

PARK



Middle School Curriculum Guide Grades 5-8

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.

Grade 5

The transition from Lower School to Middle School is a big one and in order to help students during this transition, our Grade 5 model uses a team-teaching approach. Our humanities and math/science teachers work together to create a supportive team for the students, while also giving them a developmentally appropriate amount of autonomy. The ultimate goal of the grade 5 program is to foster the emotional and academic growth of each child and to help students transition smoothly from lower school to middle school.

One of the most obvious changes from Lower School to Middle School is that students move about the campus independently, moving from class to class, and building to building (without the company of their teacher) on time and prepared with all of their necessary class materials.

Students in Grades 5 are taught how to organize their materials and maintain their supplies in this more independent environment, and learn to utilize a combination lock to properly and neatly store their personal belongings in lockers. Students are also taught how to use various supports - a daily planner, online course management systems, meeting with teachers, self-reflection, etc. - to monitor and track their academic progress and to engage with their learning materials. In addition, students are each given a school Gmail account with which to communicate with teachers regarding their progress.

Responsive Classroom

The grade 5 classroom program utilizes the Responsive Classroom approach. This is a research-based approach to middle level education, which integrates practical strategies for helping students build academic learning along with social-emotional learning throughout the day. Responsive Classroom focuses on ten classroom practices aimed at creating a classroom environment where students feel safe, challenged, and have a joyful place to learn. These classroom practices include: morning meeting, rule creation, interactive modeling, positive teacher language, logical consequences, guided discovery, academic choice, classroom organization, collaborative problem solving, and working with families. Responsive Classroom increases academic achievement, decreases problem behaviors, improves social skills, and leads to more high-quality instruction. Emphasis is placed on student happiness, not only in making the process of their education enjoyable, but also in promoting positive, lifelong learners.

Grade 5 Course Descriptions

English/Language Arts, Grade 5

Over the course of Grade 5 English Language Arts, learners will participate in student-led educational opportunities that inspire critical thinking, a love for exploring new topics and ideas, and the rigorous development of grade-level reading, writing, and speaking skills. Learners will achieve this experience through the exploration of different forms of writing, several novel studies, exposure to poetry and spoken word, and a dedicated course in vocabulary and reading practice. The primary forms of writing instruction practiced in Grade 5 English Language Arts are narrative writing, persuasive writing, and informational writing. In addition to these units, learners will read full length novels including *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan and *Out of my Mind* by Sharon M Draper. Not only will learners hone their comprehension skills through close reading and discussion, they will work toward a mastery of grade level analysis by locating text-based evidence, comparing and contrasting, summarizing, and identifying themes. Learners will be challenged to present their learning in various and unique ways. These assessments include but are not limited to: formal debate, analytical essay, persuasive letter, visual demonstration, and group presentation.

One of the priorities of this course is to deepen learners' natural instinct to make connections. The more learners feel connected to a topic, the more curious they are to learn, and the more likely they are to retain new information. This focus on making connections also lends itself to the development of core life skills, including how to collaborate, how to acknowledge and respectfully challenge differing perspectives, and how to speak with accuracy and confidence on a range of topics.

Essential Skills:

- Thinking critically and creatively
- Participating actively in their own learning and taking responsibility for their growth
- Demonstrating kindness and respect in group and whole class participation and exhibiting evidence of active listening through class work
- Developing vocabulary skills and applying them to speaking and writing
- Reading texts of various genres and lengths with fluency and comprehension

- Developing reading comprehension skills by analyzing and interpreting a variety of texts
- Supporting answers to comprehension questions with text-based evidence
- Supporting deeper analysis (comparing and contrasting, summarizing, identifying theme) with text-based evidence
- Enhancing writing ability, particularly sentence and paragraph construction, as well as mechanics
- Identifying and employing literary elements
- Identifying and employing persuasive writing strategies
- Identifying and employing poetic devices
- Using understanding of poetic devices to analyze poetry for theme, tone, and main idea (demonstrated through writing and speaking)

Mathematics, Grade 5

Students taking this course will expand their number sense and estimation skills by applying number strategies, properties, and operations that they will use throughout middle school. Students work flexibly with numbers, focusing on multiple ways of demonstrating relationships. Fractional understanding, represented with words, numbers and visuals, are a cornerstone of this course.

Essential Skills:

- Building a lasting understanding of quantity and number to complete more complex problems that they will encounter in more advanced math courses
- Communicating mathematically by using appropriate vocabulary
- Proficiency with addition, subtraction and multiplication using positive rational numbers
- Understanding the base ten number system and fractional quantities
- Utilizing mental math processes for estimation and to strengthen computation skills

Science, Grade 5

The fifth grade science course is organized into units that are each designed around an essential question. Each unit is structured around hands-on investigations that allow students to explore.

An exploration of Indigenous Botany begins the course and provides students with an understanding of plants, their internal functions and relationship to the wider world. This

unit also explores perspectives in ways of knowing. Students consider the knowledge of indigenous peoples of the western hemisphere, and how their ways of knowing and understanding the world are significant.

