

# PARK



## **Middle School Curriculum Guide Grades 7 & 8**



### **Middle School Vision Statement**

We strive to create a middle school community serving students in grades 5-8 focused on academic excellence, critical thinking, and our core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and kindness for lasting success in high school and beyond.

### **Middle School Mission Statement**

The Park Middle School is designed to provide an academically challenging and developmentally appropriate learning environment for a range of learners ages 9-14 in keeping with ideals first drafted by Mary Hammett Lewis, the founding head of The Park School. Recognizing that each child develops differently, our experienced faculty utilizes experiential learning and differentiates instruction to meet each student's individual needs. Our mission is to develop in each child the foundational skills necessary for a successful future, including a sense of self-awareness; a respect for others' rights; the ability to think critically and express ideas clearly; and an understanding of academic, civic, and personal responsibility.

### **Middle School Outcomes**

The Park Middle School is designed to provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment for a range of learners ages 9–14. We are cognizant that each child is a “work in progress,” constantly growing and changing. Students completing Park's middle school curriculum will demonstrate the following scholarly habits based on the ideals first drafted by Mary Hammett Lewis, Park's founding head of school, over 100 years ago:

- **learn to think independently**
  - students think critically by their own initiative
  - students are willing to question received ideas and conventional wisdom
  - students are resourceful
  - when faced with difficult problems, students are able to recognize what they don't know
  - students demonstrate the ability to recognize patterns within and between disciplines of study
- **possess the courage to express ideas**
  - students possess the confidence to give voice to their thoughts
  - students have the capacity to stand up for their beliefs
- **learn to assume responsibility**
  - students develop self-awareness of how they learn best and implement strategies that work for them
  - students take on responsibility of locating and evaluating needed information
  - students take risks and learn from their failures
  - students learn to be organized with their belongings, assignments, and ideas
- **demonstrate consideration and thoughtfulness of others**
  - students are responsible team members, demonstrating an ability to work cooperatively with other people
  - students are able to express their ideas respectfully and how to listen to the ideas of others, both within and outside of the Park community
  - students treat others as they would like to be treated

- **formulate their own standards in all work**
  - students challenge themselves and others to put forth their best effort and to stretch beyond their comfort zone
- **recognize the need to keep imagination alive**
  - students develop or maintain creativity in self-expression
  - students develop or maintain intrinsic motivation to learn
- **learn an attitude of joy in creative work**
  - students develop or maintain enthusiasm for learning and doing
- **learn to make use of leisure time**
  - students are curious about the world around them and are willing to take advantage of opportunities for exploration, even if doing so risks failure

## Grades 7 and 8

While grade 5 is a transition from Lower School to Middle School, grade 7 is a transition to a set of new expectations, and grade 8 is a transition to Upper School. Each of these years is important for the many valuable skills and learning opportunities presented to students. This transition is also seen in the growth and development of Middle School students. The Middle School years can be tempestuous as students rush toward independence one minute and crave the familiar comfort of family support the next.

One of the most obvious changes from grade 6 to 7 is the move from a two teacher core program to a departmentalized schedule, which gives students the opportunity to work with five core teachers.

The Middle School foundation and philosophy remain at the core of the program. (Please refer to page 1 of the curriculum guide.) Students are challenged at appropriate levels with expectations that raise the bar in content knowledge, writing skills, higher order thinking skills, and behavior.

Students in grades 7 and 8 must learn to organize their materials and supplies in different ways since they no longer have desks that are their personal spaces. They must plan to take the right materials and supplies to each class. Optimistically, they should be learning how to use their lockers and their backpacks so they do not carry the entire weight of their materials and supplies to each and every class!

The Middle School years are such a vastly important time in the growth of children. The adults who teach, challenge, advise, supervise, and engage in joyful play with these mercurial young women and men must be cognizant of the attributes of Middle School students.

These educators must embrace the credo of *This I Believe*, a publication of the Association for Middle Level Education.

