

RIVER VALLEY



2026-2027
**PROGRAM
OF STUDIES**



**Grades 6-8
MIDDLE SCHOOL**



INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

Dear River Valley Students & Families:

On behalf of the River Valley School District administration and staff, we are very excited to share the 2026-2027 Middle School Program of Studies. River Valley Middle School remains focused on preparing every student for success in a changing world by providing rigorous academic courses and a variety of electives, including exploratory courses that are aligned with our state-of-the-art STEAM programs offered to high school students. In doing so, we strive to ensure educational experiences are future-driven and focused on career-related learning based on students' strengths, interests, and values.

The RVMS Program of Studies provides a comprehensive listing of courses available to students at the middle school level, along with a strategic overview of policies and procedures relevant to academic standards and student code of conduct.

The Program of Studies is a guide to assist every student entering grades six through eight in understanding curricular offerings and the scheduling process, as well as how their individual RIASEC themes will chart their course to both graduation and their career path.

We encourage every family to review the Assessment and Testing requirements and expectations on page 10. In accordance with state and federal guidelines, RVMS students will participate in a variety of diagnostic, benchmark, and grade-level assessments. Diagnostic and benchmark testing provides us with data throughout the school year that guides our teachers' lessons to better prepare our students to demonstrate both growth and achievement on annual PSSA testing in grades six through eight. Keystone Exams are a component of Pennsylvania's high school graduation requirements system and only apply to Middle School students enrolled in Algebra I.

The River Valley Middle School team looks forward to working collaboratively with parents and students throughout the scheduling process to support each student in charting a course to success in college and/or career.

Yours in education,



Mr. Philip Martell
Superintendent of Schools



Mr. Eric Westendorf
Principal

RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
102 SCHOOL LANE
BLAIRSVILLE, PA 15717
724-459-5500



MISSION & VISION

River Valley is committed to creating a future-driven school district focusing on innovation, career exploration across all grades, and workforce development. Using the RIASEC language and prioritizing student identity are integral parts of our school culture, focusing on all students' strengths, interests, and workplace values so that they know there is a place for them in this world. River Valley takes a student-centered approach and understands the importance of the human process of personal development.

RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Rick Harper, President
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Mr. Philip Martell

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Mrs. Regina Geesey

RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



The River Valley School District is an equal opportunity agency in its education programs, activities, and employment practices. River Valley School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender (including gender identity or expression), sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, or disability in its programs, activities or employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries may be directed to the Assistant Superintendent, Title IX Coordinator, or the Section 504/ADA Title II Coordinator at 102 School Lane, Blairsville, PA 15717, 724-459-5500.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

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RIVER VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

102 SCHOOL LANE

BLAIRSVILLE, PA 15717

(724) 343-8410



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BUILDING SECRETARY

Ms. Danielle Bouy

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Ms. Bethany Faulk

GUIDANCE SECRETARY

Ms. Nicole Prohaska

DIRECTOR OF PUPIL SERVICES

Mr. Michael Leasure

SCHOOL NURSE

Ms. Carrie Chernosky

ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

Ms. Tiara Stossel
Mr. Geoff Dixon

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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Ms. Andrea DelFavero
Mr. Eugene Riley
Ms. Robyn Shaw
Ms. Holly Stuller
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SCIENCE

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WORLD LANGUAGES

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SOCIAL STUDIES

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Mr. Mark Freeman
Mr. Joseph Sembrat
Mr. Neil Stone
Ms. Allison Weir

HEALTH SCIENCES AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Mr. Richard Artley
Mr. Andrew Frassenei
Ms. Laura Thompson

ART

Ms. Katie Deglau

BUSINESS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Ms. Brittany Ciganko
Ms. Heather Faulk

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE

Ms. Maureen Bell

MUSIC

Mr. Adam Bukosky

ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING

Mr. Michael Funyak
Mr. Jonathan Taylor

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Ms. Leah Lucas
Ms. Karen Magalich
Ms. Michele Marra
Ms. Amie Olasz

STEAM

Ms. Trisha Aurndt
Ms. Jeanine Buell
Mr. Joshua Cunningham*
Ms. Carrie Detwiler
Mr. Christian Kampas
Mr. Kip Mack
Ms. Karen Magalich
Mr. Adam Peterson
Mr. Darren Studnicki
Mr. Matt Wilson

* Indicates Department Chair

CONCERNS & WHO TO CONTACT

ATTENDANCE, TRIP REQUESTS

Danielle Bouy, Middle/High School Secretary
bouy.d@rvsdpa.org, 724-343-8410

BUS DISCIPLINE

Eric Westendorf, Middle School Principal
westendorf.e@rvsdpa.org, 724-343-8410

COURSE PLACEMENT & SCHEDULES SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELING

