Program of Studies will be posted on our TMS website.

Teams

Grades 6, 7 and 8 are divided into interdisciplinary teams of approximately 100 students and five academic teachers. The teachers share a common schedule and common planning time. Team classes include Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. All other classes are cross-teamed. The school counselors place students on teams. The teams are balanced by gender, elementary sending school (Grade 6), learning differences and other needs. Although the curricula on all teams at each grade level are the same, team teachers may plan unique activities or events for their team of students. Teams of students do not stay together for all three years; they are reassigned each year.

The Program

The TMS day is divided into eight 44-minute class periods and one class at each grade level is split in half to accommodate student lunches. For students at all grade levels, the activities for five periods are the same full-period classes every day in Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Education/Family Life. In addition, Grade 6 students also take one full period of Literacy each day and a 22-minute World Language class. An additional class period each day is devoted to classes in the Integrated Arts. In addition, Grades 7 and 8 students take one full period of a World Language. The remaining period is devoted to a rotation of classes in the Integrated Arts.

English Language Arts

The English Language Arts program (ELA) builds upon the language experiences of the elementary years and aims to nurture proficiency in the interrelated activities of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and critical thinking. Through both guided and independent reading and writing activities in the language arts class, students apply comprehension strategies to create meaning from text, deepen their grasp of verbal structures, and expand their vocabulary. In the sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade classes, students study poetry, drama, the novel, memoirs, short stories, and nonfiction. Students can expect to engage in whole-class readings of a single text, group readings of varied texts, independent reading, and research.

Grammar, usage, and mechanics of English are taught within the context of writing; additional reinforcement with grammar-text exercises is provided on an as-needed basis. In each of the grade levels, and in all of the activities of the classroom, the English language arts program seeks to engage students with their capacity to use language as a source of understanding and a means of expression. It is important to note that each year, teachers use their discretion in determining which specific activities and texts they will use to meet their students' varied learning needs and capabilities.

Grade 6

The sixth-grade course, designed to nurture an awareness and appreciation of good writing and a love of reading, guides students to become more skillful writers and closer readers with a special focus on making inferences and supporting them with textual evidence. Students build working vocabulary and increase awareness of grammar in order to express themselves more effectively as they write and read a variety of genres including but not limited to short fiction, poetry, literary analysis, and novels. With many opportunities for students to work collaboratively and contribute to collegial discussions, students form a community of critical thinkers.

Grade 7

The seventh-grade program extends the work of the sixth grade by immersing students further in the study of various reading and writing genres. Through independent reading and the study of whole-class texts, students are given regular opportunities to develop individual lines of inquiry about literature. Shared texts such as S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*, *Before the Ever After* by Jacqueline Woodson, and short story collections provide students with exposure to classic literature, highly-acclaimed young adult literature, and other genres. Writing instruction continues to emphasize the process as students experiment with composition in various genres.

Grade 8

The eighth-grade Language Arts program provides a capstone experience in literacy as students build upon the foundational skills learned in the earlier grades to study classic literary works and pursue independent inquiry in literature and nonfiction reading. Shared texts such as John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* provide opportunities for students to engage in the kind of close reading and writing about literature that will prepare them for high school. Students study rhetorical devices for persuasive and expository writing. The I-Search project, a research paper on a self-selected topic written in the form of a nonfiction feature article, engages students in critical research skills and in the synthesis of ideas across various texts and sources. Throughout the year, emphasis is placed on "reading as a writer" and writing for authentic audiences.

Literacy

This course will provide explicit reading instruction to support sixth graders' transition from elementary reading curricula to the demands of secondary school reading. This will be accomplished in a workshop environment developed from decades of research on what is effective for helping secondary students become skillful, engaged readers. Whole-class, small-group and individualized instruction will meet the needs of all learners. Teachers will use a comprehensive multi-sensory morphology program to target students' specific areas of need.

By taking the literacy course, the hope is that all students find a place for reading in their lives, enjoy reading and its challenges, become emotionally invested in what they read, and utilize a variety of strategies to make sense of texts in a wide range of genres. Throughout this course, students will be expected to generate, articulate, and negotiate textual interpretations and develop an understanding that texts often possess meanings beyond what is represented.

