

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Weston, Massachusetts

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

GRADES 6 - 8

2010 - 2011

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PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

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Weston Middle School

Mission

The Weston Middle School strives for excellence and fosters a community of learners, guiding students toward their optimal intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.

Vision

The Weston Middle School community fosters academic growth, encourages personal development, and strives for each student to respect her or him self and others. We believe in learning as a process and respect both individual learning styles and the diverse cultural and family backgrounds of our students. A variety of teaching methods is utilized to achieve a shared goal of success for all students. Students are encouraged to develop high expectations for themselves and to meet their goals. All members of the community work collaboratively toward shared ideals, while accommodation is made to meet the needs of the individual. We model mutual respect and tolerance. Students are held responsible for positive contributions to a safe environment for learning and playing.

Implementation

Weston Middle School students thrive in the intimacy of our school where they are closely monitored and feel “known.” The house system is the structure that provides the basis for close collaboration among all members of a student’s team, including parents, teachers, administrators, and coaches. A student enters the Weston Middle School as a child and leaves as a young adolescent. During these years the student develops a greater understanding of personal values, while gaining a perspective on cultural and ideological diversity. The student is encouraged to: advocate for self, yet respect the needs of others; avoid harmful behavior, yet take appropriate risks; embrace creative solutions, yet understand limits and consequences; participate in new activities, yet remain responsible for academic expectations. The Weston Middle School years provide an opportunity to grow and develop, explore and fail, think critically, gain skills and test limits all within the structure of our caring learning community.

Goals

At Weston Middle School all students will:

1. Participate in a well-rounded, quality program that develops their multiple, diverse talents.
2. Act responsibly as they grow to become critical thinkers, problem solvers and independent learners.
3. Develop a sense of self-respect, as they are recognized for positive contributions to the learning community.
4. Build upon successful experiences through participation in curricular and extracurricular offerings including rigorous, challenging academics; experimental and performance-based arts; and interest-based activities and athletics.
5. Respect the diversity of our community and the world, fostering a sense of tolerance and empathy for others.
6. Dare to take appropriate risks and succeed or fail in a safe environment guided by caring teachers, parents, and support staff.
7. Engage in active learning opportunities, and apply skills and talents to real-world problems.
8. Think critically about the world and their role in it as they explore opportunities for service to others within and outside our community.
9. Learn as a community and understand what it means to be a responsible citizen.
10. Discover the joy of learning and all of its wonder.

Weston Middle School

Guidance Counselors:

Jane Clayton-Matthews

Kim Roslonek

Kari Anne Wye

Principal's Message to Weston Middle School Students

Weston Middle School offers a challenging and balanced program. This document is designed to assist you in understanding the full scope and sequence of what we offer our students. Parents and students, in collaboration with school personnel, should use this document as a guide when discussing course choices. The course request process will begin in January, and it is our goal to have student requests entered into our system during the spring, finalizing student schedules by late spring or early summer.

In addition to classroom courses, the Middle School offers a wide variety of co- and extra-curricular activities for students. These options range from competitive sports and performing arts, to student government and many special interest organizations. I encourage all students to participate in our comprehensive program because it will allow them to develop new perspectives, meet other students, and tailor their middle school experience to their interests. We strive to create successful challenges and experiences both within and outside the classroom.

In the scheduling process, it is my desire to offer each student an optimal program based on core requirements and special interests. However, in this process there are limits. Conflicts during the scheduling process may occur and other choices will have to be made. Please be assured that we will do our best to meet requests and have the least conflicts possible.

Finally, I believe the Middle School curriculum is well developed and the courses meet the needs of our students and the Standards, Big Ideas, and Benchmarks of our district. It is my hope that our students will become independent learners and thinkers. I give credit to the exceptional teachers you will encounter in this process, who work diligently designing and enhancing our program. I hope students will develop their talents and become skilled problem-solvers who can use what the school has to offer to make a difference in our world.

Sincerely,

John Gibbons

John Gibbons
Principal

MIDDLE SCHOOL HOUSE SYSTEM

The house system is the heart of the Middle School, providing both an academic and self-esteem promoting structure for the young adolescent. A house is a transitional structure, which melds the departmental emphases of the High School with the traditional "homeroom" pattern of the elementary schools.

