

# Welcome to *Scottsdale Middle Schools*

The Scottsdale School District offers a middle school program designed to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of the emerging adolescent. This middle school philosophy is demonstrated through the learning opportunities at each school. The *Middle School Standards Guide* describes the variety of opportunities available to each student.

## District Mission Statement

The Scottsdale school community inspires all students to be passionate learners and empowers them to fulfill their dreams. We are committed to realizing our mission:

- To increase individual student academic achievement and personal growth.
- To provide a positive, respectful and safe learning environment.
- To ensure all students and staff are proficient in the use of technology to acquire and manage information, communication, time, and task.
- To provide equity in opportunity, facilities, programs, and resources for all.
- To offer comprehensive professional growth programs for staff to provide them with the skills, strategies, and resources to meet the needs of all students.

## Middle School Concept

Scottsdale Middle Schools are committed to focusing on the learning needs of young adolescents. Schools are organized and teachers are trained to address the academic, physical, and emotional needs of these young people as they face the changes that occur at this critical point in their development.

All Scottsdale middle schools feature the concepts that have proven successful with this age group at schools around the country. Elective courses are provided at each grade level to provide a greater breadth of learning and to introduce students to the elective areas they will be able to enter in high school. Classes are organized heterogeneously to provide students ample opportunity to learn from one another as well as from the teacher. Each school schedules a “homebase” to provide time for student-teacher interaction on a personal level.

Each school provides programs for gifted, special education, and second language students to meet their special needs. Each school employs counseling services, nurses, librarians, and a school resource officer to maintain a focus on student health and safety.

Each middle school is aligned with its respective high school to allow for curriculum articulation and a smooth transition to the next level of education. Examine the information in this standards guide and the literature provided by the school to learn more about middle level education in Scottsdale.



## Middle School Mission Statement

Scottsdale Middle Schools are committed to providing an environment which expands personal and academic success for all students by meeting the unique needs of the early adolescent learner.

# THIS WE BELIEVE

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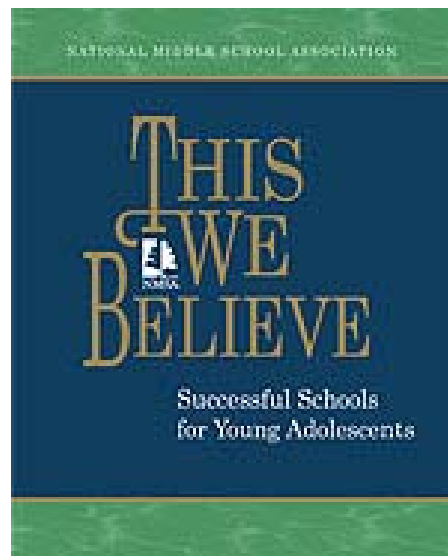
## DEVELOPMENTALLY RESPONSIVE MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS (Third Edition, National Middle School Association)

Successful schools for young adolescents are characterized by a culture that includes:

- Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so
- Courageous, collaborative leadership
- Shared vision that guides decisions
- Inviting, supportive, safe environment
- High expectations for everyone
- Students and teachers engaged in active learning
- An adult advocate for each child
- School initiated family and community partnerships

Therefore, successful schools provide:

- Curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory
- Multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to diversity
- Multi-faceted guidance and support services
- Organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning
- Assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning



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# General Information

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## Alternative Education Program

The goal of the alternative program is to create an environment in which students feel valued, secure, and self-confident. The program takes a comprehensive approach, providing curriculum and a classroom atmosphere that is professional and challenging, blending a unique mix of high expectations, creativity, and flexibility to meet the diverse needs of our population. Students who are enrolled in the Alternative Education Program are given the individualized assistance that they need to improve academic and social skills, and work toward meeting the criteria for transition to the mainstream school and/or promotion to the next grade. All students are motivated to develop a positive attitude toward themselves, their community, and their education.

## Athletic Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in athletics, including pom and cheer, students must earn passing grades in all courses for the previous nine-week grading period or be passing all classes at the completion of the third week of the following grading period. *This shall be considered a minimum standard. Schools may have additional requirements provided they are published in the school's student handbook.*



## Computer Proficiency

All students will be required to enroll in the Computer Basics class during high school unless they are able to demonstrate proficiency in keyboarding of 25 words per minute, as well as basic computer literacy as measured by a written test to be administered at each middle school prior to the end of the eighth grade year.

*At Grade 6* the curriculum focuses on sustained touch typing, word processing / keyboarding skills.

*At Grade 7* the curriculum focuses on word processing, database, spreadsheet, and Internet.