The sixth-grade Media Studies program is taught during Literacy and enables students to navigate digital and social media by learning about online etiquette, their rights, as well as their responsibility as digital citizens in our 21st-century world. Students will be equipped with strategies that will empower them to be careful, yet reflective consumers and contributors when engaged in online activities. Students will also learn traditional library skills such as how to access and locate materials and resources independently within the TMS Library Media Center. Students will utilize an array of databases offered through our library. In doing so, students will learn how to apply research skills in an effective and efficient manner when creating projects for content-area and integrated arts classes across the curriculum.

Mathematics

All programs are designed to emphasize the development of student understanding of selected concepts and topics; to perform operations; to understand problems and then to select appropriate methods and operations for solutions; and to develop higher-order thinking skills. An accelerated program is offered as early as sixth grade, beginning with Math 7 Advanced. Classes taken in the summer will not substitute for our Middle School courses nor can outside courses be used for placement.

The curriculum offered supports the following Mathematical Practice Standards:

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
- Model with mathematics.
- Use appropriate tools strategically.
- Attend to precision.
- Look for and make use of structure.
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

The table below outlines the most common sequences/accelerations offered at TMS:

Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Math 5	Math 6	Math 7*	Math 8
		Math 7 Advanced	Algebra 8
	Math 7 Advanced	Algebra 7	Geometry

Note: Students in Math 7 are eligible for Algebra 8. See detailed criteria in the next section.

Math 6

In Grade 6, instructional time focuses on five 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, including negative numbers
- Writing, interpreting, and using expressions
- Writing and solving one-step equations and inequalities
- Developing understanding of statistical thinking

This program blends these mathematical strands with real-world problem solving including investigating concepts and building conceptual understanding while developing, reinforcing, and mastering computational and procedural skills. Students analyze data and make predictions based on various graphs. They become familiar with showing multi-step mathematical procedures algebraically. Students consider real number properties and the rational number set, with emphasis on integer operations. They use both mental math and algebra to solve linear equations. They become familiar with polygons and area formulas. In all problem-solving settings, students learn to make strategic choices of procedures for efficient, effective results.

Math 7

In Grade 7, instructional time focuses on five critical areas:

- Developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships
- Developing understanding of operations with rational numbers
- Fluently solving linear equations and graphing solutions of inequalities
- Solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume
- Drawing inferences about populations based on samples

As in sixth grade, this program blends mathematical strands with real-world problem solving including, but not limited to, the examples given here. Students simplify expressions and solve multi-step equations using one variable. They translate among verbal, tabular, graphical and algebraic representation of functions. Students use descriptive statistics to summarize and compare data sets. In all problem-solving settings, students learn to make strategic choices of procedures for efficient, effective results.

Math 7 Advanced (Prerequisites*: Minimum final grade of A- in Math 6, minimum scores on benchmark assessments, and teacher recommendation).

This course follows the same scope and sequence of Math 7. Students are exposed to content in discovery-based experiences to develop concepts and are expected to apply content knowledge in more rigorous, less routine assessment settings and scenarios.

*Students in grade 5 may be eligible for acceleration into Math 7 Advanced as sixth graders, based on multiple criteria including report card scores, teacher recommendation, and benchmark assessment scores. Sixth grade students in Math 7 Advanced with an average below B- at the end of Trimester 1 will have their placements reviewed and possibly revised to Math 6.

Math 8 (Prerequisite: Math 7)

Math 8 focuses on those skills needed to help students gain experience in reading, writing and understanding the unique language of mathematics. Students continue to translate among verbal, tabular, graphical and algebraic representation of functions. Students study integers with a focus on their real-world applications. They learn multiple strategies for solving equations of one variable. The number system is expanded to include rational numbers. Ratios and proportions and their application to similar figures are explored as students study the geometry of two and three-dimensional figures.

Algebra - Grades 7 and 8 (Prerequisites: Minimum final grade of A- in Math 7 *OR* minimum final grade of B+ in Math 7 Advanced; and teacher recommendation).

This class is the equivalent of the Tenafly High School Algebra 1 class with the same rigor and expectations. Students in this class develop their abstract reasoning skills as they employ the language of mathematics through the use of variables and expressions. The four fundamental operations of rational numbers along with sets and number properties will be employed to help students transition from the concrete to the abstract. Students apply algebraic and graphing techniques as they study: relations, functions, linear equations, linear inequalities, linear systems, exponents, rational exponents, radicals, polynomial operations, factoring, solving quadratic equations, and interpreting statistics as related to the linear model.

