

Seventh Grade Program 2021-2022

Strath Haven Middle School

A safe and respectful school environment that promotes academic success and strives to meet the affective needs of all students

Language Arts

Seventh grade Language Arts maintains a focus on student choice in reading that was established in sixth grade, with the additional element of whole-class novel study. The program aims for balanced literacy through the use of approaches researched and crafted by educational theorists and practitioners such as Lucy Calkins (Teachers College Reading and Writing Project), Penny Kittle (*Book Love*), Nancie Atwell (*In the Middle*), and Kelly Gallagher (*Teaching Adolescent Writers*).

Teachers structure reading and writing opportunities throughout the year with the goal of increasing the amount of reading students complete in order to develop fluency, stamina, comprehension, and analytic thinking as they transition to the study of secondary English texts. Book selection is interest-based and leveled according to program guidelines for each student. Teacher modeling of reading strategies, independent conferences, small group differentiation, and book partnerships/clubs are the backbones of the program, creating an environment of text inquiry and excitement for reading that will challenge students at individual levels. The seventh grade Language Arts program is aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

Throughout the course, students read a number of shared mentor excerpts, short stories, poems, speeches, and nonfiction selections, with the main core text of seventh grade language arts being *The Giver*. Through novel study, students expand their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening as they develop critical thinking skills and build vocabulary. While studying shared mentor texts, students practice the analysis of literary elements including character, theme, setting, conflict, tone, mood, and personification.

Writing is an integral part of the Language Arts program. Students write narrative, expository, and persuasive essays and try their hand at creative writing and poetry. Explicit writing instruction emphasizes the domains of focus, content, and organization and builds toward more sophisticated writing throughout the school year. Analytic essays, with a focus on comparative analysis, create the core of the seventh-grade writing program. Vocabulary instruction focuses on Greek/Latin word origin, and grammar and mechanics are taught within the context of writing instruction.

Summer Reading List

In June, the sixth grade summer reading list is distributed at the elementary schools and posted on the district website. At that time, the list will also be available for reference at the local public libraries.

Math

The curriculum for seventh grade continues with *Math in Focus*, the U.S. edition of the top-rated Singapore math program which follows the pedagogical framework that includes emphasizing concept mastery, a concrete-to-pictorial-

ideals in order to promote student success: a focused and coherent syllabus which allows fewer topics in each grade taught to greater depth; a visual and balanced approach that follows the concrete-to-pictorial-to-abstract progression; a focus on numbers and operations throughout the series which ensures that students develop and maintain a strong number sense; an emphasis on problem solving using model-drawing which utilizes strategies for solving routine and non-routine problems; and the recognition of the importance of attitudes and the ability to self-monitor while problem solving to achieve success in math. *Math in Focus* provides students with the tools they need to break down complex concepts and problems, which in turn develops positive attitudes.

Math 7 and Enriched Math7 cover the same mathematical topics while offering students opportunities to apply and extend their thinking throughout the year. Students in a Math 7 class progress at a pace that provides appropriate opportunities for repeated practice and reinforcement of skills and concepts. Students in an Enriched Math 7 class progress at a pace which provides a range of higher-challenge opportunities in addition to the same core skills and concepts taught in Math 7. Accelerated Math 7/8 will cover all of the same mathematical topics taught in Enriched Math 7. In addition, students will be exposed to selected chapters of 8th grade Math in Focus. This class is designed to meet the needs of our highest performing math students through an accelerated pace, a range of higher-challenge opportunities and an in-depth study of the core concepts.

Science

Strath Haven Middle School science courses emphasize the scientific method, process skills, and measuring with the metric system. Seventh grade science focuses on Life Science. Students will identify the characteristics that define living organisms through inquiry-based investigations and hands-on experiments. They will investigate the similarities and differences among the variety of life on Earth. Topics include: cells, diseases, genetics, evolution, plants, animals, and ecology.

Social Studies

The 7th grade Social Studies program focuses on the history of the Western Civilization from the fall of Rome to the Age of Discovery. The seventh grade social studies program is partnered with the sixth grade program picking up from the Roman Empire and continuing the historical journey forward toward the Age of Discovery. The Seventh Grade program also explores the rise of cultures outside Western Civilization that influenced our world. The primary resource for this course is Discovery Education, an interactive Tech book built on engagement, exploration, explanation and elaboration. During the course of the year, certain skills are introduced or reinforced, including research writing using primary and secondary sources, note taking, and the use of multimedia

presentations in a variety of formats, informational and persuasive writing and map skills.