*At Grade 8* the curriculum focuses on word processing, database, spreadsheet, Internet, drawing, graphics, and desktop publishing.

Please note that students wishing to take two, year-long electives in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade should complete proficiency by the end of 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This is especially important for students who plan to take a full load of advanced placement classes at the high school and may not have room for the Computer Basics class in their high school schedule.

## Custody

In cases where custody / visitation affect the school, the school shall follow the most recent court order on file with the school. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent or parents having joint custody to provide the school with the most recent court order.

## Grading Scale/Grade Point Averages

The following grading scale is used for computing grade point averages:

A	=	90 or above	=	4 points
B	=	80 to 89	=	3 points
C	=	70 to 79	=	2 points
D	=	60 to 69	=	1 point
F	=	below 60	=	0 points

All graded classes are included in computing grade point averages.

## Grading Criteria

There are four grading periods for middle school students. Grades are sent home to parents at the end of each nine-week grading period. Students may receive two separate indicators for each standard course. They are:

### Academic Grade

A	=	Highest Grade
B	=	Above Average
C	=	Average
D	=	Below Average
F	=	Failure
I	=	Incomplete
NM	=	No Mark

### Conduct Grade

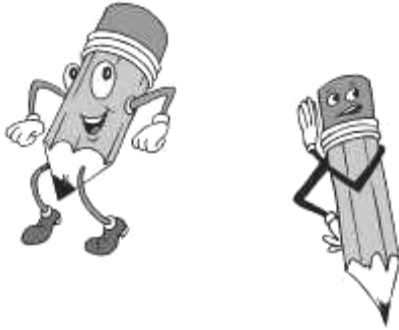
O	=	Outstanding
S	=	Satisfactory
I	=	Improving
N	=	Needs Improvement
U	=	Unsatisfactory

Failing grades in the core curriculum may result in retention.



## Homework

Middle school students are expected to spend an average of 60 to 90 minutes per day doing regularly assigned study outside of class. Students enrolled in advanced curriculum may exceed this average study time.



## Honor Roll

An Honor Roll shall be established at the end of each nine-week grading period. To qualify, a student must earn at least a 3.5 average with no U's and no more than one N in conduct.

## Immunizations

Arizona law requires documentary proof of immunity against certain childhood diseases for students entering Arizona schools for the first time. With some exceptions, students subject to this requirement who lack documentary proof may enroll but not attend classes until proof is provided.

If your child is entering an Arizona school for the first time, please obtain from the school a detailed list of immunizations required.

## Incompletes

If a student is given an Incomplete for a grade, the student must make up the work within two (2) weeks after the grading period ends.



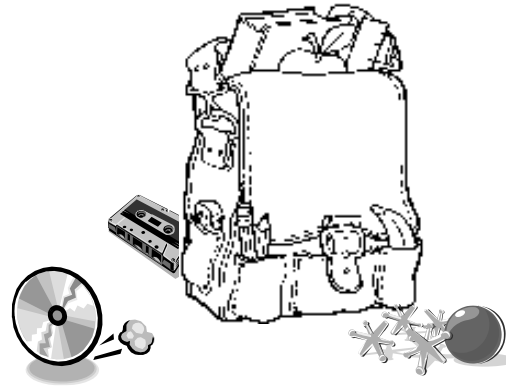
## Individual Student Planning

In cases where students demonstrate mastery of competencies beyond middle school coursework, school administrators will work with students, their parents, and teachers to devise a plan that will meet each student's needs. Options considered may include alternative programming on the middle school campus or consideration of schedule alterations that will enable the student to receive instruction on a high school campus, space permitting.

## Personal Belongings

It is recommended that all books and valuable items such as calculators, purses, wallets, etc. remain in the student's possession at all times. The school is not responsible for a student's belongings.

Electronic devices such as beepers, pagers, cellular phones, laser pointers, electronic games, etc. interfere with the orderly operation of school and are prohibited. Items such as these will be confiscated by the administration if they are brought to school. (Ref.: Uniform Code of Student Conduct)



## Principal's List

A Principal's List shall be established at the end of each nine-week grading period. To qualify, a student must earn at least a 3.8 average with no U's and no more than one N in conduct.

## Registration

Registration materials will be distributed to all students in the spring. Counseling services are available to assist students and their parents.

Students living outside a school's attendance boundary must have Open Enrollment approval based on space availability to register.