The New Jersey Student Learning Assessments for Mathematics (NJSLA-M) for Algebra 1 is taken by all students enrolled in Algebra 7 or Algebra 8. Based on the current information provided by NJDOE, students in Algebra 1 course equivalents must meet the NJDOE requirements regarding passing the NJSLA-M as a component of their graduation requirements. Students earning a grade of C+ and below will be recommended to repeat the course in the subsequent year.

Geometry - Grade 8 (Prerequisites: Minimum final grade of B in Algebra 7, and teacher recommendation)

Note: Students entering the district must have completed a full year of Algebra 1 as evidenced by a transcript or report card to be eligible for this class. This course is the equivalent of High School Geometry with the same rigor and expectations. Students engage in an in-depth study of the traditional topics of Euclidean geometry and the development of proof-writing. Topics in geometry include triangle congruence, postulates and theorems, equidistant theorems, parallel line properties, quadrilateral properties, lines and planes in space, polygons, similar polygons, the Pythagorean Theorem, circles, area, volume, coordinate geometry, and an introduction to trigonometry and numerical exercises.

The NJSLA-M in Geometry Exam is taken by all students in the class. Based on the current information provided by NJDOE, students in a Geometry course at this level must meet the NJDOE requirements regarding passing the respective NJSLA-M in Geometry as a component of their graduation requirements. Students earning a grade of C+ and below will be recommended to repeat the course in the subsequent year.

Student Placement in Math

Students will be placed in programs/courses by the Mathematics Department based on multiple criteria, including teacher recommendation, course grade averages, and standardized/benchmark test scores. Questions regarding placement recommendations are handled through the district math supervisor, building administration, and the counseling department. Individual student placement is reviewed annually.

Science

To prepare students for more advanced study at the high school level and to continue to encourage students' love of scientific discovery, the middle school science program emphasizes process, skills and concept development through laboratory experiences, problem-solving, and rich exposure to scientific concepts and terms. Students engage in **science and engineering practices (SEP)** in their classroom activities, data collection and evaluation exercises, and when discussing and presenting their lab activities and conclusions. As students advance through each year's course of study, they are asked to progress from concrete to more abstract ideas and to use the **crosscutting concepts (CC)** to organize what they have learned into a cohesive conceptual framework. Though each year's curriculum is rigorous, teachers focus on differentiating work to support the needs of each learner and on providing a mix of independent work, whole class discussion, and small group tasks so that students can take ownership of their own learning and engage in productive discourse and healthy collaboration.

Crosscutting Concepts (CC)	Science and Engineering Practices (SEP)
1. Patterns 2. Cause and Effect 3. Scale, Proportion, and Quantity 4. Systems and System Models 5. Energy and Matter 6. Structure and Function 7. Stability and Change	1. Asking questions 2. Developing and using models 3. Planning and carrying out investigations 4. Analyzing and interpreting data 5. Using mathematics and computational thinking 6. Constructing explanations/ designing solutions 7. Engaging in argument from evidence 8. Obtaining, evaluating, and communication information

6th Grade Physical Science

Students investigate the nature of matter at the atomic level and how energy interacts with matter in chemical and physical processes. In addition to being able to explain Newton's Laws and apply them in everyday examples involving forces and motion, students learn more about non-contact forces (i.e. electric, magnetic, and gravitational forces) and the fields they generate. Students explore kinetic and potential energy and energy transfer, and also learn about waves as they learn about the behavior of sound and light. Hands-on activities and lab investigations are used to reinforce class discussion, and students are expected to apply basic math skills in support of their science learning. This year of study bridges the elementary curriculum and the middle school curriculum, and the lab activities, investigation skills, and lab reporting skills that are introduced in grade 6 are reinforced in grades 7 and 8.

7th Grade Life Science

Beginning with life at its smallest form, the curriculum progresses through the cell, human body and builds to show how all organisms interact with their environment. The major objectives of the course include developing a knowledge of scientific techniques and scientific concepts. Units of study include the use of the microscope, the cell, chemistry of living things, structure and function of human systems, genetics, evolution and ecology. In various projects and activities, students integrate what they know with explorations of how environmental and climate changes impact organisms and ecosystems.