Foreign Language

Spanish/German/French/Mandarin Chinese

The study of foreign languages in the middle school addresses the four language modalities of listening, speaking, reading and writing for all target languages. The geography and culture of the places where the target languages are spoken are included in the first three years of study as well. Students engage in simple conversations, cultural simulations, and reading and writing that mirror daily life activities of the target language. Students demonstrate auditory comprehension and speaking ability through a variety of measures such as dialogues and open-ended question and answer sessions. Assessments are both written and oral. The goal is to promote communication in the target language in a variety of ways.

The world language curriculum is cumulative and each successive year builds through review and expansion of the material covered in previous years. By the end of the 7th and 8th grades, the students practice the four language modalities through some or all of the thematic units of home and family, free-time activities, school, clothing, shopping, food, around town and places of interest, and daily routines.

TRIMESTER COURSES (12 weeks):

Art

In seventh grade art, there is an emphasis on the development of skills. At this grade level, the student is introduced to illustration, painting, geometric design with the use of a compass, calligraphy and advanced hand building in ceramics. Students are given the opportunity to utilize colored pencil, marker, watercolor, clay, glazes and pen and ink. These skills, when mastered, form the basis for greater creative expression inside the classroom and out.

Music

7th grade general music is a study of guitar, drums, and the business of music. Students practice and perform major, minor, and seventh chords, read both staff and tablature notation, and compose original music on the guitars. Students explore rhythms on the drum pads and drum sets, performing and composing rhythmic compositions. Students work together to form traditional and non-traditional rock ensembles.

Family and Consumer Science

Family and consumer sciences education challenges students to think critically and creatively, problem solve, and work effectively. The essential knowledge and skills developed through family and consumer sciences prepare students for future success in college, career, and family and community life. 7th Grade Family and Consumer Sciences at Strath Haven Middle School provides students with a foundation for the development of 21st century life literacy skills in the areas of: consumer economics, culinary arts, food science, and nutrition and wellness. Learning is facilitated through coursework which includes cooperative, interactive, and laboratory-based experiences. The disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) are integrated throughout the curriculum.

SEMESTER COURSES (18 weeks):

Physical Education/Health

This two component class includes physical education and health. In physical education, students have the opportunity for physical development in the areas of strength, flexibility, coordination, endurance, balance, agility, range of motion and power. Students are introduced to the fundamentals of team and individual sports, which include skills, rules and game strategy. This diverse program allows students the opportunity to develop individual skills and be introduced to new, enjoyable experiences for lifelong physical fitness and well-being. The health curriculum is "To Be Drug Free". The course content includes an introduction to the physical and psychological effects of misusing drugs and or alcohol. The course provides student with the information needed to make healthy decisions.

Computer Science and Literacy

Computer Science strives to be innovative and keep pace with the ever-changing world of technology. The course is designed to help students integrate technology and 21st century skills across disciplines as well as beyond the classroom to maximize growth. In 7th grade students use creative approaches in the area of coding, web and graphic design to take action or solve a real world problems. Students use the Design Process which starts with a problem and ends with them presenting their solutions to their peers. Additionally, this 18 week course focuses on the importance of being a positive digital citizen and by doing so, how it can shape their future.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS:

Performing Music Ensembles

Opportunities to perform in music ensembles at Strath Haven Middle School are abundant and include band, chorus, and orchestra. Rehearsal times are from 7:00 a.m. – 7:50 a.m. The orchestra meets once each week, while the band and chorus rotate their rehearsals. Students and parents receive monthly calendars and schedules. Jazz band and other small ensembles are selected by audition in the fall, and they rehearse two days each week after school. Group music lessons are offered once each week on a rotating pull-out schedule. Students are encouraged to make music performance a part of their school lives. In the past few years, over 70% of the total seventh grade has performed in one or more of the music ensembles offered.

Guidance Program: Jessica Domsky

At Strath Haven Middle School, a guidance counselor is assigned to each grade level. The counselor begins working with the sixth graders during their first year in the middle school and stays with them throughout the end of their freshman year in high school. This plan enables the counselor to follow the development of each student during his or her middle school years, while establishing a working relationship with both students and parents. This approach also helps ease the transition to high school. Counselors inform teachers of the needs of each student, acting as a consultant to students, parents, teachers, and administrators. In addition, counselors provide individual counseling, developmental counseling groups, and crisis intervention. The guidance counselor is the

liaison between student and teacher and between home and school.

Connections

At the end of the day, after 8th period, Connections meetings are held throughout the school. These meetings, led by teachers and each with about 15 students in attendance, will include end of day closure, team building, opportunities for peer leadership, grading portal checks, grade-level issues rectification, and a litany of other preset structured activities. Our intent is to create a stress-free end-of-day gathering that can solidify the day's instruction and help the students feel more connected as citizens at Strath Haven Middle School.