### ***I believe that every young adolescent ...***

- *Has the capacity to learn, grow, and develop into a knowledgeable, reflective, caring, ethical, and contributing citizen.*
- *Must have access to the very best programs and practices a school can offer.*
- *Must be engaged in learning that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory.*
- *Faces significant life choices and needs support in making wise and healthy decisions.*
- *Thrives academically, socially, and emotionally in a democratic learning environment where trust and respect are paramount and where family and community are actively involved.*
- *Deserves educators who are prepared to work with this age group, who are themselves lifelong learners and committed to their own ongoing professional development and growth. Therefore, I proudly dedicate myself to becoming the best middle grades educator I can be and an active advocate for all young adolescents.*

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## Grade 7 Course Descriptions

### English, Grade 7

Students in Grade 7 English at The Park School will read from a formally diverse body of literature that returns throughout the school year to three overarching thematic questions:

- 1) Why do we read? Why do stories matter, and how do they help us better understand ourselves and the world around us?
- 2) What does it mean to be an outsider or an ‘other’? Why is it important to read stories about people who are unlike ourselves?
- 3) How does reading cultivate our capacity to empathize with and understand people who are different from us?

Through our works of literature, students will engage with the issues of economic, racial, and religious “otherness” that have bound and divided the peoples of the world throughout history in order to develop an awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity in our increasingly globalized world. They will also tackle the question of fiction’s importance in our lives and learn to appreciate the fundamental role stories play in allowing us to become more fully human.

Major works of literature will be supplemented by complementary texts in various forms—including poetry, short stories, and author interviews. Students will also work on the acquisition and retention of vocabulary words and their Latin and Greek roots.

#### Essential Skills:

- Analyzing literature for both explicit and implicit meaning
- Determining themes in literature and analyzing their development in a text

- Analyzing how the various elements of literature interact
- Connecting an author’s use of figurative language and form to a text’s meaning
- Formulating and writing arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence
- Strengthening writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, or rewriting

#### Reading List

- *Before We Were Free*, Julia Alvarez
- *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, Salman Rushdie
- *Inside Out & Back Again*, Thanhha Lai
- *The Merchant of Venice*, William Shakespeare

### Life Science, Grade 7

The Grade 7 life science course emphasizes the organization of life on Earth. Students begin the year by learning about cells and how they are organized, cell processes, and the biochemistry of cells. This is followed by a study of Mendelian genetics and molecular genetics. In the second semester, students study evolution and the history of life on Earth, followed by an overview of different forms of life with emphasis on members of the Plant and Animal Kingdoms and animal behavior. Students then study bacteria and viruses and how the human body reacts to and protects itself against foreign invaders (immune system).

During the course of the year, students also learn the scientific method and its application through activities done in class, some of which are student-designed. In addition, they practice skills, such as research and presentation, which they will need for future science classes. Students in this class will also be taught laboratory safety and how to use laboratory equipment.

#### Essential Skills:

- Following laboratory safety rules and procedures, including proper use of equipment
- Apply the scientific method
- Use and apply scientific measurement (metric system)
- Present data in an organized and understandable way
- Conduct, prepare, and present research to their peers
- Think critically

### **Math, Grade 7**

Prerequisite Skills: Proficiency with concepts and skills relating to fractions.

Throughout this course, students will apply their number sense, spatial reasoning, and algebraic skills to a variety of mathematical topics revolving around ratios and proportions, including but not limited to an in-depth look at ratios, rates, proportions, and percents, an exploration of probability as an application of ratios, using area models and manipulable tiles to explore variables and like terms, an introduction to slope as a rate of growth, the application of proportions by using the Law of Proportionality and by modeling similar shapes, and a review of right triangle geometry leading to an introduction to basic right triangle trigonometry.

A graphing calculator is recommended for this course, though not required. The chosen calculator must be able to do trigonometry.

### **World Geography, Grade 7**

This course will focus on the fundamentals of physical and human geography, especially in relation to the five themes of geography (location, region, place, movement, human and environment interaction). Students will

apply these ideas to various ancient and contemporary cultures from around the world.

#### Essential Skills:

- Spatial Understanding: Students will focus on maps and will learn about spatial relationships in terms of physical geography.
- Close Reading: Students will continue to develop reading comprehension skills and will build on their abilities to collect data, facts, and ideas and use them to make intelligent observations and conclusions.
- Writing: Students will continue to develop their writing skills to express opinion, persuasion, and argument, as well as creativity.
- Speech: Students will learn how to further develop and articulate their ideas through informal discussions or class presentations.
- Students will learn to develop higher-level critical thinking skills through projects and other assignments.