The second unit explored human body systems, and asks “Who’s in control? Me or my body?” Students explore many of the human body systems - focusing on how these systems interact and are dependent on one another. During adolescence, this understanding of how the body works is a powerful tool.

The next unit is Weather Matters, which explores how small changes lead to big changes. Students investigate the unique chemistry of water to then explore larger patterns in weather and climate, which are driven by energy from the Sun to create changes in density, temperature and pressure. The final unit continues the exploration of energy into electricity. Students build circuits in a variety of engineering challenges, focusing on making models and representations to test their ideas.

Essential Skills:

- Investigating phenomena through an intentional process of inquiry
- Choosing and using various science tools to collect and analyze data, and to carry out investigations
- Analyzing experimental results
- Making use of the outdoors to make discoveries and question new ideas
- Creating models to explore concepts
- Describing structures of plants and how those structures are different between species
- Describing the connections between human body systems, focusing on the circulatory, respiratory, digestive and renal systems
- Explaining how atoms and molecules interact to create visible phenomena
- Demonstrating the relationship between energy and movement at the molecular level
- Building circuits based on theoretical understanding

Social Studies, Grades 5

Over the course of Grade 5 Social Studies, learners will focus on developing a secure understanding of basic geography on a global scale. They will review latitude and longitude skills in tandem with a close look at Earth’s biomes. The map skills and background knowledge students develop over the course of this unit will support them in

delving deeper into the Western Hemisphere, its geography, its history, and the indigenous civilizations of the Americas. Learners will develop foundational knowledge of the geography and culture of the Western Hemisphere with the intention of exploring the regions of the Western Hemisphere in detail. Learners will compare the language, climate, landforms, and imports and exports of each unique country before diving deeper into the geography of Mesoamerica, and identifying the defining features of several Ancient Western Civilizations. Learners will also broach understandings in the historical significance of European exploration. Learners will focus heavily on geography, the timeline of European exploration, and how this period of time affected indigenous cultures.

Essential Skills:

- Utilizing geographical concepts and vocabulary
- Comparing and contrasting the people, history, geography, government, and economics of various world cultures
- Understanding cause and effect
- Demonstrating an understanding of maps and to be able to use maps for various purposes
- Utilizing primary and secondary sources to enhance understanding
- Developing competency in conducting activities necessary for research, critical thinking, and problem solving
- Preparing for an participating in formal debate around a specific topic

World Languages

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.

The World Languages Department focuses its instruction 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.

Another goal of the world language department is to encourage students to work cooperatively with others to improve interpersonal skills in an effort to imitate real-life work settings.

Student success is measured by participation in class activities and the successful completion of projects, tests, and other work both in and outside of the classroom. The department is mindful of students requiring greater time to progress through language study. The autonomy to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to evaluate student progress is given to the department. Individual student progress is assessed through class participation, daily assignments, and more formal assessments that are used to evaluate skill development, such as projects, speaking and listening activities, and tests and quizzes.

The purpose of all work is to reinforce the materials presented in class. Projects are often used to foster creative and open-ended thought and promote cooperative work skills and hands on learning experiences. Students are encouraged to reflect upon and revise their own work to deepen their understanding and maximize their learning.

The language department engages students in the study of cognitive and language acquisition skills through a variety of age-appropriate activities in class and through daily work outside of class. The department makes use of technology in many ways. The School's intranet system is used to maintain contact with students and parents. Use of online material provides authentic resources in the target language and culture. Virtual tours, audio of native speakers, as well as written material from news sources and cultural websites enrich the classroom experience. Students are encouraged to use the computers for creating individual and group projects and games, and for researching online resources and cultural aspects of regions of the target language.

All course titles and corresponding curriculum are aligned with proficiency guidelines as established by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Students will complete

Novice Level French/Spanish, Grade 5

In Middle School, Novice Level French/Spanish is a four year language program. The class is conducted in the target language as much as possible in order to increase student exposure to the target language.

Novice Level French/Spanish emphasizes the fundamentals of oral and written communication. Vocabulary development and grammar usage are strengthened through daily reading and writing assignments, as well as through listening activities. At the completion of Novice Level French/Spanish, students will be able to express themselves in both written and oral forms with comparative ease in structured situations.

Novice Level French/Spanish emphasizes the fundamentals of oral and written communication. Vocabulary development and grammar usage are strengthened through daily reading and writing assignments, as well as through listening activities. At the completion of Novice Level French/Spanish students will be able to express themselves in both written and oral forms with comparative ease in structured situations.

For example, a Novice level student in grade 5 will be able to identify the parts of the body. In grade 6, the student will be able to describe basic physical ailments. 7th grade will focus on healthy habits and treatments. 8th grade will compare and contrast healthcare systems and lifestyle choices that affect health.

Culture, history, geography, and literature are also interwoven into the curriculum so as to enhance the acquisition and development of language skills. Reading skills are developed using context, cognates, and other decoding skills. Writing in journals helps to develop greater understanding of basic grammatical concepts and syntax. Listening skills are assessed through deciphering oral language and appropriate responses to questions, both orally and in written form. Speaking tasks will move toward proficient communication in the areas of socializing, providing and obtaining information, persuasion, and expressing personal feelings.

