COMMUNITY MIDDLE SCHOOL &

THOMAS GROVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

2023-2024

REQUIRED COURSES

The WWPRSD Middle School Program of Studies is a valuable reference manual for students, parents, and school personnel actively involved in curriculum planning and course selection. It is a complete guide to the possible course offerings at Community (CMS) and Grover (GMS) Middle Schools. Each department has described its specific course offerings, highlighting the chief components of each course.

Middle school students are scheduled for four core courses (integrated reading and language arts, social studies, science, and math) which are taught within a team of teachers. These teachers are specialists in their content areas, but work cooperatively to create interdisciplinary experiences. The team of teachers outlines common expectations for their group of students, meets together with counselors and child study personnel, and provides coordinated information for parents. Additionally, students chose the language they will study when entering 6th grade, and are scheduled in that language for 7th and 8th grade. Students in 6th and 7th grade select one elective while 8th grade students select two electives. After-school clubs and interscholastic sports are also available.

INTEGRATED READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS

The goal of an integrated reading and language arts program is for students to read and write proficiently and with stamina for a variety of purposes. As students read text in various genres such as essays, short stories, plays, and poetry, their reading and language arts instruction supports writing in each of the genres. Writing instruction, in a writer's workshop model, supports all components of the writing process, and students apply their writing skills with attention to revision and editing. Additionally, students read quality literature encouraging critical thinking and an appreciation for the richness and complexity of language. Students demonstrate comprehension and respond to literature through reader response journals and in whole class and small group discussions. The readings, both fiction and nonfiction, provide opportunities for students to explore and develop intellectually, socially and emotionally due to the rich diversity of the themes presented in the readings.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies enables students to internalize knowledge and to develop the skills, content, and attitudes necessary for effective and responsible citizenship in a democratic society and in the global community. The sixth grade program focuses on early human development and ancient civilizations and their relationship to the world of today. The seventh grade program focuses on civics and history of the United States. Students learn about the Constitution and the development of the United States grappling with the question of, "Are we the nation we set out to be?" The historical focus of the eighth grade social studies curriculum is on the post-Classical period of 500 to 1500. The major themes of this historical era are how civilizations expanded, how power shifted, how religion spread, and how the world moved from parallelisms and tentative contacts between individual civilizations to one of encounter and exchange – producing a dynamic global framework that led to the spread of ideas, goods, technology, and disease. The 6-8 social studies program focuses on the development of critical thinking skills and empowering students to think, read, and write like historians.

SCIENCE

The science program is designed to encourage curiosity, exploration, and scientific thinking by designing and asking testable questions, designing experiments, collecting and analyzing data through observation and investigation, and drawing conclusions. In all grades, students continue to build their knowledge and enhance their skills through discovery and problem-solving activities with each grade level curriculum providing engaging experiences while spiraling Life Science, Physical Science, and Earth Science core ideas at each grade level. The middle schools believe that science is to be enjoyed and thus, promotes a student-centered and collaborative approach where children work together to uncover the wonders of their natural world. While the learning of content is a critical component, the emphasis is on the Science and Engineering Practices, and hence content area assessments are only part of the experience. Science is integrated with other curricular areas in order to appreciate the significance of important discoveries and their effects on society. In support of our district 1-1 Initiative, technology is also an essential component of our program. Students use technology to gather and report data, locate primary sources, and to take part in simulations. By involving these early adolescents in science issues, we hope to produce informed and committed young citizens who are pro-active and responsible in their communities.

MATHEMATICS

The middle school math programs address the content and practices mandated by the New Jersey Standards for Learning. All courses stress the Mathematical Practices outlined in the standards in every unit of study.

Students will:

- Make sense of problems and persevere 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 an express regularity in repeated reasoning.

In Grade 6, instructional time will focus on four critical areas: (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers and developing fluency with the computation of rational numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking.

