PRINCIPALS

Bristow Middle School

Mr. Steven Cook, Principal

Mrs. Jacqueline Colon, Assistant Principal

King Philip Middle School

Ms. Joy Wright, Principal

Mr. Justin Gusy, Assistant Principal

Mr. Marc Kotler, Assistant Principal

Sedgwick Middle School

Mr. Andrew Clapsaddle, Principal

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2017 - 2018

Curriculum *in the* Middle Schools

West Hartford Public Schools

Excellence Without Exception

What Your Child Will Learn In **Grade 8**

Dear Families,

It is a pleasure to share our 2017-2018 *Curriculum in the Middle Schools,* a brief overview of all areas of the Grade 8 West Hartford Curriculum. In this brochure, you will also find descriptions of our Unified Arts program, School Counseling, Library Media Services, and Gifted Programs. Our curriculum is based on the Connecticut Core Standards and provides instruction on the essential skills and understandings necessary for success on both district and state assessments.

Inherent in our curriculum is the belief that every student can and should learn. Instructional strategies that your child will experience include but are not limited to: collaboration, active and direct learning, problem solving, guided discovery, independent activities, and differentiation.

This curriculum comes alive in the hands of our talented teachers who are committed to ensuring that our students reach their highest potential. We are dedicated to accommodating children's diverse needs, the way they learn, their experiences and interests, and to facilitating continuous educational growth. If you should have any questions about your child's curriculum, your classroom teacher is the best source of information.

No single document can fully explain the rich and complex nature of the school curriculum and instructional goals. We know that learning is optimized in a partnership with families, teachers, and schools. Working together, we can use your experiences as a family and our work in the classroom to create a respectful climate of academic success, healthy personal and social development, and joy for lifelong learning.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Vicinus, Jr.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

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West Hartford Public Schools

Curriculum in the Middle Schools

What Your Child Will Learn In

Grade 8

English Language Arts

Students entering eighth grade will have read literature through many different lenses. They will have explored literature from different time periods, authors' perspectives and writing styles, and evaluated different themes and literary elements. Students will have experience writing narratives, expository essays, as well as argument essays over varying time frames for different tasks, purposes, and audiences. Students will apply this prior knowledge as they explore the year's overarching theme of the individual and society.

Eighth grade students will study complex psychological, philosophical, and moral themes in literature and informational texts. While examining different genres, students will analyze passages, dialogue, scenes, or words that are critical to the development of a story, theme, or central idea. Through the critical evaluation of classical and contemporary literature, students will focus their writing and class discussions on how literature helps us define the tension between the needs of the individual and the greater good of society. Students will begin to understand that family, community, and society influence one's decisions and that judging morality is a complex, nuanced undertaking. Students will be encouraged to develop empathy/compassion for the varied forces that shape one's actions. Students will read historical fiction as they explore this theme. They will discuss how authors' perspectives might produce accounts of historical events that differ from what we know happened. In class discussions and literary responses, students will identify figurative language, word choice, voice, and tone. Students will come to class prepared to discuss assigned texts, respond to diverse peer perspectives, ask questions of others, and work collaboratively towards deeper understandings of learned material. Speaking, listening, and language enrichment will remain focal points in the eighth grade language arts curriculum.

In addition, the year will center on three types of writing: narrative, expository, and argument. Students will engage in the writing process including the use of graphic organizers, drafting, and peer/self-revision to publish their work. In their literary analysis, research essays, narratives, and oral presentations, students will draw on multiple sources, including literary, informational, and multimedia texts. Furthermore, students will demonstrate the command of formal English appropriate to audience and task. Through all units, students will develop vocabulary strategies, as well as grade appropriate grammar skills, with a focus on understanding new words based on prior knowledge of prefixes, roots, and suffixes. As the year progresses, students will be expected to demonstrate increasing command of English language conventions, including grammar and vocabulary.

By the end of eighth grade, students will have a rich background in literature and literary non-fiction, with a grasp of historical context and many nuances of the works they have read. With this knowledge of the individual's role in the greater society, they will be ready for the rigors of high school.

Mathematics

The Middle School Mathematics Grade 8 Curriculum incorporates the Connecticut Core Standards for Mathematics (CCS-M). The program goals focus on the following content domains:

- The number system
- Expressions and equations
- Functions
- Geometry
- Statistics and probability

In all grades, the following mathematical practices are integrated throughout the program:

- 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

In grade 8, the major themes include extension of understanding and application of irrational numbers, radicals, integer exponents, and congruence, similarity, Pythagorean Theorem, volume and bivariate data. In addition, the understanding of proportional relationships as they relate to linear equations and the concept of a functional relationship are developed.