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 French/Spanish

- Comparing and contrasting their own culture with that of the Francophone/Hispanic
- world

Physical Education, Grade 5

Students attend co-ed, multi-age classes (Grades 5 and 6). 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 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. Students are graded according to their participation and effort. A positive image of the self in physical activity and in competition is imperative in maintaining interest and building cohesive, successful teams through lifelong learning activities. The school's core values: respect, responsibility, honesty, and kindness are also infused into our units to produce well rounded students with great character.

Sports that foster a team atmosphere and are used in our curriculum are: Soccer, Flag Football, Ultimate Frisbee, Speedball, Handball, Basketball, Lacrosse, Kickball, Floor Hockey, Softball, and Tennis. Games and activities that consist of team-building values are: Capture the Flag, Pinball Wizard, Battleship, Mission Impossible, Project Adventure, and the ropes course.

Essential Skills:

- Understanding, applying and demonstrating movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills
- Achieving and maintaining a health enhancing level of physical fitness
- Demonstrating responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings
- Demonstrating an understanding and respect for differences among people in physical activity settings
- Understanding that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction
- Applying problem-solving strategies in movement challenges
- Recognizing and communicating feedback to other students for implementation in successful game strategies

- Promoting individual success and self confidence by selecting, practicing, and redefining a challenge skill which needs improvement
- Identifying the relationship between specific muscle groups and body movement during performance of skills
- Demonstrating their knowledge of the four health-related fitness components (cardio-respiratory endurance, flexibility, muscular strength and endurance) and identify a variety of activities to develop each component

Art, Grade 5

Grade 5 Art class introduces the elements and principles of art through a variety of individual and group projects. The projects both involve 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional materials. Many Artists and styles are presented and discussed. Pencils, pastels, charcoal, paint, watercolors, clay, and plaster are only some of the materials used. Students are asked to try new techniques and brush up on skills they may already know.

Some of the projects include illustration, working with clay, tin art, self portraits, still-life drawings, stained glass and nolan prints.

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

Drama, Grade 5

This semester-long exploratory drama course is designed to give an introductory experience in the theater arts..

Students will use various creative drama techniques to build confidence and trust, stimulate imagination, movement, and role-play. Students will learn and use theater vocabulary in class discussions and the activities will specifically address the promotion and reinforcement of students' literacy skills, including reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students will exhibit and reinforce their skills through individual and group presentations and performances.

Some projects and activities include composition projects for tubanos and boomwhackers, learning imagination, movement, and role-play. Students will learn and use theater vocabulary in class discussions and the activities will specifically address the promotion and reinforcement of students' literacy skills, including reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students will exhibit and reinforce their skills through individual and group presentations and performances.

Units of Study include: Ensemble Building, Characterization, Theatre History, Script Writing, Voice & Movement, Technical Theatre and Production.

Essential Skills:

- Develop an understanding of the essentials of non-musical performing arts including voice, gesture, movement, organization and presentation as elements of the study of theater arts and public speaking
- Develop an understanding of the essentials of the history and development of this art as well as of the applications of it in the modern world
- Understand how the study of drama involves research, reading, and writing skills both factual and creative

General Music, Grade 5

Students in grade 5 are required to enroll in chorus or band in addition to general music. Students are able to participate in both band and chorus if they so choose. Grade 5 Music is an exploratory semester long course.

Grade 5 Music reinforces previously learned music reading skills and allows students to demonstrate this knowledge through performance on classroom instruments. Students study world music from a variety of countries and learn to describe and analyze music with proper music terminology. Students also explore the connections between science and music and study musicals and the role music plays in this genre.

Some projects and activities include composition projects for tubanos and boomwhackers, learning folk songs from various cultures, hands-on experiments to discover connections between science and music, completing listening journals for various musical works and analyzing a filmed musical.

Essential Skills:

- Recognizing note values, time signatures and treble clef note reading
- Demonstrating proper playing technique

Chorus, Grade 5

In Grade 5, students participate in a choral ensemble composed of students in 4th-6th grades. This full-year, performance-based course covers a variety of repertoire, along with basic music theory, history, aural training, and sight singing. Students perform in two and three part harmonies and participate in the school's Autumn Assembly Concert in November, the Sylvia Ginsberg Concert in May, and a community service concert in January at Canterbury Woods. Depending on skill level, students may be invited to audition for the ECMEA Elementary All-County Chorus.

Essential Skills:

- Demonstrate proper breathing and vocal production techniques
- Demonstrate proper posture during rehearsals and performances
- Develop basic vocal sight reading skills
- Maintain pitch and tempo in songs from a variety of genres on classroom instruments

- Appropriate use of musical terminology in written descriptions of music
- Identifying types of songs used in a musical

Band, Grade 5

In Grades 5, students are required to participate in an ensemble (Band or Chorus). Band is a full-year, graded course.

Band is designed to be a performance-based course. This course covers a variety of repertoire, along with basic music theory, history, aural training, and sight-reading. 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/or ECMEA solo and/or ensemble festivals.