Bethany Faulk, School Counselor
faulk.b@rvsdpa.org, 724-343-8406

ENROLLMENT, TRANSCRIPTS & HOMEWORK REQUESTS (ILLNESS)

Nicole Prohaska, Guidance Secretary
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EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

1st Coach, Sponsor
2nd Tiara Stossel, Athletic Director
stossel.t@rvsdpa.org, 724-343-8423
Geoff Dixon, Athletic Director
dixon.g@rvsdpa.org, 724-343-8425

GRADES & HOMEWORK

Teachers (click for link for directory)
Middle/High School Office: 724-343-8410

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

Carrie Chernosky, School Nurse
chernosky.c@rvsdpa.org, 724-459-5500 x2126

HOMELESSNESS

Katherine Monko, Saltsburg Elementary Principal,
Director of School to Community Relations
monko.k@rvsdpa.org, 724-343-8413

LUNCH ACCOUNTS

Danielle Bouy, Middle/High School Secretary
bouy.d@rvsdpa.org, 724-343-8410

RIVER VALLEY CYBER ACADEMY

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PUPIL SERVICES

1st Teachers (click for link to directory)
2nd Michael Leasure, Director of Pupil Services
leasure.m@rvsdpa.org, 724-459-5500

TEACHER CONTACTS

1st Teachers (click for link to directory)
2nd Eric Westendorf, Middle School Principal
westendorf.e@rvsdpa.org, 724-343-8410

TEACHER CONCERN

1st Teachers (click for link to directory)
2nd Eric Westendorf, Middle School Principal
westendorf.e@rvsdpa.org, 724-343-8410



GRADES

Grades are determined by assessing the student's academic achievement based on the established curriculum and individual classroom guidelines. Report cards document this level of achievement and also determine the student's grade point average (GPA) for each marking period. Grade point averages are not rounded for reporting for honor roll, academic awards, or any other purpose.

Grade Reporting

Grades will be issued at the conclusion of each marking period. Interim progress reports will be sent home with each student at the midpoint of each marking period. Tentative dates for mid-marking period and end of marking period appear on the school calendar on the District homepage.

GRADING SCALE

Letter	Percentage	Meaning
A	93-100	Outstanding
B	85-92	Above Average
C	76-84	Average
D	68-75	Poor (Not eligible for Honor Roll)
F	0-67	Failing (Not eligible for Honor Roll)
I	Incomplete	Not eligible for Honor Roll or Class Rank
P/F	Pass/Fail	

HONOR ROLL LEVELS

Distinguished Honors	95% or Higher
High Honors	90% - 94.99%
Honors	85% - 89.99%

Student Attendance

Attendance in school is required by law and should be encouraged by parents/guardians. Students are able to turn in ten written parent/guardian excuses for absences. Any amount of absences after those 10 written excuses will have to be medical excuses. Students with three or more illegal absences will be required to have a truancy meeting.

Smart Futures

River Valley utilizes a K-12 college and career planning program called Smart Futures. Smart Futures is an online career planning and portfolio platform that helps all students become prepared for post-secondary success. This program helps students obtain the necessary career artifacts required by the state.

SCHEDULING TIMELINE

The scheduling process begins in the fourth quarter of the current school year. The school counselors begin discussions with students to compile course requests for the next school year. It is encouraged that parents and students begin discussions early in this process. During this time, students and families should work closely with teachers and counselors to ensure the courses requested are closely aligned with the student's strengths, interests, and values.

2026-2027 SCHEDULING TIMELINE

Dates	Description
April 2026	School Counselors share scheduling presentations with 6th - 7th grade students as a group. Students will complete a course selection form and submit to the School Counselors.
May 2026	School Counselors and Middle School Principal visit 5th grade classes to review scheduling presentations and course selection.
August 1, 2026	Schedules are available in the Student Information System for students and families.
August 19, 2026	First Day of School for Students
September 2, 2026	Last day to add / drop a course based upon availability and requirements as per the Program of Studies.

ASSESSMENTS & TESTING

KEYSTONE REQUIREMENTS

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in three subjects: Algebra I, Literature, and Biology. The Algebra I Keystone Exam is taken during the spring of the year a student is enrolled in Algebra I.

The Keystone Exams serve as one component of Pennsylvania's statewide high school graduation requirement.

PSSA REQUIREMENTS

The annual Pennsylvania System School Assessment is a standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment which provides students, parents, educators and citizens with an understanding of student and school performance related to the attainment of proficiency of the academic standards. These standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology identify what a student should know and be able to do at varying grade levels. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 3 through 8 is assessed in English Language Arts and Math. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 4 and 8 is assessed in science.