8th Grade Earth Science

Several disciplines within Earth Sciences, including geology, astronomy, oceanography, and meteorology comprise this year of science. In addition, related concepts from physical science are re-introduced where appropriate. The geology unit includes movements of the earth's surface, plate tectonics, volcanoes, earthquakes, changes to the surface caused by weathering and erosion, as well as the study of rocks and minerals. Included in astronomy are units on the solar system, the stars, and the universe. Major topics in the meteorology unit are the study of weather patterns and climate change. Oceanography includes ocean floor topography, currents, waves and life within the ocean.

Social Studies

The middle school social studies curriculum engages students with the concepts that form the basis of human history, culture, and environments. Courses focus on establishing both core subject knowledge and the necessary cognitive proficiency in such areas as reading, writing, speaking, interpreting maps and globes, analyzing charts and graphs, and utilizing various research resources. Basic concepts include how people's lives are affected by their environment, how cultures spread and evolve over time, and how historical events continue to impact our modern-day world. While specific content is different at each grade level, all classes are organized around geography, history, economics, politics, and cultural anthropology. In addition, all courses emphasize awareness and appreciation of current events and how they reflect key social studies concepts, skills, and principles.

Grade 6

As an introduction to the middle school social studies program, this dynamic curriculum teaches sixth grade students to understand the importance of using social science disciplines to gain a broader understanding of the world and their place in it. Units of study include an introduction to social studies with a concentration on geography, culture, government and civics, and economics. The sixth-grade curriculum provides multiple perspectives on a variety of topics and serves as a foundation for student learning and inquiry in later academic years. A variety of learning experiences aim to transition students from the consideration of issues first encountered at the elementary school level to a more sophisticated analysis of historical topics in both seventh-grade and eighth-grade courses. In addition to the

informational and conceptual content, the sixth-grade course focuses on the development of social studies skills, study habits, and literacy in the content area.

Grade 7

The world history curriculum at this level focuses on the development of civilization through an examination of selected historical content drawn from the ancient and medieval world, including places in Southwest Asia, Africa, China, India and Europe. Through these studies, students are introduced to the human experience and how the past influences the present. Students will learn about the importance of archaeology and how it can teach us about early civilizations through the use of artifacts and a variety of historical sources. This course will provide students not only with key concepts but with many opportunities to explore values and develop critical thinking skills. This class will also highlight the themes of respect for cultural diversity and the need for global cooperation in the past as well as present-day. Overall, an emphasis is placed on social studies skills that are necessary for later academic work, which will help prepare students for a rapidly changing world in the 21st century.

Grade 8

The American Studies program concentrates on American history, civic education, and the development of a uniquely American nation from its colonial origins to its most severe internal crisis, the Civil War. The concept of government at the federal, state, and local levels are developed, along with an analysis of our federal constitution. The U.S. Constitution is studied in a historical context with additional focus on its key provisions and function in the governing of this nation. Both primary and secondary documents are infused throughout multiple units of study. Interactive lessons, project-based learning, and interdisciplinary units help students connect current local and national issues to American historical events and decisions. In general, this course will provide students with the necessary historical content and citizenship skills for later learning in their academic careers.

World Languages

Students in Grade 6 choose to study French, Spanish or Chinese for the next three years. World Language courses are aligned with the NJSL 7.1 for interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication in the target language.

Activities in ALL World Language classes are designed to foster growth in the interpretive (listening and reading), interpersonal (conversational), and presentational (speaking and writing) proficiencies.

Grade 6

Chinese: This is an introductory course in Mandarin Chinese. It will emphasize communication skills, focusing on conversational comprehension (speaking, listening and understanding skills). Students will learn Simplified Chinese characters and the Pinyin phonetic system. The study of Chinese cultures is an integral part of the course.

French: The sixth grade French class is designed as an introduction to the French language and culture. This course provides a foundation of phonetics, elemental vocabulary, and basic grammar including: Greetings, Alphabet, Numbers, Dates. Themes include: Meeting and Greeting others, Music, Family and Descriptions, Sports and Activities, School. This course is designed to lay foundations for success in French 7.

Spanish: The sixth grade Spanish class is designed as an introduction to the Spanish language and culture. Themes will include La Escuela es Fantástica, Yo soy yo, Estamos muy ocupados, Mi gente. Students will use the language with small but meaningful chunks of vocabulary and grammar. Activities in this course are designed to develop Novice Low proficiency skills in the interpretive mode (listening and reading), interpersonal mode (conversation), and presentational mode (speaking and writing).