In Grade 7, students are enrolled in Math 7 or Math 7 Honors. Instructional time will focus on four critical areas: (1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and

linear equations; (3) 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; and (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples

In grade 8, students are enrolled in Algebra I, Algebra 1 Honors or Math 8. Instruction will focus on simplifying expressions, operations with rational numbers, polynomials, and radicals. Students will solve and graph equations and inequalities including linear, quadratic, absolute value and exponential functions.

The criteria to be considered eligible for an honors class is posted on the district website under *Departments/Mathematics/Program overview*

Honors and Accelerated Mathematics is an accelerated and enriched program for students who have met the assessment criteria to be placed into the class. Students in grade 6 study Pre-Algebra. Students in grade 7 study Algebra 1 and students in grade 8 study Algebra 2. All courses cover material at the equivalent of an honors, high school level course and include enrichment topics appropriate to the ages and abilities of the students.

WORLD LANGUAGE

Our World Language program has been recognized as a “Model World Language Program” by the New Jersey Department of Education. Language choices include Chinese, French, German, and Spanish. All middle school students are required to take a World Language in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. At the middle school level, our World Language classes are designed to be engaging, interactive, and relevant. Our goals are to help students communicate with people from diverse cultures and grow as global citizens who can speak, read, and write in a new language. The middle school language program is designed for new learners of a language; students who already speak one of our language options will study a different language in middle school. In high school, students will have an opportunity to continue studying the language they studied in middle school, begin studying a new language, or take a placement test and enroll in an appropriate course for a language that they already speak.

CYCLE COURSES

Cycle courses are required courses offered in rotation that allow students exploration of art, computer, health, life skills, music, and technology.

Art (Grades 6, 7, 8): During this course students will be challenged to use a variety of media to solve creative design problems. Students will utilize the Elements and Principles of Design to create two and three-dimensional works of art. The experience will also include participation in self and group critiques of student and master works of art. There will also be opportunities for students to develop their sense of aesthetics, helping them to better understand their exposure to the ever-growing visual world.

6th Grade Computer Cycle: The 6th grade computer cycle is a computer literacy & research class that promotes the use of technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity, and foster creativity.

7th Grade Computer Cycle: The 7th grade computer cycle is a computer literacy & research class that expands and builds on the knowledge and skills learned in the 6th grade computer cycle. This class promotes the use of technology to gather, analyze, manipulate, and communicate information and data in an effective, efficient, and appropriate manner.

Health (Grades 6, 7, 8): Health classes are designed to help students work to meet the challenges for living a long and healthy life. The courses of study are used to guide them to make responsible, well informed choices and decisions based on knowledge and skills that they have learned and practiced. In sixth grade students begin with a unit titled the Dimensions of Wellness, followed by a unit on diseases and disease transmission, HIV/AIDS, and the immune system. The students will also explore topics on body image, eating disorders, making healthy choices and safety. In seventh grade students study topics dealing with goal setting and goal attainment, peer pressure, media pressure, growth and development, puberty and human reproduction. The focus of the eighth grade curriculum is addiction and brain function, alcohol and drug awareness, controlled substances and over the counter drugs. Students also explore decisions related to responsible personal behavior. Students are encouraged to “live what they learn” by becoming health literate and by practicing healthy behaviors.

Life Skills (Grades 6, 7): Life Skills cycle classes are designed as a "hands on" program. In sixth grade, the students are encouraged to improve their practical talents while learning the basics of nutrition, consumerism, cooking, and anti-bullying strategies. Practical experience is gained through actual food preparation tasks and clothing repair skills. In seventh grade the primary emphasis will be food preparation as well as nutrition. Students will be encouraged to make healthy food choices while learning basic cooking techniques. This class is in a laboratory setting with students working in small groups. Nutrition components will stress the importance of limiting high fat, high cholesterol foods while incorporating fruits, vegetables and whole grains to the daily diet.

Music (Grades 6, 7, 8): Students participate in a music program that provides a variety of musical experiences, exposure to music of many cultures, opportunities to listen and perform music, and a foundation in music literacy. Students sing, play keyboards, hand chimes, Orff instruments and small percussion as tools to compose and improvise in different keys and meters.