CDT/NWEA/FIREFLY

In accordance with the PA and US Departments of Education, River Valley Middles School utilizes a variety of diagnostic (Firefly, Acadience, Delta Math) and benchmark (NWEA, CDTs) assessments to identify strengths and deficiencies of individual students, as well as monitor their growth throughout the school year. The data derived from these assessments is utilized to guide and improve instruction to better prepare students for success on the PSSAs and Keystone Algebra Assessments.

**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT TESTING CONTACT
THE MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELOR**

Bethany Faulk, School Counselor
faulk.b@rvsdpa.org, 724-343-8406

CAREER EXPLORATION

RIASEC LANGUAGE

RIASEC, the most widely adopted framework for interest measurement, is a taxonomy for Realistic Doers, Investigative Thinkers, Artistic Creators, Social Helpers, Enterprising Persuaders, and Conventional Organizers. The RIASEC language used by River Valley invites students to explore their interests, develop an understanding of the language, and advance possibilities for all students by aligning their strengths, interests, and values to academic and career-related learning.

The RIASEC framework helps students connect their strengths, interests, and values to academic and career options. With the RIASEC approach, River Valley is creating a common language of career exploration that is also used by colleges, universities, and the Department of Labor, to make powerful connections between classroom learning, post-secondary education, and the job world.

Building a common language helps students develop an understanding and ability to articulate “who am I and who I think I want to become.” It all works together to build a solid foundation for career exploration, providing them a deeper understanding to connect their learning to their ideal post-secondary options and career paths. As we continue to foster the RIASEC culture in River Valley, we are supporting students toward a future where they can thrive by embracing who they are by developing strong relationships with classmates, teachers, and extended staff.

River Valley takes a student-centered approach and understands the importance of the human process of personal development.



REALISTIC INVESTIGATIVE ARTISTIC
SOCIAL ENTERPRISING CONVENTIONAL

CAREER PATHWAYS: RIASEC THEMES

REALISTIC

People with Realistic interests like work that includes practical, hands-on problems and answers. People with Realistic interests often avoid careers involving paperwork or working closely with others. They like working with plants and animals; real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery; and outside work.



RVSD Career Clusters that may be a good fit for people with Realistic interests:

- Arts, Communication, and Media
- Business, Management, and Information Technology
- Education, Public Safety, and Law
- Health, Medical, and Human Services
- Industry and Engineering Technology



INVESTIGATIVE

People with Investigative interests like work that has to do with ideas and thinking rather than physical activity or leading people. They like searching for facts and figuring out problems.

RVSD Career Clusters that may be a good fit for people with Investigative interests:

- Arts, Communication, and Media
- Business, Management, and Information Technology
- Education, Public Safety, and Law
- Health, Medical, and Human Services
- Industry and Engineering Technology



ARTISTIC



People with Artistic interests like work that deals with the artistic side of things, such as acting, music, art, and design. They like creativity and work that can be done without following rules.

RVSD Career Clusters that may be a good fit for people with Artistic interests:

- Arts, Communication, and Media
- Business, Management, and Information Technology
- Education, Public Safety, and Law
- Industry and Engineering Technology

CAREER PATHWAYS: RIASEC THEMES

SOCIAL

People with Social interests like working with others to help them learn and grow. They like working with people more than with objects, machines, or information. They enjoy teaching, giving advice, and supporting and serving people.



RVSD Career Clusters that may be a good fit for people with Social interests:

- Arts, Communication, and Media
- Business, Management, and Information Technology
- Education, Public Safety, and Law
- Health, Medical, and Human Services

ENTERPRISING

People with Enterprising interests like work that involves starting and carrying out business projects. These people like acting rather than thinking about things. They like persuading and leading people, making decisions, and taking risks for profits.

RVSD Career Clusters that may be a good fit for people with Enterprising interests:

- Arts, Communication, and Media
- Business, Management, and Information Technology
- Education, Public Safety, and Law



CONVENTIONAL



People with Conventional interests like work that follows set procedures and routines. They prefer working with information and paying attention to details rather than working with ideas. They like working with clear rules and following a strong leader.

RVSD Career Clusters that may be a good fit for people with Conventional interests:

- Business, Management, and Information Technology
- Education, Public Safety, and Law
- Health, Medical, and Human Services
- Industry and Engineering Technology

RIVER VALLEY CAREER PATHWAYS

The River Valley School District is committed to ensuring all students are prepared to be college and career-ready as citizens in a global and changing economy and job marketplace. To fulfill this goal, we have developed a College and Career Pathways system that amplifies our rigorous academic program, expands our course offerings, enhances students' instructional opportunities, and integrates access to industry experiences. All River Valley Middle School Course Offerings align with Career and Education Workforce Standards. Each Pathway is associated with the Future Readiness Career Clusters.