Grades 7 & 8

Chinese 7: The seventh-grade Chinese class will continue to emphasize communication skills, focusing on conversational comprehension (speaking, listening and understanding skills). Students will then start to build a foundation for literacy (reading and writing). Students will be able to communicate and exchange information, handle short social interactions by asking and answering simple questions. Students will expand their cultural awareness of China and other regions where Chinese is spoken.

French 7: The seventh-grade French class will build on the foundations of sixth-grade French. The focus for the year is *Ma vie et moi*, or *My life and I*, and our immediate sphere of experience. Themes include *Mon identité* (My Identity), *Ma famille* (My Family), *Chez nous* (Our Homes), and *Notre école* (Our School). We will explore ourselves and our immediate lives through the lens of our uniqueness. We will explore diversity among us and around the world, with special attention to similarities and differences in the Francophone world. This course is designed to build student linguistic proficiency. With an emphasis on interpretive, interpersonal and presentational modes of language, students will consider what they “Can Do” with the language throughout the year.

Spanish 7: The seventh grade Spanish class will build on the foundations of sixth-grade Spanish. The focus for the year is *Mi vida y yo*, or *My life and I*, and our immediate sphere of experience. Themes include *Mi identidad* (My Identity), *Mis intereses* (My Interests), *Mi familia* (My Family), *Nuestras casas* (Our Homes) and *Nuestra escuela* (Our School). We will explore ourselves and our immediate lives through the

lens of our uniqueness. We will explore diversity among us and around the world, with special attention to similarities and differences in the Hispanic world. This course is designed to build student linguistic proficiency. With an emphasis on interpretive, interpersonal and presentational modes of language, students will consider what they “Can Do” with the language throughout the year.

Chinese 8: Students will continue to expand their language through a standards based approach. They will be able to communicate and exchange information about familiar topics using phrases and simple sentences, they will be able to handle a variety of short social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering questions. As part of answering the essential question “How are we connected?” students will continue to understand and appreciate the cultural practices and perspectives of Chinese culture.

French 8: The eighth-grade French class will be an extension of the seventh grade as we focus on the different facets of our lives. Through the lens of *Nos vies*, or *Our Lives*, this course will explore our daily and weekly routines and activities (*Ma routine; Ma semaine*), our town (*Mon quartier; Ma ville*), the things we eat (*Bon appétit*) and what we do to promote our well-being in our immediate world (*Le bien-être*). We will explore our lives through the lens of our interactions with the people and stimuli that surround us. We will explore diversity among us and around the world, with special attention to similarities and differences in the Francophone world. This course is designed to build student linguistic proficiency. With an emphasis on interpretive, interpersonal and presentational modes of language, students will consider what they “Can Do” with the language throughout the year.

Spanish 8: The eighth-grade Spanish class will be an extension of the seventh grade as we focus on the different facets of our lives. Through the lens of *Nuestras*, or *Our Lives*, this course will explore our daily and weekly routines and activities (*Mi rutina; Mi semana*), our town (*Mi barrio; Mi ciudad*), the things we eat (*Mis comidas*) and what we do to promote our well-being in our immediate world (*El bienestar*). We will explore our lives through the lens of our interactions with the people and stimuli that surround us. We will explore diversity among us and around the world, with special attention to similarities and differences in the Hispanic world. This course is designed to build student linguistic proficiency. With an emphasis on interpretive, interpersonal and presentational modes of language, students will consider what they “Can Do” with the language throughout the year. A minimum grade of “C” is required to go on to the second level of language study in high school. Beginning Spanish 7/8 and Beginning French 7/8 are courses offered in alternating years. These courses are designed to provide a foundation for students who are beginning their world language education in seventh or eighth-grade respectively. These courses provide an opportunity for students who may have struggled in sixth or seventh-grade and need more foundational support to develop their language skills. They are designed to prepare students for transition the subsequent year to eighth-grade or ninth-grade Spanish or French.

Transfer Students

Grade six transfer students who have not taken Spanish in the elementary schools will begin the study of French or Chinese. Transfer students in grades seven or eight who have no previous World Language experience will take a Beginning Spanish or French course, depending upon the year.

Student Placement

Students select their language of study prior to entering grade six. Students who enter Tenaflly Middle School from other school districts or exit the ML program must meet with the department supervisor and take a placement assessment. Students are encouraged to study a World Language that is not spoken in the home. Any student who selects to study a language that he/she speaks at home and/or has studied at a heritage language school or with a tutor will need to take a placement test. If the student's proficiency is determined to be higher than the level offered at TMS, the student will need to choose another language of study for the middle school years.