The houses have teams of teachers in English, history/social studies, science, and mathematics. The house facilities include an office, a conference room, and classrooms. Grouping is heterogeneous, except in mathematics classes. All students take courses outside the house in health and physical education, the arts, and foreign languages.

The house office and corridors with adjacent classrooms are "home" for the Middle School student. Each house elects a House Council and holds house meetings for sharing information and planning activities. House officers often initiate and help organize house activities, and athletic events. House faculty meet several times a week to share information about students, develop strategies for instruction, and plan programs. The Middle School house system has proved to be a popular and successful structure for meeting the diverse academic and social needs of students at an important point in their personal development.

Parents are encouraged to maintain close contact with the school regarding their child's progress. Appointments with house faculty may be scheduled for the first Wednesday afternoons of most months as well as at other times, which are mutually convenient.

REPORTING PROGRESS

Report cards are issued four times during the school year. Grades are reported for the first term; second term and first semester; third term; and fourth term, second semester and for the year.

Marks found on report cards may be any of the following:

A = Excellent	F = Failing
B = Above Average	P = Passing
C = Average	W = Withdrawn
D = Poor	

Plus and minus signs may be used to indicate levels of achievement within the range of letter grades A through D. D- is considered the minimum passing grade.

Special reports may be issued in the middle of each marking period to call the attention of students and their parents, to the fact that student work is not up to the standards expected or to commend students for outstanding work. In many instances it is desirable that such notices be supplemented by a conference between the student, his/her parents, and the teacher. On occasion students and their parents may wish to discuss scholastic difficulties with guidance counselors as well. Teachers may also use special reports at any time to record work students have done exceptionally well.

Special reports are also issued as a supplement to report card grades, indicating unsatisfactory or failing work. These reports will give the reasons why work is unsatisfactory or failing and will also suggest ways in which students can improve their level of achievement and also to commend students for outstanding work.

COURSE SELECTION

Middle School course selection is determined by parents and counselors who work with the principal to establish student schedules. All 7th and 8th grade students take the core subjects of English, history/social studies, science, mathematics, foreign language, and health and physical education.

Except for students newly enrolled in the school, students will not be allowed to enter full year courses after October 15 of each school year unless entrance to a course involves a change in course level within a given discipline or subject. Such a change must be accompanied by written permission of the principal.

Also, middle school students take a series of electives in art, design/construction, technology, drama, dance, and music. These are scheduled in an arts rotation which consists of nine-week units in various areas. The principal establishes the arts rotation schedules. See the section below titled "Arts Rotation" for descriptions of those elective courses.

ARTS ROTATION

In Grade 6, students will take 4 courses in a rotation, Art, Drama, Music and Guidance Seminar. In Grade 7, students will choose from Visual Art, Design Construction, Drama, Robotics and Music.

Students at Grade 8 take four quarters of art electives. In addition, vocal and instrumental music course offerings are available to students, grades 6-8. Class sizes and schedule conflicts may affect availability of some art choices.

Overall, the Middle School arts rotations by grade level will be as follows:

Grade 6: One quarter each of Guidance Seminar, Music, Art, or Drama in a rotation.

Grade 7: One quarter of four of the following: Drama, Music, Robotics, Art, or Design/Construction.

Grade 8: One quarter of four of the following: Scene Study, Acting and Improvisation, Art/Architecture, Drawing, Digital Photography, Dance, Musical Theatre, Design/Construction, Sculpture, Video Journalism, Music Theory, or Advanced Robotics.

PLEASE NOTE: There is always the possibility that courses listed in the Program of Studies may not run due to low enrollment or budget constraints.

ELECTIVES IN ARTS ROTATION

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Course M860 GRADE 6 ART

M870 GRADE 7 ART

The Middle School art curriculum exposes students to drawing, painting, printing, color theory, sculpting, and mask making. The program aims to make all students art literate. Teachers will coach artists to attend to detail, explore materials and techniques, develop their own style of expression, and produce quality work. These studio courses teach skills and appreciation while exhibitions, contests and publications provide public recognition of student achievement.