In 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.

Grade 6

In Grade 6 our team-teaching and responsive classroom approaches continue in order to best support our students academic and emotional growth. We continue to reinforce the skills that were introduced throughout Grade 5 to ensure that students are prepared for even more autonomy when they transition into 7th grade. By the end of 6th grade, they are expected to check their email regularly for school communication, navigate the online management

Grade 6 Course Descriptions

English/Language Arts, Grade 6

Over the course of Grade 6 English Language Arts at The Park School, learners continue to participate in learning that inspires critical thinking, develops a love for exploring new topics and ideas, and engages them in rigorous development of grade-level reading and writing skills. Learners will achieve this experience through the exploration of different forms of writing, several novel studies, exposure to poetry and spoken word, and a dedicated course in vocabulary and reading practice. The primary forms of writing instruction practiced in Grade 6 English Language Arts are narrative writing, persuasive writing, and informational writing. In addition to these units, learners will read full length novels including *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan and *Wink* by Rob Harrell. Not only will learners hone their comprehension skills through close reading and discussion, they will work toward a mastery of grade level analysis by locating text-based evidence, comparing and contrasting, summarizing, and identifying the themes, main idea, and tone of various texts. At this stage, learners will also begin to practice employing these devices in their own writing, applying peer and instructor feedback, and experiencing writing as a process.

Learners in Grade 6 English Language Arts also study the structure and expectations of Socratic Seminar discussions. In these discussions, they work on their ability to actively listen, further a discussion, present differing perspectives, use evidence from their text, and develop thought provoking open-ended questions.

Essential Skills:

- Thinking critically and creatively
- Participating actively in their own learning and taking responsibility for their growth

system for assignments, and take advantage of after school support hours when they need additional assistance.

- Demonstrating kindness and respect in group and whole class participation and exhibiting evidence of active listening through class work
- Providing clear writing in which style development, and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience
- Writing arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence
- Using precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events
- Developing and strengthening writing by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting
- Providing a summary of a text distinct from personal opinions or judgments
- Utilizing various strategies to comprehend text
- Utilizing and applying skills related to grammar and word study in writing pieces
- Developing an awareness and appreciation for various reading and writing genres
- Identifying and employing poetic devices
- Using understanding of poetic devices to analyze poetry for theme, tone, and main idea (demonstrated through writing and speaking)

Mathematics, Grade 6

The 6th grade math curriculum is designed to thoughtfully incorporate and apply skills introduced in 5th grade. Students will build on their understanding of number relationships and expand that understanding through hands-on explorations and investigations of the world around them. They will then be guided to model those relationships mathematically and justify those models in words, numbers and visual representations. Student inquiry and cooperative learning are the driving structure for this course. Middle School students taking this course will be exposed to a variety of mathematical topics including but not limited to: operations with positive rational numbers;

introduction to integers; properties of plane figures such as triangles, quadrilaterals, other polygons, and circles; perimeter, area, circumference and volume of both regular and irregular figures; ratios and proportional reasoning; geometric relationships including scaling and translation; and creating, writing and solving algebraic expressions and equations.

Essential Skills:

- Using mathematical relationships to describe real-world situations verbally, numerically, algebraically, and/or graphically
- Proficiency with rational number operations to any place value, and with fractions greater than one
- Proficiency with the coordinate plane
- Applying observational techniques and logical reasoning skills to represent situations verbally, numerically, algebraically, and/or graphically
- Working in collaboration with others to discuss problems, determine necessary information, formulate and test strategies, and find solutions
- Communicating mathematically by using appropriate vocabulary when describing objects, relationships, mathematical solutions, and rationale

Science, Grade 6

The sixth grade science course is organized into units that are each designed around an essential question. Each unit is structured around hands-on investigations that allow students to explore.

An exploration of Indigenous Botany begins the course and provides students with an understanding of plants, their internal functions and relationship to the wider world. This unit also explores perspectives in ways of knowing. Students consider the knowledge of indigenous peoples of the western hemisphere, and how their ways of knowing and understanding the world are significant. Sixth grade students are expected to connect their learning about botany with their previous knowledge of plant cells.

The second unit explored human body systems, and asks “Who’s in control? Me or my body?” Students explore many of the human body systems - focusing on how these systems interact and are dependent on one another. During

adolescence, this understanding of how the body works is a powerful tool. Sixth grade students are expected to connect their learning about human anatomy with their previous knowledge of animal cells.

The next unit is Weather Matters, which explores how small changes lead to big changes. Students investigate the unique chemistry of water to then explore larger patterns in weather and climate, which are driven by energy from the Sun to create changes in density, temperature and pressure. Sixth grade students are expected to connect their learning with their previous knowledge of convection currents in the Earth’s mantle.

The final unit continues the exploration of energy into electricity. Students build circuits in a variety of engineering challenges, focusing on making models and representations to test their ideas.