## Textbooks

Per A.R.S. §15-723, free textbooks, subject matter materials, and supplementary books shall be furnished. *Parents are responsible for lost textbooks.*

# Student Support Services

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## Counseling Services

Each middle school offers counseling services such as individual / group counseling, crisis intervention, mediations and conflict resolution, identifying at-risk students and coordinating services; coordinating and facilitating conferences between parents, teachers, and students. Students have the opportunity to meet with one adult on staff who knows them well and can serve as their advocate and liaison between home and school.

## Psychologists

The school psychologist serving each school provides:

- Consultation services to classroom teachers when requested;
- Evaluation and assessment of students referred for suspected disabilities;
- Reevaluation of students presently identified with disabilities;
- Consultation services for parents and students regarding learning and adjustment problems;
- Crisis intervention counseling;
- In-service training for staff; and,
- Coordination of services with community professionals.

## English Immersion Studies

### (Formerly Language Acquisition Program)

Instruction is provided at each school for students who are English language learners. Daily instruction is provided in English language development including listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Cognitive and academic skill development in English is emphasized. Emphasis is placed on content, vocabulary, study skills, test taking strategies, and lessons on American culture and society.

## Gifted Services

Each middle school has a Gifted Specialist who works as a student advocate and liaison to classroom teachers and parents. In addition, the Gifted Specialist will teach an elective course for spatially gifted students entitled Independent Investigations. For a description of this course see the “Electives” page of this guide. Various teaching strategies will be incorporated in classrooms to best meet the academic and social – emotional needs of the gifted students. These strategies may include but are not limited to: suggestions for differentiated instruction, learning contracts, independent projects, and alternative assignments and compacting the curriculum. Gifted students are also encouraged to participate in competitions and extracurricular activities such as: Future Cities, Math Olympiad, Geography Bee, and Odyssey of the Mind and Word Masters.

**TESTING FOR GIFTED SERVICES** will be offered three times per year: fall, winter and spring. Please contact the Gifted Specialist for further information.

## Special Education

The goal of the Special Education program is to help identified students become independent learners, to teach learning strategies that will prepare them to be successful in their regular classes, and to prepare them for high school and post-secondary experiences. This goal will be achieved through a partnership between student, home, and school.

The Special Education Department staff includes specialists in various disabilities and related services. Related services may include speech language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adapted physical education, and assistive technology. In order to receive Special Education services, students must meet eligibility criteria as set forth in Individuals with Disability Education Act '97 (IDEA '97).

Transition services are designed to help special education students move from middle school to high school, and from high school to post secondary education and / or employment and quality adult living. Regulations require consideration of transition services for students receiving Special Education by age 14, and each year thereafter.

### **LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER PROGRAM:**

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) offers various models of small group instruction, support, remediation, monitoring, and consultation with regular classroom teachers to support identified special education students.

*Consultation* is a component of all classes in which Special Education students participate. This involves the consistent communication between the special educator and the mainstream teacher. This consultation may lead to modifications in a regular class, even though team teaching does not occur there.

*Small Group Instruction* can be offered to Special Education students as needed. Instruction can occur in the regular classroom or in the LRC.

*Team Teaching* may occur in regular education classes that serve Special Education students. It involves an agreement between regular education teachers and special educators to develop lessons and share the instructional responsibilities.

### **SELF-CONTAINED PROGRAM:**

Special classes are provided for students who, because of the severity of their disabilities, need a more intensive full-day program. The classes are limited in size to permit flexibility in meeting individual needs. These students are included in the regular classroom setting whenever appropriate.

## Special Education (continued)

### **ACADEMIC LEARNING CENTER: (ALC)**

The Academic Learning Center is designed for students who have varying disabilities with common needs. Students have primary difficulty with all academic skills, and minimal deficits in behavior / social skills and communication skills. Disabilities may include students with mild mental retardation, mild autism, severe learning disabilities, etc. that significantly impact students in 2-3 core academic areas. (Reading, Written Language, Math)