Course M862 GRADE 6 DRAMA

M872 GRADE 7 DRAMA

Students explore the dramatic process by working together to create a variety of characters and imagery. They play theater games that help them sharpen their acting skills such as body movement, vocal expression, listening and concentration, imagination and spontaneity. They learn how to “stage” their ideas to communicate to an audience, and in turn, they learn to look critically at the performances of others. Students work as a team to create improvisational dramas and prepared scenes, using their own experiences as sources, as well as poems, music, and written dialogue.

Course M866 GRADE 6 MUSIC

This course will offer instruction in the mechanics and appreciation of music. The courses will include singing, listening, improvisation, and movement. Students will learn about melody, rhythm, harmony, form, dynamics, and tone color.

Course M878 GRADE 7 MUSIC

This course will offer instruction in the mechanics and appreciation of music, utilizing the guitar. Previous experience playing guitar is not required. Students will learn to play basic chords in first position and to read standard and tablature notation. Students will learn a variety of accompaniment styles and standard strumming patterns, as well as a repertoire of songs from popular and folk traditions. Heavy emphasis will be placed on singing while playing.

Course M881 GRADE 8 VIDEO JOURNALISM

Students in this course will be introduced to the history and formats of journalistic writing and will have the responsibility of filming, producing, writing and editing a video news program. They will learn skills in the areas of organization, time-management, teamwork, and critiquing their own work.

Using the student video lab, students will produce news stories which they will edit into a newscast. These programs will be shown in grade meetings and during lunches, keeping the student body informed on school news, current events, and the community as a whole.

Course M882 GRADE 8 ACTING & IMPROVISATION

Acting skills are taught through theater games and improvisation. Students develop a range of characters and work together as an ensemble to dramatize

their ideas. Projects may include creating original plays and working with written dramatic material.

Course M883 GRADE 8 SCENE STUDY

Students will learn the basics of directing, rehearsing and performing scenes from published plays. For a culminating project, classes choose from a variety of options such as performing a one-act play, presenting a performance of scenes, or working on individual auditions monologues. This is a more advanced acting experience for the student who would like to perform for an audience.

Course M886 GRADE 8 DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

This course introduces students to digital image building. Source images acquired from the web, digital cameras, and scans provide material for image enhancement and manipulation using Adobe PhotoShop software. References to image development in history are discussed as useful to contemporary work. High quality printing techniques on various photo and art papers are also covered. The skills learned provide students with an important foundation for future computer graphic work at the High School and beyond.

Course M887 GRADE 8 MUSICAL THEATER

Students will learn about the genre of the American Musical Theater by studying its history, creating their own original musical scenes, and performing scenes from some of our most famous creators of musicals, such as Rogers and Hammerstein or Stephen Sondheim. Students will also be involved in all aspects of the production of their scenes from costuming, sets and lighting to singing, acting and dancing.

Course M888 GRADE 8 DANCE

Students will learn basic dance steps and build them into short dances at the end of each class. We move in a variety of dance styles to a wide range of recorded music, as well having some classes with a live musician. Students do not need prior dance experience—just a willingness to move and have fun with it! Students will also be exposed to trends in dance history and the current dance scene, and will also learn to choreograph some of their own dances.

Course M889 GRADE 8 DRAWING

Through a series of drawing exercises in contour, gesture, tone and color layering, students are provided with a foundation of techniques that allow for the development of a personal style. Projects such as self-portraits are accomplished in pencil, charcoal, Craypas, and mixed media. Realism, which is stressed early in the course, naturally evolves into a more expressive or abstract handling of subject and materials.

Course M893 GRADE 8 INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC THEORY AND COMPOSTION

This course will provide 8th grade students with all the tools necessary to enter high school as musically competent individuals, regardless of their specific musical interests. The following topics will be covered at an introductory level, with emphasis placed on their relevance to performing ensembles and the students' prior musical interests: reading and writing musical notation, understanding basic musical concepts (pitch, rhythm, chords, etc.) and basic composition, listening critically, and making connections and applications across musical genres. This course will utilize

computer lab technology, allowing students to make use of interactive software and MIDI keyboards, making theory and composition both engaging and enjoyable.

Course M871 GRADE 7 MATH LAB

This course will target students who will benefit from additional support in mathematics as identified by teacher recommendation, MCAS and ERB results. It will focus on addressing student mathematical needs to support their work in math classes and on the MCAS. The course will be computer based, using online resources to develop skills, problem solving, and open response strategies.