Essential Skills:

- Investigating phenomena through an intentional process of inquiry
- Choosing and using various science tools to collect and analyze data, and to carry out investigations
- Analyzing experimental results
- Making use of the outdoors to make discoveries and question new ideas
- Creating models to explore concepts
- Describing structures of plants and how those structures are different between species, and explaining how these systems support cellular processes
- Describing the connections between human body systems, focusing on the circulatory, respiratory, digestive and renal systems, and explaining how these systems support cellular processes
- Explaining how atoms and molecules interact to create visible phenomena
- Demonstrating the relationship between energy and movement at the molecular level, and making connections with convection currents in other systems
- Building circuits based on theoretical understanding

Social Studies, Grades 6

Over the course of Grade 6 Social Studies at The Park School, learners will focus on developing a secure understanding of basic geography on a global scale. They will review latitude and longitude skills in tandem with a close look at Earth's biomes. The map skills and background knowledge students develop will support them in delving deeper into the Western Hemisphere, its geography, its history, and the indigenous civilizations of the Americas. Learners will develop foundational knowledge of the geography and culture of the Western Hemisphere with the intention of exploring the regions of the Western Hemisphere in detail. Learners will compare the language, climate, landforms, and imports and exports of each unique country before diving deeper into the geography of Mesoamerica, and identifying the defining features of several Ancient Western Civilizations. Learners will also broach understandings in the historical significance of European exploration. Learners will focus heavily on geography, the timeline of European exploration, and how this period of time affected indigenous cultures.

Essential Skills:

- Comparing and contrasting cultures, governments, and geography
- Demonstrating an understanding of maps and being able to use maps for various purposes
- Understanding cause and effect
- Utilizing primary and secondary sources to enhance understanding
- Demonstrating the ability to communicate effectively
- Demonstrating competence in conducting activities necessary for research, critical thinking, and problem solving
- Preparing for an participating in formal debate around a specific topic

World Languages

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.

The World Languages Department focuses its instruction 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. Another goal of the world language department is to encourage students to work cooperatively with others to improve interpersonal skills in an effort to imitate real-life work settings.

Student success is measured by participation in class activities and the successful completion of projects, tests, and other work both in and outside of the classroom. The department is mindful of students requiring greater time to progress through language study. The autonomy to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to evaluate student progress is given to the department.

Individual student progress is assessed through class participation, daily assignments, and more formal assessments that are used to evaluate skills development, such as projects, speaking and listening activities, and tests and quizzes.

The purpose of all work is to reinforce the materials presented in class. Projects are often used to foster creative and open-ended thought and promote cooperative work skills and hands on learning experiences. Students are encouraged to reflect upon and revise their own work to deepen their understanding and maximize their learning. The language department engages students in the study of cognitive and language acquisition skills through a variety of age-appropriate activities in class and through daily work outside of class.

The department makes use of technology in many ways. The School's intranet system is used to maintain contact with students and parents. Use of online material provides authentic resources in the target language and culture. Virtual tours, audio of native speakers, as well as written material from news sources and cultural websites enrich the classroom experience. Students are encouraged to use the computers for creating individual and group projects and games, and for researching online resources and cultural aspects of regions of the target language.

All course titles and corresponding curriculum are aligned with proficiency guidelines as established by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL). Students will complete Novice level language study during Middle School.

Novice Level French/Spanish, Grade 6

In Middle School, Novice Level French/Spanish is a four year language program. The class is conducted in the target language as much as possible in order to increase student exposure to the target language.

Novice Level French/Spanish emphasizes the fundamentals of oral and written communication. Vocabulary development and grammar usage are strengthened through daily reading and writing assignments, as well as through listening activities. At the completion of Novice Level French/Spanish students will be able to express themselves in both written and oral forms with comparative ease in structured situations.

Culture, history, geography, and literature are also interwoven into the curriculum so as to enhance the acquisition and development of language skills. Reading skills are developed using context, cognates, and other decoding skills. Writing in journals helps to develop greater understanding of basic grammatical concepts and syntax. Listening skills are assessed through deciphering oral language and appropriate responses to questions using thematic vocabulary. Speaking tasks will move toward proficient communication in the areas of socializing, providing and obtaining information, persuasion, and expressing personal feelings.

For example, a Novice level student in grade 5 will be able to identify the parts of the body. In grade 6, the student will be able to describe basic physical ailments. 7th grade will focus on healthy habits and treatments. 8th grade will compare and contrast healthcare systems and lifestyle choices that affect health.

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 French/Spanish
- Comparing and contrasting their own culture with that of the Francophone/Hispanic world

Physical Education, Grades 6

Boys and girls attend co-ed, multi-age classes (Grades 5 and 6). 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 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. Students are graded according to their participation and effort. 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 in competition is imperative in maintaining interest and building cohesive, successful teams through lifelong learning activities. The school's core values: respect, responsibility, honesty, and kindness are also addressed into our units produce a well rounded student with great character.

Sports that foster a team atmosphere are: Soccer, Flag Football, Ultimate Frisbee, Speedball, Handball, basketball, Lacrosse, Kickball, Pillow polo, Floor Hockey, Softball, and Tennis. Games and activities that consist of team-building values are: Capture the Flag, Pinball Wizard, Battleship, Mission impossible, Project Adventure, and the ropes course.