Physical Education and Family Life

Tenaflly Middle School Physical Education directly reflects the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of physical fitness and lifelong activities. Each unit focuses on skill development, goal setting, sportsmanship, and team and individual sports/activities. Classes are planned to maximize student participation and leadership in a safe learning environment. The students at TMS will also receive Family Life education during the school year.

Grade 6 Family Life

Sixth-grade Family Life students will study nutrition and healthy eating habits, reproductive anatomy, puberty, decision-making skills, and L.E.A.D (Law Enforcement Against Drugs). Students will learn about these topics through class lectures, student-led discussions, group activities, professional presentations, and role-playing.

Grade 7 Family Life

The seventh grade Family Life program is a progression from the sixth-grade curriculum. Seventh-grade topics include smoking, vaping, alcohol and drug education, the process of conception, fertilization, pregnancy and the birth process, physiology of exercise, communicable diseases, and responsible dating. Students will engage in class discussions, student-led presentations, professional presentations, group projects, and skits.

Grade 8 Family Life

The eighth-grade Family Life curriculum is a continuation of the sixth and seventh-grade curriculum and aims to further develop personal and interpersonal skills. We focus on enhancing the students' knowledge of values, decision-making skills, communication, friendships, healthy vs. unhealthy relationships, power in relationships, dating relationships, abstinence, teen pregnancy, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, club drugs, eating disorders, stress/anger management, and suicide prevention.

Integrated Arts – Grades 6–8

The Integrated Arts program at Tenaflly Middle School invites students to discover the beauty, logic, and emotion that connect all forms of expression — from music and theater to technology and visual art. Here, creativity meets curiosity. Students don't just learn to play, draw, build, or design — they learn to see relationships between sound and structure, feeling and form, imagination and truth.

Every class and activity aims to help students understand themselves and the world with greater depth and delight.

Music

Music at Tenaflly Middle School is a celebration of sound, teamwork, and imagination. Students can join our award-winning Orchestra, Band, or Chorus, or explore new sounds through General Music and Music Technology courses. Whether performing on stage or composing digitally, students experience the joy of musical collaboration and discovery.

Performing Music – Grades 6, 7, 8

Concert Band:

Students develop instrumental skills and musical understanding through a wide range of music — from classical and jazz to modern and pop. Band members learn how rhythm, harmony, and balance come together as a group to create something greater than the sum of its parts.

Chorus:

Choral singers learn to use their voices as instruments of expression and unity. Through posture, diction, and musical phrasing, students discover the beauty of harmony and the joy of performance. Participation fosters confidence, cooperation, and creativity.

Orchestra:

String players continue their musical journey by mastering new techniques and exploring an array of repertoire. In Orchestra, students learn that listening and teamwork are the foundation of all great

ensemble music. Chamber music, composition, and conducting experiences deepen their artistic understanding.

Music Activities After School

After school, students can join Jazz Band, Philharmonic Orchestra, Vocal Showcase, or the Spring Musical. These ensembles and performances allow students to share their talents with the school and wider community — celebrating creativity through sound, movement, and story.

General Music – Grades 6, 7, 8

Exploring Music (Grade 6):

Students explore the science of sound and how instruments produce their unique voices. Through composing, listening, and hands-on experiments, they learn how rhythm, pitch, and structure shape the music we love.

Music Technology (Grade 7):

Students enter the music lab to create, mix, and compose using exciting digital tools like Chrome Music Lab, Groove Pizza, and Blob Opera. They experience firsthand how music connects creativity and technology.

Music Technology (Grade 8):

Building on prior skills, students dive deeper into composition, looping, and soundtrack design. They create ringtones, write original songs, and explore movie music — learning how emotion and technology come together in sound design.

Theater – Grades 6, 7, 8

In Theater, students gain confidence in their voices, imagination, and ideas. Through improvisation, playwriting, and performance, they discover that acting is not just about pretending — it's about understanding human emotion, teamwork, and expression.

Students study the history of theater and its many forms, explore Shakespeare, and write and perform scenes of their own. Each experience builds communication skills and empathy — essential tools for every part of life.