Science

The eighth grade science program focuses on the development of science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas focused on forces and motion, energy, chemistry, waves, and space (universe, stars, solar system).

Students will engage in engineering tasks that involve designing, testing, and modifying solutions to solve real world problems.

Our curriculum is developed from the Next Generation Science Standards and seeks to present science learning in a three-dimensional method that integrates Disciplinary Core Ideas, Science and Engineering Practices, and Crosscutting Concepts.

During the 8th grade, students will explore the following concepts and skills:

Scientific Investigations: Students will engage in engineering investigations that help students ask questions and define problems, modeling explanations, planning and carrying out investigations, analyze and interpret data, construct explanations and solutions from data, and communicating information

Forces and Motion: Designing investigations related to force and motion, Newton's Laws, gravitational forces, electronic and magnetic forces, forces and everyday life.

Energy: Constructing and interpreting graphs comparing types of energy (i.e. kinetic vs. potential), temperature and particle motion, states of matter, energy transfer, heat vs. temperature, investigating thermal energy transfer, practical applications of energy transfer.

Chemistry: Developing models to describe the structure of matter, properties of matter and analysis of different substances, chemical reactions, conservation of matter, chemical vs. physical properties and reactions, chemistry in our world.

Waves: Wave properties, types of waves (sound, light, etc.), using descriptive and mathematical representations of waves, waves in every-day life.

Space: The universe and stars, the solar system, using models to represent the earth/moon system and scale properties of objects in the solar system, space exploration.

Social Studies

The purpose of history and social studies is to prepare students to ask and seek answers to meaningful questions and prepare them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become informed participants in an ever-changing global community and to act responsibly to improve its condition. The social studies curriculum is aligned with the national College, Career, and Citizenship (C3) frameworks as well as the Connecticut state social studies curriculum frameworks. Key disciplinary content and skills, as well as core literacy standards for reading, writing, speaking and listening are embedded within our curricula. Our curriculum is driven by student inquiry and requires students to engage with compelling questions in order to understand the world around us and take informed action based on their learning.

In addition to disciplinary content, students are equipped with the tools necessary to engage in inquiry. In particular, students will learn to:

- Recognize, develop, and articulate compelling questions.
- Gather and evaluate sources and then use evidence to understand the complexity of multiple social studies topics.
- Explore multiple perspectives to develop their own understanding of history and social studies topics.
- Engage in conversations and share their understandings of the world around them.

The eighth grade social studies program introduces students to the study of American history from the era of the Revolutionary War through the settlement of the American west. Students will also study topics in state and local history from the same time period. Students develop and apply the essential social studies skills of chronological thinking, historical analysis and interpretation, historical decision making and historical research to better understand themes and events in American history. Reading of primary sources and supplementary historical fiction is an integral part of this course. All students participate in a guaranteed research experience during the eighth grade year through their social studies class.

Library Media Services

The library media program in the middle school continues to build on the foundation skills taught in grades K-5 for students to become critical users of information and readers for lifelong learning. ***Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*** published by the American Association of School Librarians provides the framework for instruction. By the end of grade 8 students will:

- Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.
- Demonstrate adaptability by changing the inquiry focus, questions, resources, or strategies when necessary to achieve success.
- Respect copyright/intellectual property rights of creators and producers.
- Continue an inquiry based research process by applying critical - thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, organization) to information and knowledge in order to construct new understandings, draw conclusions and create new knowledge.
- Use the writing process, media and visual literacy and technology skills to create products that express new understandings.
- Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use, and assess.
- Show an appreciation for literature by choosing to read for pleasure and expressing an interest in various literary genres.

Unified Arts

Our middle school students participate in 36-day unified arts rotations in the areas of physical education, music, art, health, and technology education in grades 6 through 8. The following pages include descriptions of the curriculum. Below please find a sample student schedule of Unified Arts courses throughout the grade 8 year.

	Morning	Afternoon
Rotation 1	PE	Art
Rotation 2	Health	Music
Rotation 3	Tech Ed	PE
Rotation 4	Art	Health
Rotation 5	Music	Tech Ed

Note: The Unified Arts Program is delivered slightly differently at Bristow Middle School where there are 6 rotations, each lasting for 30 days. The UA curriculum and the courses are identical to the other two middle schools with the only difference being that at Bristow, physical education and health are combined into one course of study called "Wellness." Every student will be in a wellness rotation at any given time throughout the year.