Essential Skills:

- Understanding, applying and demonstrating movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills
- Achieving and maintaining a health enhancing level of physical fitness
- Demonstrating responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings
- Demonstrating an understanding and respect for differences among people in physical activity settings
- Understanding that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction
- Applying problem-solving strategies in movement challenges
- Recognizing and communicating feedback to other students for implementation in successful game strategies

- Promoting individual success and self confidence by selecting, practicing, and redefining a challenge skill which needs improvement
- Identifying the relationship between specific muscle groups and body movement during performance of skills
- Demonstrating their knowledge of the four health-related fitness components (cardio-respiratory endurance, flexibility, muscular strength and endurance) and identify a variety of activities to develop each component

Art, Grade 6

Grade 6 Art is an exploratory semester-long class that focuses on the understanding of artwork, exploring ideas, and communicating visually. The course includes both 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional activities and projects, reviewing the principles of art, looking at artists and styles, class discussions and critiques. Every challenge starts with an idea, then a drawing or design, then the project, as it is important to see the process. 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, landscape painting, working with clay on the pottery wheel and handbuilding, mixed media sculpture, sketchbook drawings, self portraits, perspective drawing, photography, and earth art.

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

Drama, Grade 6

This semester-long exploratory drama course is designed to give an introductory experience in the theater arts. Students will use various creative drama techniques to build confidence and trust, stimulate imagination, movement, and role-play. Students will learn and use theater vocabulary in class discussions and the activities will specifically address

the promotion and reinforcement of students' literacy skills, including reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students will exhibit and reinforce their skills through individual and group presentations and performances.

Units of Study include: Ensemble Building, Characterization, Theatre History, Script Writing, Voice & Movement, Technical Theatre and Production.

Essential Skills:

- Develop an understanding of the essentials of non-musical performing arts including voice, gesture, movement, organization and presentation as elements of the study of theater arts and public speaking
- Develop an understanding of the essentials of the history and development of this art as well as of the applications of it in the modern world
- Understand how the study of drama involves research, reading, and writing skills both factual and creative

General Music, Grades 6

Students in grade 6 are required to enroll in chorus or band in addition to general music. Students are able to participate in both band and chorus if they so choose. Grade 6 Music is an exploratory semester long course.

Grade 6 Music reinforces previously learned music reading skills and allows students to demonstrate this knowledge through performance on classroom instruments. Students study music from the Romantic period with a specific focus on Tchaikovsky and The Nutcracker Suite. Students also study the origins and anatomy of the ukulele and learn the basics of playing this instrument.

Some projects and activities include composition projects for xylophones and ukuleles, playing various pop songs on xylophones and ukuleles, identifying the form of various musical pieces and viewing and analyzing a filmed performance of The Nutcracker ballet.

Essential Skills:

- Recognizing note values, time signatures and treble and bass clef note reading
- Demonstrating proper playing technique on classroom instruments
- Appropriate use of musical terminology in written descriptions of music

- Identifying the form of various pieces of music

Chorus, Grade 6

In Grade 6, students participate in a choral ensemble composed of students in 4th-6th grades. This full-year, performance-based course covers a variety of repertoire, along with basic music theory, history, aural training, and sight singing. Students perform in two and three part harmonies and participate in the school's Autumn Assembly Concert in November, the Sylvia Ginsberg Concert in May, and a community service concert in January at Canterbury Woods. Depending on skill level, students may be invited to audition for the ECMEA Elementary All-County Chorus.

Essential Skills:

- Demonstrate proper breathing and vocal production techniques
- Demonstrate proper posture during rehearsals and performances
- Develop basic vocal sight reading skills
- Maintain pitch and tempo in songs from a variety of genres

Band, Grade 6

In Grade 6, students participate in a band composed of students in 4th-6th grades. Band is designed to be a performance-based course. This course covers a variety of repertoire, along with basic music theory, history, aural training, and sight-reading. 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/or ECMEA solo and/or ensemble festivals.

In 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.

Grade 7

Grade 7 is a transition from a two teacher core program to a departmentalized schedule, which gives students the opportunity to work with five core teachers.

Additionally, grade 7 is when students join the Park School advisory program. Students are assigned to a mixed grade group of approximately 6 - 8 students and one faculty member who they will remain with for the rest of their time in middle school. This small group meets regularly to review grades, practice short-term and long-term goal setting, and get to know each other on a deeper level to form a tight knit group to support and uplift each other.

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, Thanh Hà Lại
- 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. This is followed by a study into metabolic reactions; the processes that convert nutrient and oxygen molecules into energy. In the second semester, students study ecosystem dynamics, animal behavior and the importance of biodiversity through the development of their own sustainable farm designs. Next students investigate the study of genetics by learning how to predict what parent characteristics are passed down to offspring. Lastly, students study the history of earth and

evolution of living organisms through the topics of natural selection and common ancestry.