Technology (Grade 7): Is a hands-on program where seventh grade students learn to solve technical problems creatively through the use of a systematic process. Students study various problems, research information, brainstorm ideas, design and plan, build models and devices and do various testing and evaluation of their solutions. They learn technical processes, tools, materials, planning, problem solving and teamwork while applying science, math and other knowledge and skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is an important program stressing fitness, teamwork and individual achievement. The focus of the program is for students to attain such fundamental skills and objectives that include: balance, cardiovascular fitness, strength training, team building, agility, flexibility, endurance training, and good sportsmanship.

ELL

The English Language Learner program offers courses aligned to students' English proficiency level. The purpose of the ELL program is to strengthen the four language skills; speaking, listening, reading and writing. The curriculum also includes a cultural component. In addition, the ELL program provides a comfortable and nurturing environment that supports students as they engage with a new academic setting and culture.

PRISM

PRISM (Performance Revealing Individual Students' Magic) is a Renzulli-based, multi-disciplined program designed to accelerate and enrich students with identified talents in the arts and humanities. PRISM students have the option to pursue accelerated levels of independent and group research and problem solving. Students are considered for PRISM candidacy based on their past consistent motivation and task commitment, creative problem solving, and high ability. There are many ways for students to meet their potential in middle school. PRISM is one way students can realize their exceptional potential.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Students with Individualized Education Program (IEPs) have their programs designed to meet requirements as dictated by student need. All individual program needs are discussed at a student's IEP Annual Review meeting with the IEP Team.

ELECTIVE COURSES

Art (Grades 7 & 8): This is an advanced art course intended to meet the needs of students who are excited about art. Students will express themselves through drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, and mixed media. This elective builds on skills learned in cycle art and involves in-depth art experiences approached through creative problem solving, material exploration, skill building, aesthetics, and art history. In Art Elective you will discover your inner artist!

Band (Grades 6, 7, 8): This group rehearses a wide variety of music literature, from marches to musicals and everything in between, in order to prepare for formal concerts, festivals, and recitals. The majority of students in the 6th and 7th grade bands have 1-2 years of experience and the

majority of students in the 8th grade band have 2-3 years of experience. Each student also receives a regularly scheduled small group lesson, which is an integral part of the program's success.

Broadcast Journalism (Grade 7 Only): Do you want to be a TV reporter? Then, this is the place for you. Broadcast Journalism is designed for the innovative student who is interested in writing, producing, editing, creating, and reporting news stories for broadcast. The student will learn the techniques used in researching & reporting a story, developing questions, conducting interviews, writing scripts, and investigating stories. Students will gain skills in communication, collaboration, planning, and researching information in a very self-directed & responsible learning environment.

Choir (Grades 6, 7, 8): This group rehearses a wide variety of music literature in order to prepare for formal concerts, festivals, and recitals. Emphasis will be placed on proper vocal production including breathing, posture and tone quality. Goals include developing the voice of each student, expanding appreciation for choral literature, strengthening the ability to read music, and enabling artistic performance. Choir is open to all students, regardless of previous singing experience.

Communication Arts (Grade 6 Only): Public Speaking is both performance and persuasion. This course will give students the opportunity to develop techniques and strategies that will develop the student's ability to persuade, inform, entertain, and connect with an audience. Theatre techniques are blended with the student's individual and authentic style. Students will explore improvisational theatre to overcome fear, anxiety, and build confidence. Students will work on Reader's Theatre, Storytelling, Debate, Multimedia Communication, and the art of persuasion with their own developed personal presentation styles.

Computer Applications (Grade 7 Only): Computer Applications is an elective course designed to permit exploration and learning through a variety of software applications. A "hands on" approach is used to encourage the use of the computer as a problem-solving tool and resource. Projects include graphic design, multimedia presentations, animations, web page design, research, and photo editing.