### **World Languages, Grade 7 French/Spanish, Novice Level**

The objective of world language instruction at The Park School is to promote global cultural awareness and skills in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the target language. The overall goal is to develop competency toward attaining mastery in a second language.

Instruction focuses on the development of global citizens by fostering verbal communication skills and cross-cultural understandings. This is accomplished through the development of effective oral and written communication, building a curiosity regarding the world outside of one's own community,

and promoting critical thinking through investigation and project-based experiences.

The class is conducted in the language as much as possible in order to increase student exposure to the target language. Culture, history, geography, and literature are also interwoven into the curriculum so as to enhance the acquisition and development of language skills.

**Essential Skills:**

- Identifying and using a variety of introductory, thematic vocabulary
- Describing themselves and their daily routines, and the people and places around them
- Understanding basic sentence structure and speech patterns
- Understanding and interpreting written text (at an appropriate level)
- Demonstrating comprehension of written and oral communication in the target language
- Comparing and contrasting their own culture with that of the Francophone/Hispanic world

### **Hebrew, Novice/Intermediate Level**

Language instruction at the middle school level continues to build on and reinforce lower school language content while adding in an emphasis on grammar and sentence structure. The language at this level focuses on using the present, infinitive, and past tenses with emphasis on speaking development. An online program is used in conjunction with classroom instruction in order to reinforce Hebrew language acquisition and oral language production. Students begin to acquire the skills necessary for presentational speech.

### **Art, Grade 7**

The first several weeks of this exploratory, semester-long course are devoted to drawing concepts and techniques. Students are encouraged to draw from observation in considering proportion and perspective. Learning to draw has been explained as a gradual process that requires individual student participation, dedication and practice.

Moving through a unit on color, students are challenged to do five color compositions that exhibits their understanding of how colors interact in a composition. We also discuss the difference between objective and non-objective art. Compositional concerns and individual comprehension of the projects should be reflected in the student self-assessment sheets. The primary use of these forms is to allow students to reflect on projects as they are assigned.

Students are also given another color related challenge in designing a painting weaving composition. Again the results are reflective of the individual student's ideas and original thoughts on how colors interact. The self-assessment sheet requires students to describe the elements of art and principles of design that make the composition interesting. The reference sheet on the back of the form encourages students to use the vocabulary associated with visual design.

**Essential Skills:**

- Understanding and applying visual arts media and techniques
- Using knowledge of visual arts materials and resources
- Responding to and analyze works of art
- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- Understanding the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others



## **General Music, Grade 7**

General Music in grade 7 focuses on the development and evolution of Jazz music. Some of the Jazz musicians that we will explore include: Joplin, Smith, Gillespie, Coltrane, and Armstrong. Students will be exposed to and educated in music through imitation, exploration, improvisation, and visualization. The objectives of general music are categorized into five conceptual areas: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre. Students will approach objectives through a variety of experiences, which include movement, speech, singing, listening, playing, and notating. General Music is a semester-long exploratory course.

### **Essential Skills:**

- Demonstrating pulse
- Recognizing note values
- Identifying time signatures
- Exploring different musical forms
- Identifying musical symbols and vocabulary
- Exploring musical expression
- Demonstrating proper vocal technique
- Demonstrating proper mallet technique
- Experiencing Jazz music.

## **Chorus, Grades 7 and 8**

Students in Grades 7 and 8 are required to take a general music course as well as participate in an ensemble: chorus or band. Chorus is a full-year, graded course.

This performance-based course covers a variety of repertoire, along with basic music theory, history, aural training, and sight singing. Students are required to sing as a soloist and/or small group. This gives the students an opportunity to gain performance etiquette and allow assessment of the individuals learning of the music. Concert

opportunities include opportunities within school.

Chorus requires students to demonstrate basic vocal technique by displaying proper breathing, blend, tone, and posture. Students perform in two, three, or four part harmonies depending on proficiency. They sing on pitch, in small and large group settings, maintaining a steady beat in a variety of tempi. Students learn how to read standard notation in a variety of standard meters using solfege.