### **AUTISM PROGRAM:**

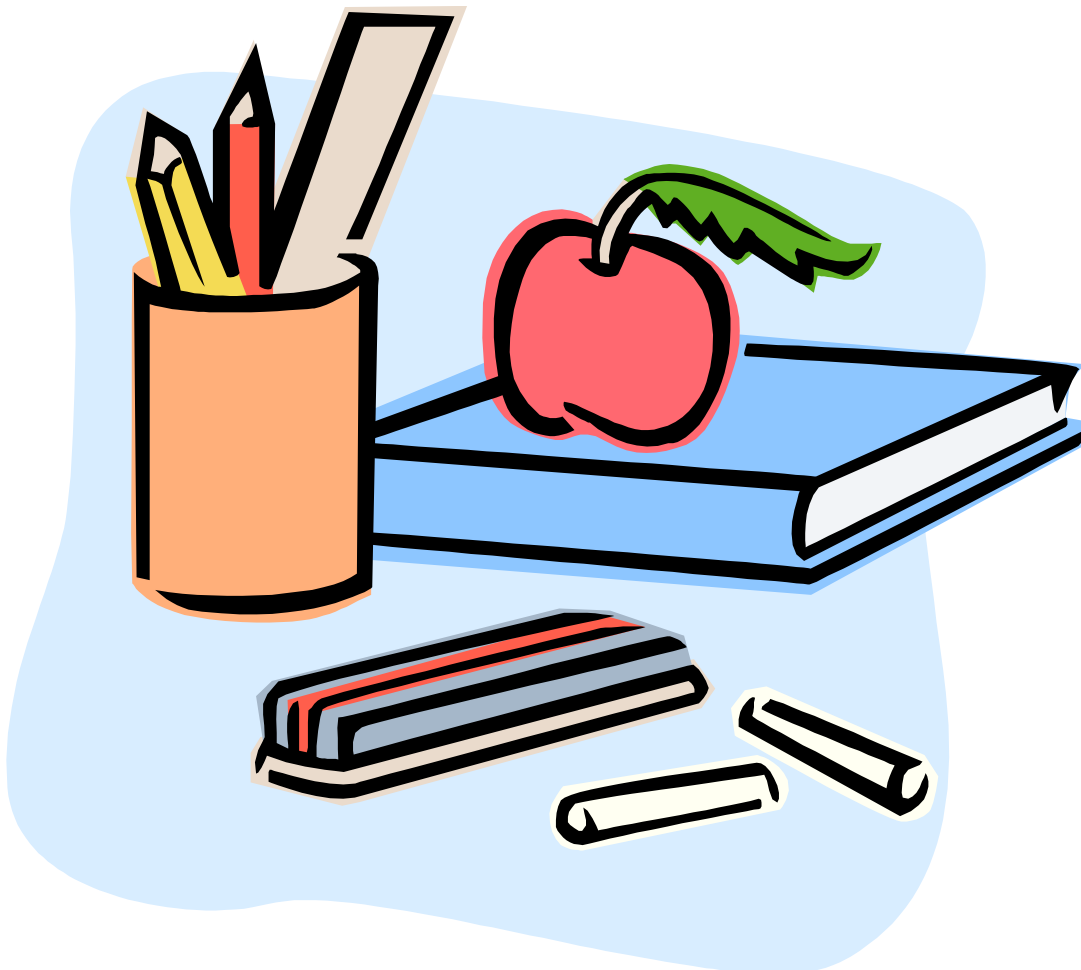
Autism programs are specifically designed to serve students with autism, who require a highly structured more intensively staffed program due to severity of limitations in social skills, language, behavior, and independence. Program structure and model methods and strategies are specific to students with autism. There are different levels of program offerings, due to severity of disability, functioning levels, and concomitant disabilities.

### **SUCCESS PROGRAM:**

SUCCESS classes are designed for students who, because of their intensive emotional problems, are incapable of being educated successfully in the regular classroom or LRC. The SUCCESS program is highly structured, affording mainstreaming opportunities when students are capable of managing behavior in less restrictive environments. Focus of the program is centered on improving behavior, self-management, communication, and social interactions.

### **LIFE SKILLS CENTER PROGRAM:**

The Life Skills Center (LSC) is a cross-categorical program for middle school students with substantial disabilities. LSC is designed to meet the individual educational needs of students functioning substantially below grade level. The LSC curriculum focuses on functional academics, vocational training, and independent living skills, including recreational / leisure skills. The school and local communities are used as the classroom to teach skills needed to become productive, contributing members within the total community.



# English Immersion Studies

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Instruction is provided at each school for students who are English language learners. Daily instruction is provided in English language development including listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Cognitive and academic skill development in English is emphasized. Emphasis is placed on content, vocabulary, study skills, test taking strategies, and lessons on American culture and society.

Students are placed according to their level of proficiency in English. The EIS program teachers are the teacher of record for the content areas listed. The district's core curriculum is followed for all content areas. English language development is taught through each content area as well as the required content curriculum objectives.

## **Middle School Plan Grades 6-8 Course Placement and Progression Chart**

(For students who have low academic skills in their native language and lack formal education.)