ARTS, COMMUNICATION, AND MEDIA

This pathway focuses on developing skills in visual arts, broadcasting and media content, writing, and filmmaking. Careers in this pathway are varied, and they include jobs such as visual artist (e.g. sculptor, painter), journalist, sports broadcasting/podcasting, writer (e.g. novelist, poet, screenwriter), social media strategist, animator, and movie director.



BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

This pathway includes a broad spectrum of business-related professions, as well as information technology services and mathematics-focused professions. Careers in this pathway include options such as business management, startup development, hospitality and tourism, finance and investing, marketing, IT support, programming, accounting, and insurance/actuarial services.



EDUCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND LAW

This pathway focuses on professional support of community well-being through schools, community safety programs and law enforcement. Careers in this pathway include teachers, law enforcement personnel, lawyers, public offices (elected officials and their support staff), forestry staff, community planners, civil engineers, librarians, and parks and recreation personnel.



HEALTH, MEDICAL, AND HUMAN SERVICES

This pathway focuses on professional support of individuals' well-being. Careers in this pathway include healthcare providers and support personnel, as well as social workers and non-profit aid/charity organizations.



INDUSTRY AND ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

This pathway includes the various careers related to design, development, production, construction, transportation and maintenance of various goods and services. Careers in this pathway include architecture and engineering, construction, welding, truck driving, mechanical and autobody work, food production (growing produce/raising livestock), alternative energy solutions, and lighting design for performance venues.

Through the College and Career Pathways program students will:

- Plan for their future through personal interest mapping (RIASEC Model), guidance lessons, project-based learning opportunities, college interviews, and visits; job site visits through Career Hub and career learning experiences.
- Invest in their future through the purposeful use of instructional technology, increased availability of authentic learning experiences, and integration of enriched educational experiences focused on critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity.
- Experience their future through STEAM Academy programs at our Saltsburg Campus, mentorships, research, service learning, College in High School courses, and internships. The College and Career Pathways program at River Valley School District will ensure all students are prepared for success in our dynamic and evolving world.

COURSE PATHWAYS

RIVER VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL



These are the typical sequences that students progress through during their middle school careers. Student progression is determined by meeting prerequisites for future courses.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS		
Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
ELA 6	ELA 7	ELA 8

MATH		
Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Math 6	Math 7	Math 8
	Pre-Algebra	Algebra I
	Algebra I (A select number of 7th grade students are placed in Algebra I based on a combination of grades and standardized and diagnostic testing.)	Advanced Geometry (8th grade students are placed in this class if they have taken Algebra I and passed the Keystone exam.)

SCIENCE		
Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Science 6	Science 7	Science 8

SOCIAL STUDIES		
Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Social Studies 6	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 8

SCHEDULES

SAMPLE STUDENT SCHEDULES



The school day begins with a homeroom period and is followed by nine 40-minute class periods. These nine periods include five academic classes, three rotation courses, and a lunch period.

Grade 6

A typical day may look as follows. This sample schedule is not indicative of all 6th grade schedules.

PERIOD 1	English Language Arts 6
PERIOD 2	English Language Arts 6
PERIOD 3	Transition 6
PERIOD 4	Social Studies 6
PERIOD 5	Health/Wellness
PERIOD 6	Lunch/Science 6
PERIOD 7	Math 6
PERIOD 8	Math 6
PERIOD 9	Family and Consumer Science 6

Grade 7

A typical day may look as follows. This sample schedule is not indicative of all 7th grade schedules.

PERIOD 1	English Language Arts 7
PERIOD 2	English Language Arts 7
PERIOD 3	Social Studies 7
PERIOD 4	Artificial Intelligence 7
PERIOD 5	Science 7
PERIOD 6	Lunch/Art 7
PERIOD 7	Math 7
PERIOD 8	Math 7
PERIOD 9	Panther Learning Time

Grade 8

A typical day may look as follows. This sample schedule is not indicative of all 8th grade schedules.

PERIOD 1	Math 8 or Algebra I
PERIOD 2	Math 8 or Algebra I
PERIOD 3	Cybersecurity/Gaming 8
PERIOD 4	Social Studies 8
PERIOD 5	Leadership 8
PERIOD 6	Science 8/Lunch
PERIOD 7	English Language Arts 8
PERIOD 8	English Language Arts 8
PERIOD 9	Robo-Technics

ROTATIONS

RIVER VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL



In addition to the required Math, Science, English, and Social Studies courses, RVMS students take a variety of subjects on a rotating basis. The rotations are designed to expose students to a broad range of disciplines beyond the core academic areas, such as arts, technology, health and wellness, leadership, and economics. By rotating through subjects, students have the opportunity to gain introductory knowledge and skills in each area, ensuring a well-rounded educational experience. *The courses outlined below are subject to change.*

Grade 6		
Rotation 1	Rotation 2	Rotation 3
Leadership 6	Digital Citizenship 6	Health and Wellness 6
Transition 6	Exploring Robotics	Family and Consumer Science (FACS) 6
	STEM: Creative Computing	Physical Education 6
	Design and Technology 6	Art 6

*If a student elects Band/Chorus it will replace one of these three rotations.