Throughout their studies, students will identify, define, and interpret musical symbols and terms. In addition, students will demonstrate an understanding of the function of music, roles of musicians, and connections to other disciplines. Depending on skill level, students may be invited to audition for NYSSMA and ECMEA solo contests.

## **MS Orchestra and Band**

Orchestra and Band are full-year, graded courses.

Orchestra and Band are designed to be performance-based courses. The course covers a variety of repertoire, along with basic music theory, history, aural training, and sight-reading. Students are required to play as a soloist and/or small group. This gives the students an opportunity to gain performance etiquette and allow assessment of the individuals learning of the music.

Concert performances include opportunities within and outside of school. Depending on an individual's skill level, students may be asked to participate in NYSSMA and ECMEA solo contests.

In Orchestra and Band, students will demonstrate a variety of repertoire on pitch, in small and large groups, maintaining steady beat in a variety of tempi. Students will also

demonstrate balance and blend of ensemble playing with technical and expressive accuracy, and will demonstrate basic instrument technique by displaying care of instrument, proper breathing, blend, tone, and posture. Students will identify, define, and interpret musical symbols, terms, and standard notation in a variety of standard meters. In addition, they will demonstrate an understanding of the function of music, roles of musicians, and connections to other disciplines.

### **Health, Grade 7**

Health is a survey course based on NYS standards taught to students as a component of Park's physical education program.

In Health, students learn about various topics related to themselves and their community. There are open discussions about all aspects of health.

The health curriculum in grade 7 focuses on the topics of hygiene and body image, living a healthy lifestyle (school and family), mental and emotional health (character, personal and family values), nutrition and fitness, the effects media and society have on our lives, and the decision-making process.

Students are evaluated on group work, individual assessment, in-class written work, and participation during class discussions.

#### **Essential Skills:**

- Considering interpersonal actions
- Caring for their personal health and safety
- Following both verbal and written directions
- Working individually and as a member of a team
- Thinking carefully and thoughtfully
- Acting to reduce stress
- Demonstrating independence in their thoughts and actions

- Reading and follow directions
- Presenting work to their peers
- Being organized and responsible
- Thinking critically

### **Judaic Studies, Grades 7 and 8**

Judaic studies and some Jewish history instruction at the middle school level focuses mainly on bible stories with a weekly Torah (bible) portion related to modern day life. In addition, the curriculum continues to explore Jewish holidays and traditions and their roots in Jewish history. All topics are interwoven into meaningful activities to grow both language and cultural awareness.

### **Physical Education, Grades 7 and 8**

The major objective of physical education at this level is to offer a wide variety of activities in which the students are required to participate. The students are exposed to different sports, allowing them the opportunity to understand their strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes. Students are given adequate time to develop physical skills, self-confidence, and a positive self-image. Participation as a means of learning is encouraged as opposed to relying upon winning as the evaluative tool. Success is measured by the quality of the development in each individual.

Physical education during these years works to build the foundation of Physical Literacy and participation in our upper school program. By breaking down and practicing movements necessary for everyday life as well as meaningful participation in sport & fitness, we will create a greater sense of self-confidence and allow students to demonstrate a greater "movement vocabulary." Class is designed in such a way that students will achieve feelings of success around balance, coordination, fine

motor skills, and gross motor skills.

The students are evaluated in physical education class and team sports (7/8 sports only). Students are graded according to their participation and effort.

Essential Skills:

- Developing Physical Literacy skills
- Practicing team work through team building activities and participation in team sports
- Demonstrating the ability not only to form a decision individually, but also to work together toward a common goal through strategizing in sports play
- Demonstrating good sportsmanship, fair play in team competition and interscholastic and intramural competition

## Grade 8 Course Descriptions

### English, Grade 8

Grade 8 English focuses primarily on American literature to complement the students' history studies. We begin the year reviewing *In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse*, contrasting how values differ in Native American cultures with those of white settlers and discuss how language and communication affect bias in culture. We then study the various, multicultural perspectives that have led to the formation of the American (literary) identity, including but not limited to the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Abraham Lincoln, Langston Hughes, and Walt Whitman. We will discuss ideas like the American dream through the lenses of these texts, and we will interrogate how accessible that dream was and is for the diverse range of people living in the United States.