### **Year 1**

**NES**

#### **English Immersion Studies I**

**1-2 semesters**

4 Period Block                      ESL Resource

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Language Arts

Humanities

Math

Science

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Social Studies

Sheltered

Electives

### **Year 2**

#### **English Immersion Studies II**

**1-2 semesters**

3 Period Block                      ESL Resource

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Language Arts

Humanities

Science

---

Social Studies

Sheltered

Math

Sheltered

Electives

### **Year 3**

#### **English Immersion Studies III**

**1-2 semesters**

2 Period Block                      ESL Resource

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Language Arts

Humanities

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Social Studies

Sheltered

Math

Sheltered

Science

Sheltered

Electives

## Middle School Plan Grades 6-8 Course Placement and Progression Chart

### Year 1

NES

**English Immersion Studies I**

**1-2 semesters**

3 Period Block

ESL Resource

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Language Arts

Humanities

Science

---

Social Studies

Sheltered

Math

Sheltered

Electives

### Year 2 or LES

**English Immersion Studies II**

**1-2 semesters**

Language Arts

ESL Resource or Sheltered

Humanities

ESL Resource or Sheltered

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Social Studies

Sheltered

Math

Sheltered

Science

Sheltered

Electives

### Year 3 or LES

**English Immersion Studies III**

**1-2 semesters**

Language Arts

ESL Resource or Sheltered

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Humanities

Sheltered

Social Studies

Sheltered

Math

Sheltered

Science

Sheltered

Electives

# Curriculum Offerings

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Listed below are the curricular offerings that the Scottsdale School District Governing Board and the State Board of Education believe are essential for every middle school student. The curricula described in this booklet are presented at each school in a variety of ways. The teachers utilize a wide range of instructional methodologies. Elective opportunities may vary from site to site depending upon staffing and availability of facilities. For specific descriptions of curricular offerings, please refer to the registration form, which is given to each student in the spring.



## Core Curricula

Five disciplines are required at the 6th, 7th, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels:

- Humanities/Reading Skills
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science/Health
- Social Studies



## Elective Curricula

Electives may be offered from the following categories. Additional electives may be offered to 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

- Visual and Performing Arts
- Foreign Language
- Physical Education
- Computers
- Independent Investigations



# Core Curricula Standards

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## Language Arts Standards



### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

The goal of sixth grade Language Arts is to build a student's competence in written and oral communication, and to strengthen study skills. Curriculum objectives address reinforcement of grammar and syntax skills, legible handwriting, conventional punctuation, capitalization, spelling, vocabulary, and standard English usage. In addition, students are expected to organize ideas into writing for a variety of purposes, and to proofread, edit, and revise their work. Students will be expected to write a report, an evaluation, a problem solution, a personal experience narrative, observations, a story, speculation about cause and effect, poetry, descriptive and expository paragraphs, summaries, a friendly letter, and a business letter. Study skills addressed include: scanning material, time management techniques, and use of reference materials.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

The purpose of seventh grade Language Arts is to continue to build a student's competence in written and oral communication, and to strengthen study skills. Curriculum objectives address reinforcement of grammar and syntax skills, legible handwriting, conventional punctuation, capitalization, spelling, vocabulary, and standard English usage. In addition, students are expected to organize ideas into writing for a variety of purposes, and to proofread, edit, and revise their work. Students will be expected to write a report, an evaluation, a problem solution, a personal experience narrative, observations, a story, speculation about cause and effect, poetry, description and expository paragraphs, a summary, a friendly letter, and a business letter. Study skills addressed include: scanning material, time management techniques, and use of reference materials, test-taking skills, and understanding and avoiding plagiarism.

## 8th Grade

The purpose of eighth grade Language Arts is to continue to build a student's competence in written and oral communication, and to strengthen study skills. Curriculum objectives address reinforcement of grammar and syntax skills, legible handwriting, conventional punctuation, capitalization, spelling, vocabulary, and standard English usage. In addition, students are expected to organize ideas into writing for a variety of purposes, and to proofread, edit, and revise their work. Students will be expected to write a report, an evaluation, a problem solution, a personal experience narrative, a story, responses to literary selections, descriptive and expository paragraphs and essays, and summaries. Study skills addressed include the use of reference materials, use of graphic materials, test-taking skills, outlining, and note-taking.

## Reading & Humanities Standards



### 6th Grade

Comprehension of a variety of reading materials is expected in daily reading activities such as: following directions, accessing information, reading for pleasure and sharing reactions to these written materials. Students will be exposed to different types of literature, including personal narratives, biographical and autobiographical stories, fiction and nonfiction stories, informative reports, poetry, and essays at the appropriate reading level. Humanities will introduce students to the arts, literature, and history of various cultures. It is designed to broaden a student's cultural awareness and understanding. Vocabulary skills will be taught utilizing reading materials and other sources. Independent reading and book reports will also be assigned.