Theater Activities After School

The TMS Drama Club and Spring Musical bring students together in a joyful celebration of storytelling. Whether on stage, dancing, or working behind the scenes, students learn the artistry of collaboration and the excitement of live performance.

Engineering & Technology

Technology at Tenaflly Middle School is more than circuitry and code — it's creative problem-solving with purpose. Students learn to think like inventors and designers, using the tools of engineering and digital technology to build a better world.

Engineering Technology (Grade 6):

Students explore design thinking, coding, and simple machines while learning safe and ethical digital practices. Using Onshape CAD, Strawbees, and JavaScript coding, they bring ideas to life through prototypes and hands-on creation.

Engineering Technology (Grade 7):

Building on earlier work, students deepen their understanding of the engineering design process, coding in Python, and Internet of Things (IoT) technology. They apply design principles to projects like video game creation and explore STEM careers.

Engineering Technology – Robotics (Grade 8):

Eighth-grade students enter the exciting world of robotics using VEX systems. Through design, programming, and testing, they see how creativity and logic merge to solve real-world challenges — teamwork in its most dynamic form.

Visual Arts

Visual Art in middle school is where observation and imagination meet. Students discover that art is a conversation — between color and shape, history and emotion, idea and design. Each project helps students express their individuality while recognizing the unity between creativity and structure.

Art – Grades 6 & 7:

Students explore painting, drawing, sculpture, and mixed media, learning the elements of art and design through hands-on projects. They experiment with clay, weaving, and collage while studying how artists throughout history expressed balance, emotion, and story.

Digital Art – Grades 6 & 7:

Students enter the world of digital design, experimenting with Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. They blend photography, video, and graphic design — turning traditional art principles into modern creative experiences.

Art – Grade 8:

Eighth-grade students refine their artistic voice through advanced work in drawing, painting, sculpture,

and pottery. Projects such as mask-making and perspective design encourage reflection and expressive depth.

Digital Art – Grade 8:

Students move beyond two dimensions with 3D design, digital video, and sound. Using advanced digital tools, they explore how technology can extend imagination and bring vision to life.

Aesthetic Learning in All Arts

Across all areas — Music, Theater, Technology, and Visual Art — the Integrated Arts program helps students see the connections between creativity, knowledge, and the self. Whether performing in an ensemble, designing a robot, composing a song, or sculpting with clay, students discover that beauty and understanding grow together.

Each class invites them to see and like the world more deeply — and to return, again and again, to the joy of learning through the arts.

Reaching All Peer to Peer (R.A.P.P.) - Grade 8

Program Supervisor: [Ms. Andrea Florczak](#)

In the spring of grade seven, students may apply to participate in the New Jersey Peer-To-Peer Program. Those selected from their written applications and personal interviews will be placed in the eighth-grade Reaching All Peer to Peer class. Students meet with an adult mentor and train as peer leaders. In the second half of the year, the students coordinate and facilitate peer programs as well as presentations for faculty and parents. The major emphasis of the program is building leadership skills. This course takes the place of an elective course.

Multilingual Learners (ML) *(formerly English Language Learners)*

The ML program provides instruction to students who are learning English language skills. Conversation, vocabulary building, writing skills, and reading comprehension are stressed. Content area material is used as a vehicle to teach English. The program is flexible and helps students at all levels. Placement in and out of ML is determined by multi exit criteria, including a passing score on a state-approved test.

ML Grade 6

In this class, sixth graders work on reading strategies and learn English through content areas. There is a focus on class participation, reading for information and vocabulary development. Students work on critical thinking and literacy skills which lead to better performance on the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments for English Language Arts (NJSLA-ELA).

ML Grade 7

Seventh grade English Language Learners work on building their speaking skills, reading strategies, vocabulary, grammar and writing strategies using selections in different content areas. Students work on critical thinking and literacy skills which lead to better performance on the NJSLA-ELA.

ML Grade 8

This class provides eighth grade ML students with a sheltered environment where students develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. English is learned through content, especially social studies and science. Emphasis is also on vocabulary development, grammar and different types of writing. Students work on critical thinking and literacy skills which lead to better performance on the NJSLA-ELA.

Beginning ML Language Arts

In this class, the goal is to develop reading strategies and to build proficiency in English structure, mechanics, and conventions. There is a strong focus on reading and writing. These skills are developed through high-interest nonfiction reading; paragraph writing; mini-lessons in grammar, mechanics, and conventions; reading comprehension activities; and reader's theater.