Grade 7		
Rotation 1	Rotation 2	Rotation 3
STEM/Robotics 7	PE 7	Leadership 7
Cybersecurity/Gaming 7	Art 7	Panther Learning Time 7
Design and Technology 7	Health and Wellness 7	Exploratory Spanish
Artificial Intelligence 7	Family and Consumer Science (FACS) 7	

*If a student elects Band/Chorus it will replace one of these three rotations.

Grade 8		
Rotation 1	Rotation 2	Rotation 3
Intro to Economics/Personal Finance 8	Robo-Technics	Leadership 8
Physical Education 8	CMU CS0 8	Panther Learning Time 8
Health and Wellness 8	Cybersecurity/Gaming 8	Exploratory Spanish
Art 8	Exploring Digital Media	

*If a student elects Band/Chorus it will replace one of these three rotations.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

6th Grade



COURSE #: 6100
COURSE TITLE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 6

The 6th grade Language Arts builds upon the reading and writing foundational skills established in 5th grade. ELA 6 transitions the focus of the learner from comprehension of nonfiction and literature texts to inference and analysis. Fiction text concentrates on the elements of literature and their use to analyze and respond to texts for deeper meaning. Nonfiction texts transition from main idea and supporting details to learners establishing a central idea for longer and more complex texts along with introducing the author's purpose and utilization of the author's text structure. Poetry introduces poetic devices and builds upon figurative language introduced in 5th grade. Grade-level vocabulary acquisition is presented in an integrated manner from within classroom texts. Public speaking skills will be developed with a combination of digital presentations and classroom assignments. Text dependent analysis writing is embedded into the ELA 6 curriculum within three units aligning to the different genres of ELA texts appropriate to the grade level.

COURSE #: 6200
COURSE TITLE: MATH 6

Math 6 is a sixth-grade course that will build on the curriculum taught in the previous courses. In this program, the students will cover the number system, expressions and equations, ratios and proportional relationships, geometry, and statistics in preparation for Math 7 the following year.

COURSE #: 6300
COURSE TITLE: SCIENCE 6

The Science 6 course covers Geology on Mars, Plate Motion, Plate Motion Engineering Internship, Rock Transformation Earth, Moon, and Sun, Ocean, Atmosphere, and Climate, Weather Patterns, Earth's Changing Climate, Earth's Changing Climate Engineering Internship. Amplify is the curriculum adopted by the school district to teach and assess these standards. The Amplify curriculum is broken down into nine main units. In seven of these units, students are challenged to think like a scientist rather than like a student. In two of these units, students are expected to "be a scientist", as they endeavor to engineer the solution to a practical problem. In addition to developing processing skills, problem-solving skills and scientific reasoning skills, Science 6 is an opportunity for students to develop personal responsibility for his/her learning.

COURSE #: 6400
COURSE TITLE: SOCIAL STUDIES 6

The sixth grade social studies curriculum is a geography-based course which introduces students to the physical and human geography of the world. Students will learn about key elements of geography such as location, place, human-environment interactions, regions, climate, landforms, population and immigration.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

7th Grade



COURSE #: 7100

COURSE TITLE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 7

English 7 focuses on both literature and composition. Students read and respond to a variety of literature including informational texts, poetry, dramas, essays, short stories, and novels. Writing assignments include journals, essays, critiques, and creative pieces. Students write in the areas of description, argumentation, and exposition. Vocabulary, spelling, and grammar assignments are also an important part of the class. To accomplish the objectives, students use the literature book, novels, online sites like Quill and Read Theory, Literature Circles, and independent research.

COURSE #: 7200

COURSE TITLE: MATH 7

Math 7 is a seventh-grade math course that will be based on the curriculum taught in the previous courses. In this program, the students will cover the number system, expressions and equations, ratios and proportional relationships, geometry and probability and statistics in preparation for Math 8 or Algebra I the following year.

COURSE TITLE: PRE-ALGEBRA

REREQUISITES: TEACHER RECOMMENDATION

Pre- Algebra 7 Students focus on developing an understanding of and applying of proportional relationships. They develop an understanding of operations with rational numbers. Students focus on formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations. They will calculate area, surface area and volume of two and three- dimensional geometric figures. In addition, students will develop an understanding of statistical thinking.