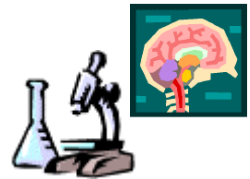
### 7th Grade

The primary focus of instructional activities is on higher levels of comprehension and vocabulary growth. Students will be exposed to different genres of literature including personal narratives, biographical / autobiographical stories, fiction and non-fiction stories, informative reports, poetry, and essays. Students will be directed toward works of literature suitable to their reading levels. Vocabulary skills will be taught utilizing reading materials and other sources. Humanities is a multi-disciplinary course teaching students that the arts, literature, history, and culture are interrelated and interdependent; it is designed to broaden a student's cultural awareness and understanding. The course is designed to show how works of art, music, literature, dance, drama, and architecture are generated and influenced by man's reaction to such elements in his life as his own person, relationships with other people, emotions, and nature.

## 8th Grade

The primary focus of instructional activities is on higher levels of comprehension and vocabulary growth. Students will be exposed to different genres of literature including personal narratives, biographical / autobiographical stories, fiction and non-fiction stories, informative reports, poetry, and essays. Students will be directed toward works of literature suitable to their reading levels. Vocabulary skills will be taught utilizing reading materials and other sources. Humanities is a multi-disciplinary course teaching students that the arts, literature, history, and culture are interrelated and interdependent; it is designed to broaden a student's cultural awareness and understanding. The course intends to show how works of art, music, literature, dance, drama, and architecture are generated and influenced by man's goals and ideas such as structure and order, relationships and beauty, justice, and the future.

## Science / Health Standards



### 6th Grade

The focus of sixth grade science is in the areas of Life Science, Physical Science, and Earth and Space Science. Concepts within the study of Life Science include: Structure and Function in Living Systems, and Populations of Organisms in an Ecosystem. Students will learn about Transfer of Energy as part of the study of Physical Science. Concepts within the study of Earth and Space Science include: Structure of the Earth, and Earth's Processes and Systems. The process of scientific inquiry, history and nature of science, personal and social perspectives, as well as the integration of technology, are interwoven throughout the course. In addition, students study human body systems within the guidelines of the district's human sexuality curriculum.

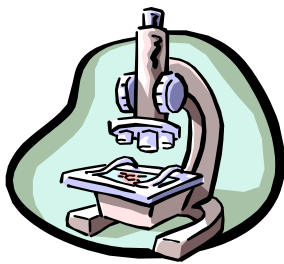
### 7th Grade

The focus of seventh grade science is in the areas of Life Science, and Earth and Space Science. Students will learn about the Populations of Organisms in an Ecosystem as part of Life Science. Concepts within the study of Earth and Space Science include: Structure of the Earth, Earth's Processes and Systems, and the Earth in the Solar System. In addition, students study human body systems within the guidelines of the district's human sexuality curriculum.

## Science / Health Standards

### 8th Grade

The focus of eighth grade science is in the areas of Life Science and Physical Science. Concepts for Life Science include: Reproduction and Hereditary, Diversity, Adaptation, and Behavior. Concepts for Physical Science include: Properties and Changes in Property in Matter, and Motion and Forces. The process of scientific inquiry, history and nature of science, personal and social perspectives, as well as the integration of technology, are interwoven throughout the course. In addition, students study human body systems within the guidelines of the district's human sexuality curriculum.



## Mathematics Standards



### 6th Grade Mathematics

The key mastery topics of this level are determining the equivalency between and among fractions, decimals, and percents; using all four operations with fractions and mixed numbers; analyzing various graphs, including scatter plots and stem-and-leaf plots; predicting outcomes of probability experiments; classifying 2-and 3-dimensional figures by their attributes; translating written phrases into algebraic expressions; and identifying transformations on a coordinate grid. Problem-solving strategies and applied problem-solving are emphasized throughout the year in each unit.

### 7th Grade Mathematics

The key mastery topics of this level are using all four operations with integers; classifying rational numbers; converting between standard notation and scientific notation; simplifying numerical expressions; translating written phrases into one-step algebraic equations; identifying 2- and 3-dimensional figures by their nets; finding area, perimeter and volume of geometric shapes; using a four quadrant coordinate grid; and applying systemic listing, tables and tree diagrams to analyze data. Problem-solving strategies and applied problem solving are emphasized throughout the year in each unit.

## 7th or 8th Grade Pre-Algebra

The key mastery topics of this level are working with rational and irrational numbers; interpreting box-and-whisker plots, circle graphs, and scatter plots; conducting 2-stage probability experiments; identifying the slope of a line; graphing inequalities; solving simple algebraic proportions; identifying surface area of shapes; and solving two-step equations with rational coefficients and integer solutions.