Intermediate ML Language Arts

In this class, a collection of adapted and authentic world literature in different genres is used to strengthen reading and writing skills. The class also develops grammar skills by analyzing errors from students' writing samples.

Advanced ML Language Arts

Literacy is enhanced through varied texts, short stories, assigned novels, independent reading, and poetry. There is a focus on story elements, literary terms, and techniques. Interpretive writing is developed and independent reading is encouraged.

ML Skill Building Grades 6, 7, 8

Through sheltered instruction, students review and preview the concepts and skills taught in their science, social studies, and math classes. They prepare for tests and quizzes, receive literacy support for long-term research projects, and build the presentation skills necessary to present in front of their English-proficient, grade-level peers.

Special Services

The Department of Special Services offers a range of programs catering to students with identified special education needs. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are crafted during collaborative meetings that include input from the Child Study Team, Special Education Teachers, General Education Teachers, and parents or students.

Advisory

In very concrete and straightforward ways, the Tenaflly Middle School Advisory Program reflects, promotes, and celebrates our “Tiger Stripes!” The TMS Advisory program is meant to be a complement to the already stellar work we all do every day attending to the whole child as well as meeting the instructional needs of our students. Though school reform efforts come and go, one abiding truth (especially in middle school years) is the concept that a student’s sense of “belonging” in school is the foundation for future success. For over two decades, the trend in middle school education has emphasized this need for student connectedness; a concept that refers to a school culture in which students have meaningful relationships with adults within the school, are engaged in the school and feel a sense of belonging to the school. School connectedness correlates directly with low attrition and improved academic achievement.

Middle school reformers have consistently advocated advisory programs as a way to develop connections between pre-adolescents and their teachers. A lasting, meaningful relationship with at least one caring adult in the school is the cornerstone of connectedness. All of the sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade lessons in this Advisory Guide were created with this concept of connectedness in mind.

Gifted and Talented Program (Discovery)

Tenaflly Public Schools provides a diverse array of programs designed to foster development in authentic research, language arts, social studies, STEM, and the arts. Our offerings include school-wide enrichment, differentiated learning opportunities both within and beyond the classroom, and extended learning experiences to meet the needs of all students. For detailed information about our programs, please explore our [Gifted and Talented Program Guide](#).

Media Center

All sixth-grade Language Arts classes receive a library orientation at the beginning of the school year. A brochure outlining the types of available materials and library procedures is given to all students. The librarian provides research and book selection assistance to faculty, staff and students. Individual, group and class instruction in library skills is also given by the librarian at all three grade levels at teacher request, or when deemed necessary. The library staff is active in preparing temporary collections of books and audio-visual materials for use in connection with reports, projects and special assignments. The library is

open almost every day before school at 8:00 a.m. and after school until 3:30 p.m. Staff members are available to assist students during these times.

Promotion

Students who successfully complete the subjects established for grades six, seven, and eight are promoted to the next grade level. If Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education or Family Life are failed, students are required to attend the summer review session. Failure to make up subjects in the summer may result in a student repeating the course(s) the following year. The administration will decide if retention is necessary for students who fail subjects and perform unsatisfactorily in summer school.

After School Activities and Athletics

The Middle School program includes extra or co-curricular activities. TMS sponsors the following before and after school programs. All students are encouraged to participate in these activities as part of their total middle school experience. Students are also encouraged to bring ideas forward for new clubs.

Interscholastic Sports

Supervisor: [Mr. Joseph Carollo](#)

Cross-Country (Fall - Boys & Girls Grades 6, 7, 8)

Volleyball (Fall - Girls Grades 7 & 8)

Baseball (Spring - Boys Grades 6, 7, 8)

Softball (Spring - Girls Grades 6, 7, 8)

Track and Field (Spring - Boys & Girls Grades 6, 7, 8)

Clubs

Supervisor: [Ms. Cathy Paz](#)

Debate Team

Drama Club

E-Sports

Global Citizenship

GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance)

Jazz Band

Junior Key Club

Limelight (Literary Magazine)

Math Counts Club

Open Gym

Philharmonic Orchestra

Quiz Bowl

Robotics Club

Science Olympiad

Sixth and Seventh Grade Ambassadors

Spring Musical

Student Organization

Tiger Tales (Newspaper)

Vocal Showcase

Yearbook