COURSE #: 7210

CREDIT: 1.0

COURSE TITLE: ALGEBRA I

REREQUISITES: Teacher Recommendation

Students are placed in Algebra based on test scores, grades, teacher recommendation, and attendance. This course is designed to provide an algebraic foundation for the college-bound student. Emphasis is placed on problem solving and logical thinking while basic concepts such as number development, equations, functions and graphing are stressed as well. Exploration and presentation of topics including symbol interpretation, statement problems, polynomial expressions and equations are included.

COURSE #: 7300

COURSE TITLE: SCIENCE 7

The Science 7 course covers Human Energy, Force and Motion, Magnetic Fields, Thermal Energy, Phase Change, Chemical Reactions, and Light Waves. Amplify is the curriculum adopted by the school district to teach and assess these standards. The Amplify curriculum is broken down into nine main units. In seven of these units, students are challenged to think like a scientist rather than like a student. In two of these units, students are expected to be a scientist as they endeavor to engineer the solution to a practical problem. In addition to developing processing skills, problem-solving skills and scientific reasoning skills, Science 7 is an opportunity for students to develop personal responsibility for his/her learning.

COURSE #: 7400

COURSE TITLE: SOCIAL STUDIES 7

The World Cultures course is an academic, yearlong course with an emphasis placed on the culture (language, religion), geography, and political structure in various regions from around the world. The course relies on texts, primary resources, documents, and supplemental readings. Students will be required to participate in class discussions, research, individual and collaborative projects, and enrichment activities. In addition, objective assessments, simulations, and integrated technology assignments will also be explored.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

8th Grade



COURSE #: 8100

COURSE TITLE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 8

Eighth grade language arts builds upon the literary and writing skills developed in 6th and 7th grade language arts. In addition to the foundational elements of literature, ELA 8 stresses the interactions of various elements of literature within a text as well as connections between separate texts. Nonfiction texts emphasize the analysis of text structure to determine an author's purpose. Poetry continues the skills acquired in ELA 6 and 7 with an emphasis on analysis and response to grade-level appropriate poems. Group and individual presentations are incorporated throughout the year to prepare students for the rigors of high school English. Text dependent analysis writing is embedded into the ELA 8 curriculum within three units aligning to the different genres of ELA texts appropriate to the grade level.

COURSE #: 8200

COURSE TITLE: MATH 8

Math 8 is an eighth-grade math course that will be based on the curriculum taught in the previous courses. In this program, the students will cover the number system, expressions and equations, functions, geometry, and probability and statistics in preparation for Algebra I the following year.

COURSE #: 7210

COURSE TITLE: ALGEBRA I

CREDIT: 1.0

PREREQUISITES: Teacher Recommendation

Students are placed in Algebra based on test scores, grades, teacher recommendation, and attendance. This course is designed to provide an algebraic foundation for the college-bound student. Emphasis is placed on problem solving and logical thinking while basic concepts such as number development, equations, functions and graphing are stressed as well. Exploration and presentation of topics including symbol interpretation, statement problems, polynomial expressions and equations are included.

COURSE #: 8215

COURSE TITLE: ADVANCED GEOMETRY

CREDIT: 1.0

PREREQUISITES: Completion of Algebra I/Pass Keystone

This course is designed for students who have completed Algebra I in middle school. The course offers a rigorous approach to mathematical reasoning through Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometries. Deductive reasoning, theorem proofs, and applications in parallelism, congruence, similarity, inequalities in geometry, transformations, and coordinate geometry are emphasized.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

8th Grade



COURSE #: 8300
COURSE TITLE: SCIENCE 8

The Science 8 course covers Microbiome, Metabolism, Metabolism Engineering Internship, Traits and Reproduction, Populations and Resources, Matter and Energy in Ecosystems, Natural Selection, Natural Selection Engineering Internship, Evolutionary History. Exploring these ideas through Amplify Science, students are challenged to think like a scientist rather than like a student in order to find solutions to practical problems.

COURSE #: 8400
COURSE TITLE: SOCIAL STUDIES 8

Early American History is the story of the people of the Americas. Students will study Native American cultures who first settled in the Americas. The age of European Exploration and colonization will be addressed. The development of the English colonies and the road to American independence are core concepts. In addition, we will focus on reading comprehension and writing.



ROTATION

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



COURSE #: 6900/7900/8900
COURSE TITLE: LEADERSHIP (6, 7, 8)

This course promotes a new mindset and language to students based on Dr. John Holland's widely researched RIASEC model and self-awareness of strengths, interests, and workplace values. The RIASEC framework is used to assess and build student awareness of their career-related strengths, interests, and values. Students will be involved in authentic activities where they will expand their knowledge of the RIASEC concepts. Also utilized is SmartFutures, a career planning and portfolio platform that helps schools easily implement the Career Education and Work (CEW) standards. This will house the career artifacts and portfolio required for graduation.