Visual Arts

The middle school curriculum, like that of the elementary and high school levels, encompasses art production, art history, aesthetics and art criticism. All processes and concepts addressed through this program foster visual literacy skills. Students produce works of art that express their personal experiences and reflections about different cultures and artists.

The curriculum is grounded in the State and (1994) National Standards to ensure that high expectations for student learning are maintained. Within the curriculum there are required concepts, artists, cultural time periods, vocabulary, techniques, and processes to be mastered by students at each grade level. The curriculum is currently being revised using the National Core Arts Standards DRAFT (2015) (NCAS) as a guide.

Middle school students have the opportunity to experience many art forms such as:

Drawing, painting, printmaking, graphic design, technology applications, textiles, and ceramics.

Music

The middle school music curriculum includes classroom instruction for all students in grade 8 and is aligned with State and National Standards to ensure a comprehensive and sequentially appropriate experience. The elective program includes band, orchestra, and choral ensembles. Further extension and enrichment of the curriculum is offered through co-curricular ensembles: jazz band, select string, and vocal ensembles.

Performance Ensembles
Performance ensembles focus on building individual and ensemble skills through a broad selection of music literature. Components include:

Blend	Ear Training	Posture
Bow Control	Expression	Sight Reading
Breathing	Intonation	Tone Quality

Instrumental students also receive small group instruction focusing on individual technique within a specific instrument grouping.

Classroom Instruction
Students, through the use of Music Technology, develop their performance skills on the keyboard, explore compositional styles, apply music theory and notation concepts, and continue their study of composers and their music.

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World Languages

The World Language Curriculum incorporates the National Standards and the State of Connecticut Frameworks for World Languages. Students continue their selected study of French or Spanish. Our program goals focus on:

- Communication: to use language in three modes: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational
- Cultures: to understand cultures through products, practices and perspectives of speakers of that language
- Connections: to understand relationships of language to other disciplines and new frontiers
- Comparisons: to develop insight into one's own language and culture as well as those of the new language
- Community: to apply language beyond the classroom in a global setting

In all grades, emphasis is placed on development of oral and written communication skills; links to other disciplines are encouraged.

Grade 8 students look beyond their immediate environment to their own community and the larger world. Students investigate French and Hispanic influences in the U.S. Attention is paid to the development of reading in a cultural context and to writing comprehensible text. Oral communication skills that reflect age-appropriate relevance remain the primary objective.

Upon successful completion of the middle school World Language sequence, students earn one high school credit and either one or two years advancement in French or Spanish at the high school level.

Technology & Engineering

STEM: Science → Technology → Engineering → Math

Helping student's gain the skills required to succeed in today's challenging world including critical thinking, problem solving and the ability to drive advancements in STEM. The Technology & Engineering Department puts the "T&E" in STEM.

Our program goals seek to enable students to:

- Advance technological and information literacy
- Apply creative problem solving and critical thinking skills within the design process
- Understand the impacts of technology on society
- Collaborate to enhance experiential learning and communication in a diverse environment
- Develop STEM career awareness and exploration

Focus: Communication, Graphic Design and Computer Science
Through the exploration of information technology 8th grade students use the principles of design and the engineering design process to solve various challenges. Units of study introduce students to the creation of messages through visual and audio communication, the design of digital images and electronic communication, and the formation of architectural renderings through the study of past and present structures. Activities include architectural design using CAD software and 3D printing, digital photography and video production with an emphasis on advertising and marketing, and coding within computer science principles. Strong vertical articulation within the middle school Technology & Engineering program prepares students for an advanced approach to STEM careers at the high schools.

Physical Education

The goals of physical education are for students to develop fitness and skills in the movement areas of dance, adventure education, and sports. An integral part of physical education is the development of the responsible and respectful behaviors in both cooperative and competitive activities. The sequential and varied experiences contribute to the total well-being of each student. Concepts, strategies, rules, sportsmanship, teamwork, and basic movement skills are all woven into the offerings. After-school intramurals provide additional times for students to participate in fitness activities according to their interests.