Course M873 GRADE 8 ELA LAB

This course will target students who will benefit from additional support in English/Language Arts as identified by teacher recommendation, MCAS and ERB results. It will focus on addressing student English/Language Arts needs to support their work in English classes and on the MCAS. The course will be computer based, using online resources to develop vocabulary, reading comprehension, grammar and usage, writing, and open response strategies.

GUIDANCE

Course M868 GRADE 6 GUIDANCE SEMINAR

Taught by the grade-six guidance counselor, this course will focus on concepts of social competency, health and wellness, and anti-bullying. Students will cycle through units focusing on effective communication, interpersonal relationships, problem solving, anti-bullying, reducing stress, coping and resiliency, self-advocacy, organization, time management and contributing to a positive school climate. It will serve as a companion to the grade six-health course, grade-six “Harassment Will Travel” program, and the grade-six “RALI for success in school” program

TECHNOLOGY/ENGINEERING

CourseM874 GRADE 7 ROBOTICS

This course introduces students to concepts in mechanical engineering and computer programming, utilizing the new Lego NxT robotic design system and NxT-G programming environment. Students begin by learning sturdy construction methods with Lego Technics beams through the design of a sturdy chair. The use of gears and other mechanisms to transform speed, torque, and motion are explored. The application and programming of microcomputers are then investigated, applying sensors, motors, and sounds to solve a series of robotic design challenges, learning concepts such as loops, decision trees, and signal thresholds in the process. Finally, the various building and programming techniques learned are applied to one or more open-ended design challenges, such as a robotic amusement park, transportation system or exploration voyage, which emphasize engineering systems. Throughout, students are introduced to the work of current leaders of robotics research, and the application of robotics to real-world applications.

Course M876 GRADE 7 DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION

This course introduces students to the engineering design process, through projects emphasizing structural concepts. Students begin by building and testing to failure models of an antenna tower, beams, and columns, and learning the forces that act on structures, including tension, compression, bending, and shear. Students learn about how these principles apply to the various types of bridge designs including beam bridges, truss bridges, and suspension bridges, and how their design has changed through history. Next, they apply these concepts to the building and testing of prototype truss bridges, using both physical modeling and engineering simulation program to explore concepts such as efficiency and redundancy. In the final unit, students learn about affordable architectural design. Students design a house using a computer-aided design program, and then build a structural model of a timber-frame house, using saws, drills, and various other shop tools.

Course M880 GRADE 8 ART/ARCHITECTURE

In this course, students will study architects and architectural styles and/or periods through history. They will then apply these ideas to a project of their own in which they will conceptualize, plan, and design, and finally construct an architectural model or project based on some aspects of what they have learned.

Course M884 GRADE 8 DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION

An Introduction to Craftsmanship

This elective course gives students experience in design, technological

problem-solving, and craftsmanship in woodworking techniques, using both hand and power tools. Students begin by reviewing shop safety, tool use, and technical drawing, in the context of a simple wood project such as a sanding block. Next, they learn the use of miter saws, routers, bandsaws, sanders, drill presses, and finishing techniques through the design and construction of a fine art miter-joint box or bandsaw box of their own design. In a final project, they design and construct a small table or chair, building a scratch model, then using mortise-and-tenons and other joinery concepts to construct a final product.

Course M890 GRADE 8 ADVANCED LEGO ROBOTICS

In this elective, students will explore advanced concepts and applications in computer programming and mechanical engineering, using the Lego NxT robotics prototyping system. Students will explore the use of data wires, variables, data manipulation, advanced sensors, and wireless communication, applied to signal processing and navigation challenges. Further exploration of mechanical mechanisms will also be done. These advanced software and hardware skills will be applied to investigation of current areas of research in robotics, including cooperating robot 'swarms', sociable robots that express emotion, self-guided vehicles that can navigate through complex environments, intelligent sculptures, and embedded robots used in medical instrumentation. Students will pursue a major design project of their own choosing, culminating in an inventor's showcase and presentation.

Course M885 GRADE 8 SCULPTURE

Students are given the opportunity to build three-dimensional pieces in a variety of materials such as wood, paper plaster, wire, and plastic. Projects might include wire shoes, plaster figures cast in sand, wood scrap assemblages, paper clothing, etc., or works of special interest to individuals. Examples of sculptures from many cultures are examined. Concepts such as balance, unity, movement, repetition of shapes, and structural integrity are considered as part of the design/build process.