During the course of the year, students also learn scientific and engineering practices and their applications 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
- Utilize scientific and engineering practices
- Use and apply scientific measurement (metric system)
- Present data in an organized and understandable way
- Conduct, prepare, and present engineering designs 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. This may include but is not limited to an in-depth look at the rational number and integer systems, as well as rates, proportions, and percents. Students will also explore probability as an application of ratios, deepen their understanding of variables and like terms, and begin to work with slope with specific emphasis on understanding it as a rate of change. This course simultaneously offers students the opportunity to consider many geometric applications of their algebraic work, including the use of the Law of Proportionality to model 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.

Essential Skills:

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Look for and make use of structure and patterns
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others

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. Novice Level French/Spanish emphasizes the fundamentals of oral and written communication. Vocabulary development and grammar usage are strengthened through daily reading and writing assignments, as well as through listening activities. At the completion of Novice Level French/Spanish students will be able to express themselves in both written and oral forms with comparative ease in structured situations. For example, a Novice level student in grade 5 will be able to identify the parts of the body. In grade 6, the student will be able to describe basic physical ailments. 7th grade will focus on healthy habits and treatments. 8th grade will compare and contrast healthcare systems and lifestyle choices that affect health.

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

Students will dive into a diverse array of artistic concepts and ideas, aimed at broadening their creative horizons and building upon skills they already know. They'll learn techniques for incorporating value, texture, balance, rhythm, and scale into their projects. The journey begins with an exploration of embracing mistakes through our initial spilled ink project, where students transform accidental spills into works of art using pen and ink.

Transitioning into a unit on composition, students craft self-portraits using magazine clippings, allowing for individual expression and exploration of personal identity by the choices of images and colors they choose. Later in the semester students learn about art history while getting inspired from the works of Claes Oldenburg and his “everyday made extraordinary” style by creating extra-large everyday objects themselves. Throughout these projects, students are empowered to bring their unique creative visions to life, and after each assignment we do our class reflections to better their understanding and application of visual arts media and techniques.

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 popular music in the United States. Students explore early blues, folk, and country music and study contemporary musicians such as Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Pink Floyd, and Tupac. They also examine the role of popular music as a medium for addressing social and political conditions of the 20th century through the songs of artists like Bob Dylan, Grandmaster Flash, and Marvin Gaye.

Students review elements of music theory relevant to the course content—time signatures, notation, tempo, dynamics, form—with a focus on rhythmic notation as they apply theory to practice by playing tubanos (adaptations of

conga drums) and other percussion instruments. General Music is a semester-long exploratory course.

Essential Skills:

- Demonstrating pulse and recognizing note values
- Performing (body percussion and drums) and notating rhythmic patterns
- Analyzing and discussing defining characteristics of various contemporary music styles

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 repertoire from a diverse selection of musical genres. Alongside repertoire preparation, students develop their music theory, history, aural training, and sight singing skills.

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. Students learn to sing 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.

Concert performances include opportunities within and outside of school. Students have an opportunity to audition for the ECMEA choral festival.

Drama, Grade 7

This semester-long exploratory drama course is designed to give an introductory experience in the theater arts.. Students will use various creative drama techniques to build confidence and trust, stimulate imagination, movement, and role-play. Students will learn and use theater vocabulary in class discussions and the activities will specifically address the promotion and reinforcement of students' literacy skills, including reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students will exhibit and reinforce their skills through individual and group presentations and performances.

Units of study include: Ensemble Building, Characterization, Theatre History, Script Writing, Voice & Movement, Technical Theatre and Production.

Essential Skills:

- Develop an understanding of the essentials of non-musical performing arts including voice, gesture, movement, organization and presentation as elements of the study of theater arts and public speaking
- Develop an understanding of the essentials of the history and development of this art as well as of the applications of it in the modern world
- Understand how the study of drama involves research, reading, and writing skills both factual and creative

Band, Grades 7 & 8

Students in Grade 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 a small group. This gives students an opportunity to gain performance etiquette and allow assessment of the individual's 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/or ECMEA solo and/or ensemble 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 7

Health is a survey course based on NYS standards taught to students as a component of Park's physical education program. In this course, 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), and nutrition and fitness. 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

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 teamwork 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

During this final year of middle school students will continue to be pushed academically in our accelerated math course, Integrated I, which combines both algebra and geometry, as well as their other academic coursework, as teachers work to ensure students are ready for Upper School. Students are asked to put the knowledge and skills that they have acquired during their middle school years into practice, particularly during the Grade 8 seminar project and presentation.

Students continue in their advisory groups, becoming the veterans who can help to mentor and guide their grade 7 peers.

Grade 8 Course Descriptions

English, Grade 8

Grade 8 English focuses primarily on American literature to complement the students' history studies. Students will examine the American experience through the eyes of a diverse group of writers and read works of fiction and nonfiction that confront the importance of marginalized voices. Coursework will encourage students to make connections between their own lives and the lives of the characters about whom they read. By the end of the year, the hope is that students, in addition to improving their reading, writing, and critical-thinking skills, will be able to answer deeper, more complex questions about the American experience and how that experience differs for all of us. In addition to literature, students will work regularly on the critical writing process and the acquisition and retention of new vocabulary.