#### Essential Skills:

- Analyzing literature for both explicit and implicit meaning
- Determining themes in literature and analyzing their development in a text
- Analyzing how the various elements of literature interact
- Connecting an author's use of figurative language and form to a text's meaning
- Formulating and writing arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence, with particular focus on specific aspects of essay writing: introductions, thesis statements, supporting point paragraphs, conclusions, and documenting sources among others
- Strengthening writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, or rewriting
- Studying Greek and Latin roots to understand vocabulary

#### Reading List

- "The Song of Hiawatha," Henry Wordsworth Longfellow
- "Learning to Read," Francis Ellen Watkins Harper
- "Dream Within a Dream," Edgar Allan Poe
- "Emancipation Proclamation," Abraham Lincoln
- "Long, too Long America," Walt Whitman
- "I, Too," Langston Hughes

### Math, Grade 8

#### Integrated I

Prerequisite Skills: Proficiency with concepts and skills relating to fractions and rates, ratios, and proportions.

Students taking this course will continue previous work in translating and evaluating expressions, translating and solving equations and inequalities, exploring the meanings of variables and growth rates of equations and inequalities, and working with exponents.

Students will work to build and grow a variety of mathematical skills including but not limited to polynomial operations and factoring, translating and solving equations and inequalities with absolute values and radicals, simplifying and performing operations on exponents and radicals, solving systems of equations and inequalities, and examining both explicit and recursive equations. In addition, students are formally introduced to the concept of a function, and the concepts of range and domain.

Introductory work with functions focuses on linear functions, studied in a variety of forms (graphs, equations, tables of values), but will also explore geometric functions as well. The key ideas of slope as a meaningful rate of change and y-intercepts as initial values will be

discussed in detail as students learn to write linear equations modeling real-world data.

A graphing calculator is recommended for this course, though not required.

### **Physical Science, Grade 8**

Physical science is the study of the physical world, what it is made up of, and how it behaves. This course involves a wide range of topics exploring the fields of chemistry, physics, and space science and will prepare students for their high school science courses in these subjects. The content of this course will follow the recommendations of the New York State Science Learning Standards (NYSSLS), which are based off of the national Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

The following topics are included: forces & motion; energy storage & transfer; momentum; electric, magnetic, & gravitational fields; electrical circuits; planetary motion; our solar system; waves; mass, volume, & density; phases of matter; mixtures, elements, & compounds; the atom; the Periodic Table of Elements; and chemical reactions.

Essential Skills:

- Applying scientific reasoning to the creation of a hypothesis
- Using observation to make reasoned predictions
- Analyzing data to measure validity of predictions

### **American History, Grade 8**

This course will explore the trajectory of American history through multiple cultural lenses and to examine our unique places within America's historical narrative. The fall semester will focus on the history of the United States from the Pre-Columbian era through the American Revolution and the

18th century. Students acquire a broad foundational perspective and understanding of American history and its modern ramifications as the year progresses, as well as ethics/civics, culture, economics, social, and political developments.

The course covers the following critical units: Three Worlds Meet and the American Colonies Emerge; Independence for the Colonies; Launching the New Nation; the Union in Peril; the Civil War and Reconstruction; Immigrants, Urbanization and Industry; WWI and the Roaring 20's; the Great Depression; WWII and the New Deal; and The Civil Rights Era.

Essential Skills:

- Writing for exposition, persuasion, and creativity in the historical genre
- Analyzing and evaluating primary sources
- Listening actively and taking notes
- Working collaboratively in pursuit of a common objective
- Discussing issues in seminar format
- Reading and understanding a wide variety of historical material, including both primary and secondary sources
- Collecting data, facts, and ideas and using them to make intelligent observations and conclusions
- Speaking and writing in a formal, academic manner

### **World Languages, Grade 8 Novice Level French/Spanish**

The objective of world language instruction at The Park School is to promote global cultural awareness and skills in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the target language. The overall goal is to develop competency toward attaining mastery in a second language.