COURSE #: 7907/7909
COURSE TITLE: PANTHER LEARNING TIME 7/8

Panther Learning Time is a semester-long structured study hall during which students will have time to complete outstanding assignments, study for tests, complete projects and get individualized and/or small group interventions, enrichment and counseling services. It is structured in that each day has a theme aligned to the four core academic classes; ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies, as well as a catch all day on Friday, but students do have the autonomy to focus on higher priority needs specific to their grades and attendance needs.

COURSE #: 6903
COURSE TITLE: TRANSITION 6

Transition 6 is a hybrid course designed to initially welcome students to the Middle School and ease the stress and anxiety that is often inherent in moving from the Elementary School to the Middle School, and then evolve into a structured study hall as the first semester progresses. In the first few weeks of the course, students will take tours of the Middle/High School building to get familiar with the layout of the connected buildings and shared spaces (like the cafeteria, gymnasiums, media center, and principal's, guidance and nurse's offices), practice unlocking the combination locks for their lockers, and an emphasis on time management and self-care all to ensure a smooth transition to the busier pace of the Middle School.

HEALTH SCIENCES & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



COURSE #: 6820/7820/8822

COURSE TITLE: HEALTH AND WELLNESS (6, 7, 8)

The Botvin LifeSkills Training Middle School Program is comprehensive, dynamic, and developmentally designed to promote mental health and positive youth development. In addition to helping kids resist drug, alcohol, and tobacco use. The program is designed to be taught in sequence over three years building on skills learned in the previous levels.

COURSE #: 6730/7730/8740

COURSE TITLE: PHYSICAL EDUCATION (6, 7, 8)

The Middle School physical education program, grades sixth through eighth, will expose all students to the concepts of physical education and physical well-being. To achieve these goals, the students will be provided opportunities to participate in a variety of physical activities, which will give them an understanding for the needs of physical fitness in their life. The physical education program will incorporate decision-making skills while promoting lifetime activities through sports, games and other activities to attain a desirable level of physical well-being.

WORLD LANGUAGES

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



COURSE TITLE: EXPLORATORY SPANISH

Exploratory Spanish introduces students to the Spanish language and Hispanic cultures through engaging, comprehensible activities. Using the Vamos curriculum, students develop foundational communication skills in listening, speaking, and reading by interacting with meaningful, high-frequency language. Students explore topics such as personal identity, daily life, and cultural traditions while building confidence in understanding and using Spanish. This course provides a strong foundation for success in Spanish I at the high school level.

ART & MUSIC

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



COURSE #: 6700
COURSE TITLE: ART 6

In 6th grade, the students will be using the fundamentals of the art elements and principles of design to explore more in depth art and techniques. Art 6 focuses on using colored pencils to create value and the illusion of three dimensional works on two dimensional surfaces. Students will learn how to use watercolor techniques to create atmospheric perspective in landscapes as well in addition to symbolic representations. Art 6 is the stepping stone to more advanced art techniques in their following years.

COURSE #: 7710
COURSE TITLE: ART 7

In 7th grade, art students will continue refining their understanding and use of the art elements and principles of design. Using their previously learned skills, they will use new and less conventional materials and mediums such as metal tooling, charcoal, and ink. Experiencing new mediums and materials opens the door to nurture the creative problem solving process which will aid them in not only art but other areas that require independent thinking and reasoning by using mixed media.

COURSE #: 8820
COURSE TITLE: ART 8

In 8th grade the art students are exploring more advanced techniques such as using clay and making prints. Art 8 enables the students to use their previously learned skills and refine them even further, preparing them for high school-level art classes and creative problem-solving skills. In addition to making 3-D works they are able to develop the principles of design of compositional elements to make successful pieces with unconventional ideas and solutions.

COURSE #: 6910/7910/8910
COURSE TITLE: MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND

The purpose of the course includes playing for enjoyment, developing technical skills, and reading and studying a widely varied band repertory including modern, popular, and classical styles. Course objectives include developing ensemble performance skills such as posture, tone, intonation, breathing, rhythm, and articulation, and using these skills in expressive musical performances. Students will provide their own instruments; some school instruments are available. The school provides all concert music. Periodic playing assessments and concert performances are part of the grading process.

COURSE #: 6920/7920/8920
COURSE TITLE: MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORUS

The purpose of the course includes singing for enjoyment, developing vocal skills, and reading and studying a widely varied choral repertory including secular, popular, and classical styles. Course objectives include developing ensemble performance skills such as posture, tone, intonation, breathing, rhythm, and articulation, and using these skills in expressive musical performances. The school provides all concert music. Periodic singing assessments & concert performances are part of the grading process.