Eighth grade students will participate in a number of activities that may include the following:

- Adventure Education
- Invasion sports (basketball, lacrosse, soccer, team handball, Ultimate Frisbee)
- Dance
- Fitness
- Net sports (badminton, pickleball, speedminton, tennis, volleyball)
- Softball
- Track and Field

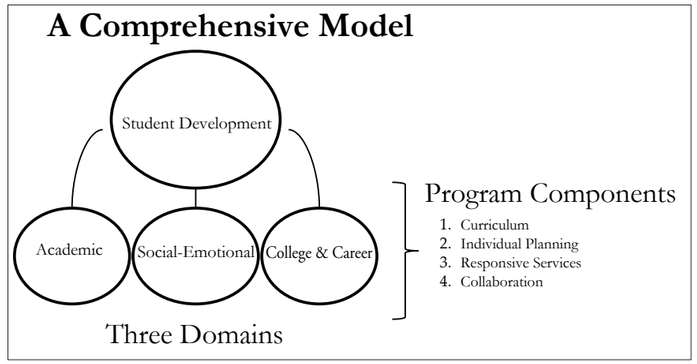
A change in clothing is required for healthy participation. Shorts, t-shirts, sneakers, and warm-up suits for colder weather are appropriate attire.

Support Services

Special Education, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), remedial reading services, and math support are available for students who may need them.

School Counseling

Program Model
A comprehensive school counseling program model is planned, preventative and measurable. It is based on developmental theory and designed to meet the needs of all students as they progress from grades K-12. Content standards define what students should know and/or do at each grade level and provide a scope and sequence for program implementation.



Service Delivery
School counselors provide skills and experiences that promote student academic, social-emotional and career development. These skills and experiences are provided through both **Direct** and **Indirect** services and define the nature and role of today's school counselor.

Direct Services are face-to-face interactions between the counselor and students.
Examples include:
- Delivery to the school counseling curriculum
- College and Career Readiness Activities
- Individual/Group Counseling
- Crisis Intervention and Responsive Services

Indirect Services are interactions the counselor has with others on behalf of students.
Examples include:
- Advocacy to ensure equitable access and opportunities for all students
- Consultation with parents, school-based personnel and community agencies
- Collaboration within and outside the school community
- Program coordination and management
- Leadership initiatives to enhance student learning and promote healthy development

Sources:
-A Guide to Comprehensive School Counseling Program Development : State of Connecticut: State Board of Education 2008
-American School Counselor Association (2012). The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, Third Edition. Alexandria, VA: Author

Health

Health education emphasizes students developing healthy lifestyles.

Fundamental to developing healthy lifestyles are opportunities to learn to apply health literacy skills. These skills include decision making, goal setting, effectively communicating, accessing information and resources, analyzing what influences our actions, and advocating a healthy position. These align with National and State Standards.

Students practice these skills using different health contents. The major topics are listed below.

Wellness, physical fitness
Steroids, ecstasy/club drugs
Stress, stress management, suicide prevention
Healthy relationships, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception

QUEST

QUEST is West Hartford Public Schools Gifted and Talented Program serving the needs of high ability, highly creative, highly motivated students. QUEST offers unique and diverse experiences for students in grades 4 – 8. QUEST strives to identify, nurture, support, and service gifted and talented students from diverse populations to ensure that students have an opportunity to develop their unique gifts and talents by creating a learning environment that encourages students to **Q**uestion, **U**nderstand, **E**xplore, **S**earch, and **T**hink.

A student centered program, **QUEST** is founded on the principles of the Enrichment Triad Model (Renzulli, 1977) and the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (Renzulli and Reis, 1985). It is a challenging and demanding responsibility that requires hands-on learning, firsthand investigations, and the application of knowledge and thinking skills to complex problems. Students participate in three types of enrichment learning activities, each one guiding the student learner through greater depth, complexity, and independence. The delivery components are extensions of:

Type I Enrichment: exploration and discovery are the key elements in Type I enrichment. Students are exposed to general exploratory experiences such as presentations, performances, workshops, interest development centers, etc.

Type II Enrichment: "How to" is the key element in Type II enrichment. Students engage in individual, small group or classroom lessons to develop the skills and processes necessary for independent learning.

Type III Enrichment: "Practicing professional" is the highest level of enrichment learning. Students conduct an in-depth independent/small group investigation based on their personal or group interests.

Identified students participate in a program that offers a variety of options for challenging their learning. There is a grade level thematic unit of study for each of the middle school years, in addition to individualized, in-depth research projects on student-selected topics for each of the three years of middle school. Students are involved in advanced level investigations within any academic or artistic area of personal interest. In each case, the QUEST teacher facilitates student learning by guiding students' research, and product development using higher level thought processes and investigative procedures. A student may spend one, two, or three years researching a topic and developing a project to be presented to appropriate audiences. A capstone project at the end of each school year includes the student's' presentation at a Type III Celebration on a topic of choice.

QUEST
exploring searching questioning thinking
A Schoolwide Gifted Program
West Hartford Public Schools