## Advanced Mathematics - Algebra I

Students who have mastered Pre-Algebra, may qualify to enroll in Algebra I. This accelerated curriculum follows the high school Algebra I course syllabus and uses the district evaluation instruments. The course fulfills college entrance requirements and prepares students for study of higher-level mathematics in district high schools. An Honors Qualifying Test is administered in May to help determine if students qualify for the High School Math Honors Program. The content includes operations with real numbers, solving equations, inequalities, systems of equations, special products and factoring of polynomials, solutions of quadratic equations, and the introduction of functions and relations.

It is recommended that students planning to apply to the International Baccalaureate program in high school, take Algebra I in their eighth grade year.

### Middle School Math Progression

Grade	Regular Track	Accelerated	Advanced
6	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	Pre-Algebra
7	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	Pre-Algebra	Algebra I
8	Pre-Algebra	Algebra I	Geometry Honors or Algebra II Honors*

\* Students who are taking Geometry as middle schoolers will receive instruction by a high school certified teacher at a middle school site or take Geometry at a high school site. In both cases, high school credit will be given for the successful completion of this course.

\* Due to different high school course sequences, students who qualify for the High School Honors math Program while in middle school, will either enroll in Geometry Honors or Algebra II Honors, depending on their designated high school sequence.

# Social Studies Standards



Enlightenment that integrates geography, civics, and economic skills. Units of study focus on Islam, African Civilizations, Feudal Japan, European Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Age of Exploration. Emphasis will be placed on the integration of World Geography and World History as well as relating history to current events.

## 6th Grade

Emphasis in sixth grade social studies is placed on a global study of Pre-History through the Fall of Rome with a balance of history and geography. Civilizations studied will include Egypt, Kush, Mesopotamia, Indus Valley, China, Greece, and Rome. The interrelationships of history, geography, citizenship, humanities, and current events are emphasized.

## 7th Grade

The seventh grade social studies curriculum is an historical study from the Fall of Rome through the Age of

## 8th Grade

The eighth grade social studies curriculum focuses on the study of United States history, geography, and United States / Arizona government. Citizenship and current events are strongly emphasized, and the Constitution is a focus of study. The course begins with a review of early U.S. history, which is followed by focused study of U.S. history from the Revolutionary War through the period of reconstruction. The year ends with an introduction to the time periods from the turn of the century to the present.



# Elective Curricula

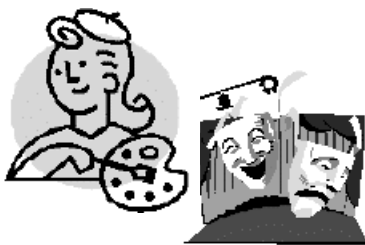
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Elective courses are offered at each grade level to provide a greater breadth of learning and to introduce students to the elective areas they will be able to enter in high school. Elective curricula are designed to complement, enhance, and integrate learning opportunities with the core curricula. Students may choose elective courses based on availability of courses, staffing at their site, and space. Many of the elective course offerings are available at multiple grade levels, while others are unique to a particular grade level. Elective curricula are structured to meet state standards for proficiency by the end of the eighth grade year as mandated by the Arizona State Board of Education Code. Students who choose year-long elective courses will have fewer elective opportunities. Those students who participate in semester-long electives, may have more elective options available to them. The availability of all elective course offerings is dependent on staffing and space availability.

It is important to note that students wishing to take two (2) year-long electives, should plan on completing the required computer proficiency by the end of the 7th grade. This is especially important for students who plan to take a full load of advanced placement classes, or enroll in the International Baccalaureate program at the high school level, and who may not have room for the Computer Basics class in their high school schedules. Students who fall into this category should work closely with the counseling staff at their middle school site to plan a course of study that will allow them to transition smoothly into the advanced high school programs.

## Fine Arts

Fine arts electives are available at the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels and include both visual and performing arts courses. Typical fine arts electives include, band, strings, chorus or choir, visual arts, and drama. Students may choose to take certain fine arts electives in a multiple year strand in preparation for more advanced classes at the high school level.



## Foreign Languages

Foreign language studies at the middle school level are offered as an 8<sup>th</sup> grade elective. Students who maintain a B average in their seventh grade Humanities / Language Arts classes are eligible to take either Spanish or French. These are rigorous courses with an emphasis placed on listening, reading, speaking, and writing to facilitate communication in the target language. Vocabulary acquisition and a cultural overview are integral components of Level I coursework. Students who complete the Level I course successfully may be considered for enrollment in Level II courses in high school. Students who are considering enrollment in the International Baccalaureate program in high school should plan to take Spanish I or French I in their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.



