

## Eighth Grade Program 2017-2018

# 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**

Eighth grade Language Arts has been expanded for the 201516 school year to include a balance of guided novel story and independent reading. The research-based approach, sprung from Reading Workshop and the Penny Kittle *Book Love* program, seeks to increase the amount of reading students do in a year so as to improve fluency, stamina and comprehension as they prepare for the rigors of high school English. Book selection is interest-based and leveled according to the program guidelines for each student. Book Clubs, teacher modeling of reading strategies and individual conferencing are the backbone of the program, creating an environment of text inquiry and excitement for reading that will challenge students at individual levels.

In the novel study segment of the course, students read and analyze *Torn Sawyer* (LA-8), *Huckleberry Finn* (Enriched LA 8), *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Inherit the Wind*, a selection of Shakespearean scenes and sonnets, and various short stories and poetry. Through novel study, students expand their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening as they develop critical thinking skills and build vocabulary. Through novel study, students are exposed to literary terms and concepts, including plot, character, setting, theme, mood, characterization, conflict, parody, irony, hyperbole, 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. Grammar and mechanics are taught within the context of writing instruction

### **Math**

In eighth grade, students take either a third year of *Math in Focus* or the first course from the high school Math sequence Advanced Algebra I Honors (from the Center for Math Education Project CME Project). *Math in Focus* is 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-to-abstract approach, metacognitive reasoning, and the use of model drawing to solve and justify problems. CME is published by

*Math in Focus* is a mastery program aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that focuses on the following 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-

CME focuses on the ability to comprehend and apply mathematical concepts. Students experiment with ideas, look for patterns, make generalizations, and explain their reasoning both orally and in writing. The objective is to develop genuine understanding of the rules and principles of mathematics. Students will learn traditional math rules, and they will work extensively to determine the "how and why" of problem solving.

Students are placed into Math 8, Enriched Math 8, or Advanced Algebra I Honors from 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The Math 8 and Enriched Math 8 both cover the same mathematical topics from the *Math in Focus* curriculum, while the Advanced Algebra I Honors course covers the same mathematical topics as well as more advanced Algebra I topics from the CME program. The Math 8 classes move at a pace that provides appropriate opportunities for repeated practice and reinforcement of skills and concepts. In contrast, the Enriched Math 8 classes move at a pace which provides students a range of higher-challenge opportunities to apply and extend their **learning. The Advanced Algebra I Honors class is the first course in the high school's Math sequence and as such, the pace and expectations of the students in this class are above the rest of their peers.**

### **Social Studies**

The eighth grade social studies program focuses on the types of political systems, the political system of the United States, the philosophical and historical foundations of the United States Constitution, and the freedoms protected by the Constitution. In addition, this course traces individuals and groups in their efforts to affect social and political change. As with any social studies course the ultimate goal is help students become knowledgeable and active citizens.

There are three major areas of study during the course of this year. American Government and The United States Constitution, The Evolution of American Beliefs, and The Holocaust. Resource for this course include the textbook *We the People*, selected readings and activities from *A World of Difference*. The Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'rith in cooperation with Temple University 1989, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Movement 1954-1985*, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*, *Facing History and Ourselves* National Foundation, Inc. During the course of the year, students research using primary sources, determining bias in research, note-taking, the use of multimedia presentation in a variety of formats, formal debating, informational and persuasive writing, formal research writing and citation, film-making and story boarding.

## **Science**

Strath Haven Middle School science courses emphasize the scientific method, process skills, and measuring with the metric system. Eighth grade science offers an introduction to the basic concepts of chemistry and physics and is a standards- and laboratory-based program. Constructivist methods of teaching are employed to ensure the best possible comprehension and retention of science concepts. Topics include the nature of matter, laws of energy, motion and forces, and energy transformation.

## **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 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **Cultures I and II**

Cultures course is taken by students who have not had a 6<sup>th</sup> and/or 7<sup>th</sup> grade foreign language experience. In this course, students develop an understanding of culture through a comparison of their own culture with those of other peoples. They discover the features of culture and study the effects of geography and biodiversity on culture, as well as historical reasons for cultural differences. In year one of Cultures, students focus on the study of various countries around the world and their customs. In year two, students expand this study of culture in an assortment of thematic units such as communication, relationships, food, and family. They explore the cultures through the mediums of readings, documentaries, and exploration of visual and auditory arts. Students gain insights and reflect through journal writing.

## **QUARTERLY COURSES (9 weeks):**

### **Art**

The curriculum for 8<sup>th</sup> grade art comprises three areas of concentration: Traditional Fine Arts, Interdisciplinary Arts,

and Cultural Arts. The course is designed this way in order to provide students with the broadest possible exposure to the world of art. Throughout the nine weeks, students will study art history, indigenous and cultural art, and the basic principles of fine arts design all through two-dimensional and three-dimensional works such as drawing, painting, collage, printmaking and mixed-media.

### **Music**

8th grade general music is a culmination of general music grades K-7. These students will spend their time in the keyboard technology lab learning how to play the piano, composing music, and performing for the class. Students will use a software notation program, *Finale*, to compose and arrange music. Students will discover practical applications of music and technology into their everyday lives.

### **Technology Education**

The technology education program allows students to gain a greater understanding of technology by utilizing the technological design process to solve open-ended problems in a materials laboratory. This process includes designing, prototyping, refining, and producing a product. During this quarter-long session, students learn how to utilize basic hand tools and machines ranging from a hammer and screwdriver to a bandsaw and disc sander. The students will also receive an introduction to CAD/CAM programming where they will use software to design a solution to a problem and later setup a computerized machine to produce their individual design and/or parts

## **SEMESTER COURSES (18 weeks):**

### **Physical Education/Health (18-week Semester Course)**

This two component class includes physical education and health. In physical education, students are reacquainted with sports and fitness concepts from earlier grades, as well as introduced to new ones in eighth grade. These concepts are explored through exercise, fitness evaluations, and play, with activities including invasion games, non-traditional games, team building activities, net games, and aerobic and strength training routines. The health curriculum focuses on physical and social health topics starting with human body systems, relationships, teenage dating & sexuality, and HIV/STD prevention.

### **Computer Science (18-week Semester Course)**

Ingrade Computer Science class, students receive instruction on Technology Safety, intro to programming and intro to html. Through Learning to Program with Alice, students will develop programming skills. Later in the semester, students are introduced to html through the creation of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade portfolio project. Students explore web design software such as Flash, Photoshop and Dreamweaver. They are expected to implement proper web design techniques in their final project. By working closely with students and their subject teachers, these elements are integrated through an interdisciplinary approach.

#### ***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 am, -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.

##### ***Community Service Project***

Every eighth grade student is expected to complete a 4-6 hour community service project during the course of the year. After performing the service, each student completes a 1-2 page paper on the experience. We provide opportunities for the students to complete this project during the year. The eighth grade at SHMS has well-earned reputation of compassion and altruism. In the past the students provided solar panels for a Gambian hospital in need, aided over 150 Darfur refugee families, and last year over 140<sup>8th</sup> grade students ran a 5K raising money for Back On My Feet.

##### ***Guidance Program: Erica Laster***

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.