Essential Skills:

- Developing reading comprehension in order to understand and interpret various types of texts, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama.
- Developing the ability to think critically about texts, evaluating author's purpose, point of view, and bias, and forming well-supported opinions.
- Developing connections between other works of literature and/or curriculum
- 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

- Developing an understanding of the rules of grammar, punctuation, and syntax to communicate effectively in writing.

Reading List:

- Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451
- Jason Reynolds, Long Way Down
- John Lewis, March Trilogy
- Elizabeth Acevedo, Poet X
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
- Susan B. Anthony, "Woman's Right to Suffrage"
- Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman"

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. Throughout this course, 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. Students will also study the concepts of rigid transformations and polynomial operations. Students will end the year with mastering arithmetic and geometric sequences and recognizing connections between these sequences and linear and exponential functions. 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 in this curriculum: forces and motion; energy storage and transfer; waves; electricity and magnetism; space science; measurements and physical properties of matter; phases of matter and phase changes;; mixtures, elements, & compounds; and chemical reactions.

Essential Skills:

- Making relevant observations about the physical world
- Collecting, graphing, analyzing, and interpreting data
- Developing and applying scientific and mathematical models to construct explanations and make predictions about phenomena in the physical world
- Gaining experience with laboratory equipment and measuring tools

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. Novice Level French/Spanish emphasizes the fundamentals of oral and written communication. Vocabulary development and grammar usage are strengthened through daily reading and writing assignments, as well as through listening activities. At the completion of Novice Level French/Spanish students will be able to express themselves in both written and oral forms with comparative ease in structured situations. For example, a Novice level student in grade 5 will be able to identify the parts of the body. In grade 6, the student will be able to describe basic physical ailments. 7th grade will focus on healthy habits and treatments. 8th grade will compare and contrast healthcare systems and lifestyle choices that affect health.

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

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 activities and projects, looking at artists and styles, written reflections of completed work, class discussions and critiques. Every challenge starts with an idea, then a drawing or design, then the project, as it is important to see the process. 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, landscape painting, illustration, working with clay on the pottery wheel, mixed media sculpture, sketchbook drawings, and self portraits.

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 is a one-semester exploratory course focused on the development and evolution of Jazz music in the USA. Students learn about its roots in spirituals and slave songs melding with elements of the marching band. Students learn to identify the characteristics of major jazz genres such as Dixieland, Swing, Bebop, Cool, and Fusion through listening to jazz musicians including Armstrong, Gillespie, Coltrane, Coleman, and Hancock. They continue

to build music-reading skills as they learn to play scales, melodies, and chords on the ukulele.

Their major project is research of a musician/singer to create a presentation that outlines the biography and musical contribution of this group or individual. They work with the art department to design an album cover that visually depicts their interpretation of this artist's music.

Essential Skills:

- Recognizing melodic and rhythmic notation
- Describing and analyzing characteristics of different jazz genres
- Identifying time signatures
- Exploring different musical forms

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 repertoire from a diverse selection of musical genres. Alongside repertoire preparation, students develop their music theory, history, aural training, and sight singing skills.

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. Students learn to sing 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 solfège.

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.

Concert performances include opportunities within and outside of school. Students have an opportunity to audition for the ECMEA choral festival.

Drama, Grade 8

This semester-long exploratory drama course is designed to give an introductory experience in the theater arts.. Students will use various creative drama techniques to build confidence and trust, stimulate imagination, movement, and role-play. Students will learn and use theatre vocabulary in class discussions and the activities will specifically address

the promotion and reinforcement of students' literacy skills, including reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students will exhibit and reinforce their skills through individual and group presentations and performances.

Units of study include: Ensemble Building, Characterization, Theatre History, Script Writing, Voice & Movement, Technical Theatre and Production.

Essential Skills

- Develop an understanding of the essentials of non-musical performing arts including voice, gesture, movement, organization and presentation as elements of the study of theatre arts and public speaking
- Develop an understanding of the essentials of the history and development of this art as well as of the applications of it in the modern world
- Understand how the study of drama involves research, reading, and writing skills both factual and creative

Band, Grades 7 and 8

Students in Grade 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 a small group. This gives students an opportunity to gain performance etiquette and allow assessment of the individual's 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/or ECMEA solo and/or ensemble 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

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.

Co-Curricular Programming

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. Clubs meet twice per rotation before the lunch block. Past Clubs offerings have included: garden club, book club, yoga club, art club, science club, embroidery, sports, poetry, travel club, and woodshop.

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 Immersion Seminar classes 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 to local day trips, to stateside overnight stays, and to a seven to ten-day immersive experience abroad. Immersion Week is biannual.

Middle School Student Government

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 teamwork 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

Under the advisement of the division head, the Middle School Student Government (MSSG) program offers students the opportunity to build upon and strengthen their leadership skills. MSSG meets once in the rotation. Government officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) Class Representatives are elected by the student body for a year's term, lead class meetings and school gatherings, as well as plan and execute class projects and various events, including Spirit Week celebrations, and a Spring Dance.

Performing Arts—Chorus, 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 and band programs. Students enrolled in chorus and band 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 increases responsible behavior and effective decision-making in our students. This program offers both parent and student resources online as well.