Computer Graphics (Grade 8 Only): Computer Graphics is an elective course designed to enhance students' experience combining art and the computer. This course will cover a variety of computer applications that teach various drawing and painting techniques. Students will learn to use the basic functions of these programs and combine these skills with their own creative ideas to create original works of art. Digital cameras may also be used to create both still images and video. Images and video will be edited and altered using a variety of programs and techniques.

Computer Programming (Grade 8 Only): Computer Programming is an elective course designed to introduce and enhance students' experience in programming applications. This course will challenge students to analyze tasks, predict outcomes, and solve problems. Students will learn programming fundamentals such as program design, flow of control, variables, and data handling. Programming projects include graphic design, mathematical challenges, game programming, mobile app and game development, and more. Students will also explore robotics by using hands-on construction to engineer and build, program, test, and evaluate a robot's behavior.

Creative Baking and Cooking (Grade 8 Only): This elective course is designed to expose students to general cooking and baking principles as well as the chemistry of recipe production. By working in groups, students will be preparing foods such as muffins, breads, cookies, and soup in a "hands-on" laboratory setting. Making nutritious food choices and adapting recipe ingredients to conform to today's health standards will also be stressed. If you enjoy cooking and baking as well as trying foods from various food groups of the pyramid, then this elective may be for you!

Creative Woodworking (Grades 7 & 8): Students in this class will be involved in designing and building projects, with wood being the main component. Other materials such as hardware may be used as well. All projects will initially need a plan selected from a text and later of student design. Students will use basic hand tools, portable electric tools and stationary machine tools to fabricate, assemble and finish wood products such as tool boxes, shelves, jigsaw puzzles, birdhouses, game boards and other basic wood projects. Student projects will be based on experience and ability. There is no prerequisite. Woodworking can be taken in either grade 7 or grade 8 or both.

Exploring Design and Engineering (Grades 7 & 8): Students in this course will be involved in designing and building all types of structures, mechanisms and vehicles that are needed to solve specific problems. They will develop creative ideas, make plans and build solutions to engineering problems using basic hand tools, portable electric tools and stationary machine tools. It will involve using a variety of materials and many different processes to cut, shape and fasten these materials, in order to create solutions to the problems. Examples of projects would be support structures, bridges and vehicles that use alternative energy to travel on land, sea and air, such as CO_2 race cars, boats, planes and simple rockets. There is no prerequisite. Design and Engineering can be taken in either grade 7 or grade 8 or both.

First Period Paws* (GMS Only - Grades 7 & 8): This elective will meet from **7:00 to 7:40 am every morning**. First Period Paws is designed for the student who is interested in creating, writing, and reporting broadcast news. The student will learn the techniques used in researching, investigating, and reporting a story, developing questions, conducting interviews, appearing on camera, and writing scripts. Parental permission is required.

***If you are selected, this course is taken in addition to your other elective(s).**

Foods Around the World (Grade 8 Only): The goal for this elective class is to introduce students to foods and meal patterns of various countries around the world. Students will gain experience using a variety of cooking utensils and ingredients native to other cultures. Tasting foods such as chocolate mousse from France, pasta with various sauces (pesto, alfredo, etc.) from Italy, stir-fry's from China, hummus from the Middle East, spaetzle from Germany, or fresh salsa from Mexico will be a major component of the course. By understanding how holidays, religions, and climate affect food customs, students can begin to appreciate how families in their community live and eat.

Orchestra (Grades 6, 7, 8): Orchestra ensembles rehearse and perform different genres of music literature, from baroque to contemporary. The Orchestras perform in several concerts, festivals, and recitals throughout the year. The majority of students in the 6th and 7th grade orchestras have 2-3 years of experience and the majority of students in the 8th grade orchestra have 3-4 years of experience. Each student also receives a regularly scheduled small group lesson, which is an integral part of the program's success.

Performing Arts (Grade 7): Students will develop their imaginations thinking quickly on their feet exploring different activities through improvisational theatre. Students will understand what makes a good story and develop their own ideas into short vignette scene study. They will explore the world of Broadway plays/musicals through music, dance, costume design, and technical theatre. Students will develop characters and understand that acting is about being truthful under imaginary circumstances of the characters they are trying to portray. They will play characters that already exist, and also be given the opportunity to create their own.