## Computers

Computer and technology courses offer instruction in keyboarding, computer applications, multimedia, graphics video production, and Internet.



## Physical Education

Physical education is offered as an elective at all middle schools and provides a variety of instructional units in the following categories: team sports, lifetime sports, and physical conditioning. Emphasis is placed on skill development, sportsmanship, and improving personal fitness levels.



## Independent Investigations

Taught by Gifted Specialists, Independent Investigations is a semester long, hands-on class, designed with special emphasis on non-verbal / spatial intelligence. Enrollment is open to all gifted learners. The class focuses on creative and productive thinking, problem-solving and personal development. The content is delivered in a three-year rotation, which includes Creating Visual Images, Architecture and Building the Future.

# Especially For Parents

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This section has been reserved for information that parents of middle school students might find useful. You will find information from several sources, including the Scottsdale Unified School District Website (<http://www.susd.org>). Please visit the District Website often to keep up with the latest in Middle School and other District news.



The **National Middle School Association** has been a voice for those committed to the educational and developmental needs of young adolescents. NMSA is the only national education association dedicated exclusively to the growth of middle level education. NMSA provides professional development, journals, books, research, *The Family Connection*, Middle Matters Online, and other valuable information to assist educators and parents on an ongoing basis. NMSA maintains a website at <http://www.nmsa.org>



**Uniform Code of Conduct** is a SUSD publication developed by the District to “provide students, parents, and staff with a clear outline of student’s rights and behavioral expectations.” A copy of the Uniform Code of Conduct is provided to each student at the beginning of the school year, and contains the Parent / Student Agreement and the Parent Permission for Media Access form, both of which are to be returned to your local school. In addition to information about student rights, responsibilities, and behavior, the guide provides a wide variety of general information from athletics to immunizations to parent liability, and much more. Parents who do not have a Uniform Code of Conduct guide may obtain one from their Middle School or from the District office.

**TIPS FOR PARENTS** The following are "Tips for Living Successfully with Your Young Adolescent." The tips quoted are from *H.E.L.P. How to Enjoy Living with a Preadolescent* and *MORE H.E.L.P.* These pamphlets, especially designed for parents and guardians of children 10-15, are authored by Judith Baenen, published by the National Middle School Association, and appear on their website along with other valuable information.

- **Think Ahead**...One of our best tools as parents is being prepared. As your son or daughter gets to the middle school years, get ready for at least occasional conflicts. Think through what is truly important to you. Is the youngster's hairstyle as important as homework? Isn't curfew more of a concern than crabbiness? Obviously, dawdling is a lot easier to accept than drugs. As these give-and-take situations start, know ahead of time what areas you are willing to negotiate and what areas are absolutes.
- **Break down big chores into small parts.** Sometimes young people feel overwhelmed by tasks, especially those they've let go for a long time. A disastrous bedroom, twenty-three overdue math assignments, a long-term project that's "suddenly" due in a few days (or hours!); all of these cause the preadolescent to choose to give up rather than get started. Help your child by setting up smaller goals: clean off your bed; get five assignments done tonight; assemble the materials for the project. Preadolescents have trouble structuring tasks so that they are more approachable. In an even and off-hand way, we can help them in this.
  - Encourage your middle schooler to keep a daily list (weekly is too much) with a few things on it to be done that day. When the task is completed, draw a line through it to show accomplishment.
  - Don't hesitate to remind your middle schooler about appointments and due dates. Try to think ahead about materials required for a project (unless you look forward to late-evening visits to K-Mart). This will not last forever.
- **Be willing to listen**, but don't poke or pry. Kids this age value independence and often seem secretive. Keeping to themselves is part of the separateness they are trying to create. Let them know you'd love to help them, but don't push them into a defensive position.
- **When reprimanding, deal only with the precise problem**, don't bring in other issues. "The trash is still here, and I want it out, now," is better than, "You are so lazy! I told you to take that trash out two hours ago and it's still here! You'd live in a pigsty, wouldn't you? Well, you aren't the only one in this house, you know..."If the issue is minor, keep things light.. Call attention to them in a humorous way, so your middle-schooler knows you want action but you aren't being punitive. "Either the cat's smarter than I thought or you left the milk carton open on the counter. One of you please put it back before it spoils."
- **Don't use power unless it's urgent.** Parents have the ultimate power and kids know it. We don't have to "prove" it to them at every turn. Save your strength for those really important issues you've decided are non-negotiable. Eventually kids are going to possess power of their own, and we want them to be able to use it wisely.