Instruction focuses on the development of global citizens by fostering verbal communication skills and cross-cultural understandings. This is accomplished through the development of effective oral and written communication, building a curiosity regarding the world outside of one's own community, and promoting critical thinking through investigation and project-based experiences.

The class is conducted in the language as much as possible in order to increase student exposure to the target language. Culture, history, geography, and literature are also interwoven into the curriculum so as to enhance the acquisition and development of language skills.

**Essential Skills:**

- Identifying and using a variety of introductory, thematic vocabulary
- Describing themselves and their daily routines, and the people and places around them
- Understanding basic sentence structure and speech patterns
- Understanding and interpreting written text (at an appropriate level)
- Demonstrating comprehension of written and oral communication in the target language
- Comparing and contrasting their own culture with that of the Francophone/Hispanic world

**Hebrew, Novice/Intermediate Level**

Language instruction at the middle school level continues to build on and reinforce lower school language content while adding in an emphasis on grammar and sentence structure. The language at this level focuses on using the present, infinitive, and past tenses with emphasis on speaking development. An online program is used in conjunction with classroom instruction in

order to reinforce Hebrew language acquisition and oral language production. Students begin to acquire the skills necessary for presentational speech.

**Art, Grade 8**

Grade 8 Art is an exploratory semester-long class that focuses on the understanding of artwork as a means of communicating ideas. The course includes both 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional ideas and projects. The 2-dimensional ideas deal with drawing concepts, and exploration of different drawing mediums. The 3-dimensional projects explore many mediums, and are inspired by a variety of artists. Overall, students are asked to try new techniques, brush up on skills they may already know, and are encouraged to put their own spin to each project. Some of the projects include drawing from observation and outdoors, illustration, a research project, working with clay, outdoor sculpture, card creations, and Calder inspired sculpture.

**Essential Skills:**

- Understanding and applying visual arts media and techniques
- Using knowledge of visual arts materials and resources
- Responding to and analyzing works of art
- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- Understanding the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others

**General Music, Grade 8**

General Music in grade 8 focuses on the development and evolution of Contemporary music. Some of the Contemporary musicians that students will study include: Beatles,

Rolling Stones, Hendrix, and Joplin. Students will be exposed to and educated in music through imitation, exploration, improvisation, and visualization. The objectives of general music are categorized into five conceptual areas: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre. Students will approach objectives through a variety of experiences, which include movement, speech, singing, listening, playing, and notating. General Music is a semester-long exploratory course.

**Essential Skills:**

- Demonstrating pulse
- Recognizing note values
- Identifying time signatures
- Exploring different musical forms
- Identifying musical symbols and vocabulary
- Exploring musical expression
- Demonstrating proper vocal technique
- Demonstrating proper mallet technique
- Experiencing Contemporary music

**Chorus, Grades 7 and 8**

Students in Grades 7 and 8 are required to take a general music course as well as participate in an ensemble: chorus or band. Chorus is a full-year, graded course.

This performance-based course covers a variety of repertoire, along with basic music theory, history, aural training, and sight singing. Students are required to sing as a soloist and/or small group. This gives the students an opportunity to gain performance etiquette and allow assessment of the individuals learning of the music. Concert opportunities include opportunities within school.

Chorus requires students to demonstrate basic vocal technique by displaying proper

breathing, blend, tone, and posture. Students perform in two, three, or four part harmonies depending on proficiency. They sing on pitch, in small and large group settings, maintaining a steady beat in a variety of tempi. Students learn how to read standard notation in a variety of standard meters using solfege.

Throughout their studies, students will identify, define, and interpret musical symbols and terms. In addition, students will demonstrate an understanding of the function of music, roles of musicians, and connections to other disciplines. Depending on skill level, students may be invited to audition for NYSSMA and ECMEA solo contests.

**Band, Grades 7 and 8**

Students in Grades 7 and 8 are required to take a general music course as well as participate in an ensemble: chorus or band. Band is a full-year, graded course.

Band is designed to be a performance-based course that covers a variety of repertoire, along with basic music theory, history, aural training, and sight-reading. Students are required to play as soloists and/or in small group. This gives students an opportunity to gain performance etiquette and allow assessment of the individuals learning of the music. All students enrolled in band receive one individual or small group lesson once a rotation. Lessons are individualized to address the needs of each student. Concert performances include opportunities within and outside of school. Depending on an individual's skill level, students may be asked to participate in NYSSMA and ECMEA solo festivals.