Performing Arts (Grade 8): Students will continue to develop their Improvisational Theatre skills with impromptu games and live performance opportunities. There will be a unit on the differences between acting on stage and acting for Film. We will be talking about the history behind acting in films, and the trends that it has set for movies and television today. Students will collaborate during a Playwriting Unit and write their own monologues and short scenes to be performed by professional actors that will be guests in the classroom. The students will do intensive scene study on the history of Theatre, and look at different classical and contemporary plays. Students will have a chance to perform some of these works. The 8th Grade students will be writing, producing, acting, filming, and presenting their work for audiences throughout the entire school year.

STEM: Explore, Discover & Apply (Grade 8 Only): In this course, we will ignite students' passion for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) through independent and group challenges in a double elective year-long course that meets every day. This hands-on, project-oriented class will emphasize collaboration, critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, creativity and effective experimental design. Students will be exposed to projects and activities that combine Computer-Programming with Mechanical & Electrical systems and Material Fabrication. Topics of study may include: Arduino / Raspberry Pi Programming, Amusement Park Physics & Maker Innovation.

Television & Film Production (Grade 8 Only): This rigorous elective is designed for the student who loves television, video and film. Students will meet every other day throughout the school year and need to be self-disciplined, responsible and highly motivated. Meeting deadlines and being able to work in small groups are essential to a student's success. Time will be spent studying the art of television, video, and film production, television and video camerawork, working with digital editors, writing scripts, creating storyboards, producing and directing. The focus of this class is on project-based learning and individual student expression.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

CMS and GMS offer a variety of after school activities, clubs and interscholastic sports. Student interest dictates offerings, which are frequently updated. Late bus service is provided to accommodate the various time schedules of the activities.

Clubs and Activities: Offered in the Fall and Winter will be determined each season based upon student interest. CMS and GMS offer similar activities, but school-specific activities are available on each school's web pages.

Interscholastic Sports: Middle School Athletics is a wonderful way to get your student involved. Our athletic teams teach lifelong skills such as team work, commitment and the importance of being physically active. Students who plan on participating should be prepared to practice Monday through Friday from 3-5pm. There is a late bus available to transport the students home after practice.

All students who are interested in participating in our athletic program will need to register through Genesis and have a valid physical on-file. Registration for fall sports will open in August, registration for winter will open in October and registration for the spring will open in February. Depending on interest, students may have to try out to participate. Please contact Athletic Director, Kate Dobinson at Katharine.Dobinson@wwprsd.org or Assistant AD Jeff Reilly at Jeff.Reilly@wwprsd.org

Fall	Winter	Spring
Boys Soccer (7 & 8)	Boys Basketball (7 & 8)	Boys Baseball (6-8)
Girls Soccer (7 & 8)	Girls Basketball (7 & 8)	Girls Softball (6-8)
Field Hockey (6-8)	Cheerleading (6-8)	Track and Field (6-8)
Cross Country (6–8)	Wrestling (6 – 8)	Boys Lacrosse (6-8)
		Girls Lacrosse (6-8)
		Tennis (7 & 8)

Should you have any questions about the middle school program of studies, please feel free to contact your child's counselor or the appropriate content area supervisor:

Business/Computers/Engineer.	Dr. Russ Wray	716-5000 – ext. 7329
Fine & Performing Arts	Mr. Jeff Santoro	716-5000 – ext. 5262
Health & Physical Education	Mr. Jeff Reilly	716-5000 – ext. 5950
Language Arts	Ms. Emily Creveling	716-5000 – ext. 7307
Math	Ms. Andrea Bean	716-5000 – ext. 5264
Science	Mr. Richard Stec	716-5000 – ext. 5268
Social Studies	Dr. Cindy Assini	716-5000 – ext. 5536
World Languages	Dr. Ashley Warren	716-5000 – ext. 5120