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



COURSE #: 6710
COURSE TITLE: FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE 6

This class for sixth grade students is an introduction to subjects taught in family and consumer sciences. Students will learn about family structures and friendships. Students will also learn and practice basic hand sewing techniques.

COURSE #: 7720
COURSE TITLE: FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE 7

This class for seventh grade students is a continued introduction to subjects taught in family and consumer sciences. The first half of this class will focus on healthy eating, cooking basics, and kitchen safety. The second half of this course will teach basic sewing machine skills.

BUSINESS & COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



COURSE #: 1289
COURSE TITLE: INTRO TO ECONOMICS/PERSONAL FINANCE 8

This course is designed to teach students basic economic concepts. Students will be learning basic economic questions like “What a country produces and why?” to “How does the United States economy function?” Students will also learn the real-world functions of economics and how the course will have an impact on them as soon as they graduate high school (or how it has already had an impact on their lives.) In this course, students will explore their money values, learn the basics of banking, saving, and budgeting, and start thinking ahead to high school and their financial futures.

COURSE #: 1245
COURSE TITLE: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP 6

Digital Citizenship 6 focuses on navigating digital environments in a safe and responsible way. Students will learn about topics such as: the potential effects of their digital footprints, appropriate online behavior, how to protect their information from online risks, and the implications of cyberbullying. All of these topics, and more, will be covered to help students become respectful and responsible online citizens.

BUSINESS & COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



COURSE #: 1256
COURSE TITLE: STEM: CREATIVE COMPUTING

This course introduces students to problem solving through creative computing and serves as an introduction to computer science. Using tools such as Scratch, students create games, animations, and interactive projects while learning how technology can be used to solve problems. Emphasis is placed on developing critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and computational thinking skills that prepare students for future study in computer science, artificial intelligence, and digital innovation.

COURSE #: 7906
COURSE TITLE: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE 7

This 7th grade class is designed to help students explore AI concepts and real-world applications with ethical design and responsible use. Across six units, students will investigate the broad implications of AI technology such as targeted advertising, machine learning, facial and voice recognition, and neural networks.

COURSE #: 1501
COURSE TITLE: CMU CS0 8

This 8th grade class, CS0 is a light version of the CS1 course designed to engage and excite future CS1 students. It is predicated on the notion that learning about programming and computer science should be fun and engaging. This requires interesting problems, as computational problem-solving is the core of computer science. The lessons are visually engaging, allow for multiple correct solutions, and provide visual cues when a solution goes awry.

COURSE #: 7912/8912
COURSE TITLE: CYBERSECURITY/GAMING 7/8

This course prepares students with crucial skills to be responsible citizens in a digital future. Students will learn foundational cybersecurity and Esports topics. Students will learn about the esports industry, digital citizenship, the basics of cryptography, software security, networking fundamentals and basic system administration. Students will also engage in the play experience and get a deeper insight into the esports ecosystem. In addition to play experience, students will also look at the experience as designers and critical thinkers.

COURSE #: 8677
COURSE TITLE: EXPLORING DIGITAL MEDIA

This course offers students a preview of the dynamic world of media and marketing. Students will explore the fundamentals of graphic design, video production, and brand building while gaining hands-on experience in storytelling and digital content creation using basic tools and emerging technologies. This course is designed to inspire creativity and provide valuable skills for future exploration in the fields of media, marketing, and communications.

ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



COURSE #: 6712
COURSE TITLE: DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY 6

Each student will utilize the AutoDesk Inventor CAD software. They will use these skills to design and develop engineered blueprints for a project built in the production lab. The software used in 6th grade rotation is also taught by our high school and widely used in industrial applications.

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COURSE #: 6908
COURSE TITLE: EXPLORING ROBOTICS 6

Designed to help students develop their interest in the robotics field. Students will acquire a basic understanding of electronics, machining technology, as well as design concepts to complete individual assignments. Various activities will include chassis design, logic board programming and system control checks, all used to form a complete knowledge base for Robotics (LJCreate).

COURSE #: 7908
COURSE TITLE: STEM/ROBOTICS 7

The STEM program uses active learning to foster a range of important skills across a wide variety of subject matter. Simulations and practical tasks involve problem solving, creativity and critical thinking, while enhancing manipulative skills in the career fields of engineering, computer logistics, and robotics (VEX-EXP). Finally, each activity concludes with a design project, to develop computer programming skills, and promote communication and interpersonal skills through teamwork.

COURSE #: 8908
COURSE TITLE: ROBO-TECHNICS 8

Each student will reimplement the previous knowledge from Exploring Robotics and STEM as they design, fabricate and test their very first BATTLEBOT. In the Robo-Technics course each student will compete against each other to determine who is the best of the best at creating a battlebot. The champion will compete with their robot in the annual Indiana County Middle School Robotics Competition held at Indiana Middle School.

RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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