Students will demonstrate a variety of repertoire on pitch, in small and large groups, maintaining steady beat in a variety of tempi. Students will also demonstrate balance and blend of ensemble playing with technical and

expressive accuracy, and will demonstrate basic instrument technique by displaying care of instrument, proper breathing, blend, tone, and posture. Students will identify, define, and interpret musical symbols, terms, and standard notation in a variety of standard meters. In addition, they will demonstrate an understanding of the function of music, roles of musicians, and connections to other disciplines.

### **Health, Grade 8**

Health is a survey course based on NYS standards taught to students as a component of Park's physical education program.

This course is designed to prepare students to meet the challenges of healthy living by providing knowledge to make responsible and informed decisions in order to adapt and maintain healthy behaviors. In Health, students learn about various topics related to themselves and their community. There are open discussions about all aspects of health.

The students will learn how to obtain, interpret, and understand basic health information and the services that are available to them. As a result, students will understand the importance of maintaining their health and well-being (which includes- physical, mental, emotional, and social).

Overall, health education gives students the knowledge and skills needed to examine alternatives and make responsible health-related decisions.

The health curriculum in grade 8 focuses on the topics of functions of the human body, drug abuse, dangers of smoking, effects of alcohol on the body systems, alcohol and the brain, prescription for trouble, addiction, and mental/emotional health.

Essential Skills:

- Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention.
- Evaluate the validity of health information and health promoting products and services.
- Demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community wellness.
- Demonstrate the ability to practice health- enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks.
- Analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors that affect health decisions and behaviors

### **Judaic Studies, Grades 7 and 8**

Judaic studies and some Jewish history instruction at the middle school level focuses mainly on bible stories with a weekly Torah (bible) portion related to modern day life. In addition, the curriculum continues to explore Jewish holidays and traditions and their roots in Jewish history. All topics are interwoven into meaningful activities to grow both language and cultural awareness.

### **Physical Education, Grades 7 and 8**

The major objective of physical education at this level is to offer a wide variety of activities in which the students are required to participate. The students are exposed to different sports, allowing them the opportunity to understand their strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes. Students are given adequate time to develop physical skills, self-confidence, and a positive self-image. Participation as a means of learning is encouraged as opposed to relying upon winning as the evaluative tool. Success is measured by the quality of the development in each individual.



Physical education during these years works to build the foundation for our upper school program. A positive image of the self in physical activity and the competition is imperative in maintaining interest and building cohesive, successful teams in the future years.

The students are evaluated in physical education class and team sports (7/8 sports only). Students are graded according to their participation and effort.

Essential Skills:

- Practicing team work through team building activities and participation in team sports
- Demonstrating the ability not only to form a decision individually, but also to work together toward a common goal through strategizing in sports play
- Demonstrating good sportsmanship, fair play in team competition and interscholastic and intramural competition

## **Co-Curricular Programming Grades 7 and 8**

### **Advisory**

The Park School of Buffalo's Middle School Advisory Program provides supportive academic and personal guidance through both individual and small group structures that address the distinctive ethical, social, and academic needs of our students. The program nurtures self-advocacy, character development, diversity and cultural awareness, service learning, interpersonal relations, and strategies necessary for academic and life-long success.

### **Clubs**

In an effort to provide students with an opportunity to explore a variety of interests, the Middle School offers a wide array of club offerings. The slate of clubs changes from year to year depending on student interest and teacher availability. Most clubs meet twice in the rotation, and some may meet after school or off-campus as needed. Past Clubs offerings have included: garden club, book club, yoga club, art club, robotics club, woodshop club, and chess club.

### **Community Service**

As a means to foster mutual respect and empathy for others, students are offered several opportunities to engage in community service. Each grade level completes a class community service project each year. Whether it be spending time with ill children in a local hospital, leading recycling efforts, collecting new or gently used clothing items for the needy, or fundraising for Roswell Park Cancer Institute, students are engaged in service activities throughout the year. In annual tradition, the Middle School cooks

dozens of Thanksgiving meals, complete with the fixings, for Compass House, a local organization that benefits homeless teens.

### **Immersion**

Immersion aims to completely immerse students in a world outside of their own, involving them in opportunities to learn and explore through firsthand experience. In preparation for the weeklong experience, students attend an Immersion Seminar class throughout the year team-taught by faculty members who also serve as Immersion leaders. Offerings provide students with the opportunity to expand their knowledge in an area of study in a particular discipline (science, math, technology, literature, the arts, history, or world language), and may be large or small in scale, ranging from on-campus experiences and local day trips to stateside overnight stays and seven-to-ten-day immersive experiences abroad. Immersion is a biannual co-curricular program.

### **Middle School Student Government**

Under the advisement of the division head, the Middle School Student Government (MSSG) program offers student the opportunity to build upon and strengthen their leadership skills. MSSG meets once in the rotation. Government officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) are elected by the student body for a year's term, and Class Representatives are elected by their fellow classmates each semester, lead class meetings and school gatherings, as well as plan and execute class projects and various events, including Spirit Week celebrations, Movie and Game Night, and Cocoa House. MSSG members also head the middle school's paper recycling efforts.

### **Performing Arts—Chorus, Band, Orchestra, Theater**

The Park School believes that the Arts should be a part of everyone's life. In addition to regular instruction in music, studio art, and drama, middle school students also have the opportunity to participate in the School's Chorus, Band, and Orchestra programs. Students enrolled in Chorus, Band, and Orchestra are exposed to music of all cultures and genres, with the aim of fostering a lifelong appreciation of music. Through preparing for solo, small-group, or all-group performances, students learn cooperation and team building skills, and gain insight on and appreciation of their own and peers' talents, contributions, and cultures.

Apart from their curricular experiences with dramatic production, middle school students may also participate in the school's theater program. The Park Players produce a musical and a dramatic performance each year, utilizing student talent from all three divisions of the School. Students take an active role in all aspects of these productions, from acting to building sets, to creating costumes, and designing lighting.

### **Project KNOW**

Taught by experienced specialists from the Erie 2 Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Board of Cooperative Educational Services, middle school students participate in a one-week human sexuality education program. Presented primarily in co-educational lessons, the program helps participants gain accurate knowledge about puberty and sexuality, increases family communication on these topics, and develops healthy attitudes about puberty and sexuality in participants, and ultimately increase responsible behavior and effective decision-making in our students. The program commences with a Parent

Information Night and culminates in a Parent-Child Night.

### **Student Seminar, Grades 7 and 8**

Grades 7 and 8 Student Seminar aims to ease the transition from the more self-contained classroom design of grades 5 and 6, to that of a departmentalized structure with many teachers.

The focus of Grade 7 Seminar is on the development of study skills, and to help student adjust to increased workloads, time management, and other skills necessary to be successful in their study studies throughout their academic career, including developing and strengthening organization skills, test-taking skills, note-taking skills, listening skills, and goal setting skills. In addition, lessons and group discussions center on cyber safety, digital footprints, and proper *netiquette*. Seminar is a complement to the advisement students receive in our Advisory program.

Grade 8 Seminar focuses on the development of the students' writing and research skills. Skills such as documentation, paraphrasing, and argument are developed and strengthened. In addition, lessons and class discussions center on proper citation of digital information and that found in print. This course reinforces the skills presented throughout the year in the Grade 8 English course.

### **Technology Integration**

The Park School recognizes that we are living in a rapidly changing, advanced technological society, and we are committed to preparing our students with the technology skills necessary to be successful, lifelong learners. Today's technologies also serve to meet the needs and abilities of individual learners by providing them with a variety of tools for active involvement in their own education. At

Park School, students learn how to successfully and responsibly use technology for research, collaboration, and communication. Creativity and problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking skills are fostered as students use technology to access, analyze, integrate, evaluate, and create information in a variety of forms, as well as to communicate information in oral, written, or multimedia format.

In partnership with Park's director of technology, teachers integrate technology across the curriculum through a variety of tools and practices including: project-based activities, game-based learning and assessments, handheld or mobile devices, interactive whiteboards, web-based activities and exploration, and collaborative and interactive online tools.