ENGLISH

The English courses in grades 6 - 8 are designed to enhance each student's reading, writing, and oral skills. They are also specially designed to encourage open and clear communication, and foster reading for comprehension, information, and enjoyment.

Each course requires homework and student participation in class discussions. In addition, the program is constructed to give students the opportunity to succeed in a wide variety of learning experiences including writing poetry, short stories, and essays; delivering speeches; and reading literature.

Course M262 GRADE 6 READING

Full Year

M263 In Reading classes, all types of literature are read and studied: poetry short stories,

M264 biography, and various types of fiction and non-fiction. Our core novels include *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor, *The Wild Children* by Felice Holman, and *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park.

Personal responses to assigned readings are encouraged both in class discussions and in journal writing. Exercises in reading comprehension and expository writing are a regular practice in Reading.

Course M260 GRADE 6 ENGLISH Full Year
M261 This course is primarily for instruction and practice in written expression. The process writing approach is used and considerable attention is given to revision. Paired conferences, small group work, student-teacher conferences, and ongoing teacher feedback are part of this process. Additionally, class-time focuses on specific skill areas such as vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and punctuation. All of these support the main focus of the course: personal written expression. Every sixth grader is encouraged to use computers for writing and other projects.

Course M270 GRADE 7 ENGLISH Full Year
M271 Reading, writing, and discussion form the core of the seventh grade English
M274 program. Students are encouraged to be active readers, clear writers, and involved classroom participants. This is a year to move from concrete to abstract thinking through rich discussions and reflections.

Students study literature from varied genres including short stories, novels, plays, poetry and non-fiction. They learn key literary concepts and terms, note-taking skills, and essay writing. A particular focus in writing will be on the revision process and correct grammatical usage. Students will also spend time learning the skills and study strategies necessary to tackle the MCAS exam.

Course M280 GRADE 8 ENGLISH Full Year
M281 In Grade 8 English, students read, discuss, and write about literature of
M282 various genres, including fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry. Assignments are designed to deepen and broaden the understanding of key literary terms and improve clarity of written and oral communication. Through literature students will explore important issues that are relevant to their lives, such as justice and coming of age.

By the end of the year, students will improve their overall writing skills, with an emphasis on analytical writing. They will also see writing as a means of thinking through and expressing thoughts and ideas. In addition, students will continue to enrich their vocabulary through reading and exercises.

All eighth grade students will read and study five core texts: *Pathways: Literature for Readers and Writers*, *Of Mice and Men*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Animal Farm*. These core texts are supplemented with additional reading throughout the course.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Foreign language courses in Weston follow the proficiency model of foreign language instruction reflected in the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks and the National Standards for Education. Students are presented with both grammar and vocabulary in context and are encouraged to express themselves in the target language independent of a text as soon as possible. Awareness of cultural differences and similarities is also essential to a complete language education. Interdisciplinary themes allow students to use the language they acquire to learn about their world in general. They also demonstrate a more authentic use for the language as a means of communicating important information.

While Latin does not require the same instructional shift from a more traditional methodology to the proficiency model as do Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, and French, curricular objectives for Latin have

been modified to make study of the language more relevant to students. Projects, games and historical lessons complement working with grammar and vocabulary, which is presented in context and in an age-appropriate manner. In addition, students learn to recognize parts of speech and vocabulary derivatives which enhance their understanding of their native language. Study skills are an essential part of the curriculum as well.

FRENCH/SPANISH

Course M561 GRADE 6 SPANISH

Full Year

Sixth grade Spanish serves as a continuation of the elementary school Spanish program. Students will be taught to express themselves in the target language and comprehend simple statements, commands and descriptive passages. Grammar will be addressed only in context and grammatical accuracy will be secondary to general communication. Hands-on activities, games and songs will be used to reinforce the material. The ultimate goal of studying a second language at this grade level will be enjoyment of, awareness of the need for, and commitment to language study. This course will meet two periods each week.

Course M573 SPANISH NOVICE I

Full Year

Students in this Grade 7 course will continue their study of Spanish that began in the elementary schools. The course will meet four periods per week and the curriculum will build on students' previous learnings. Regular classroom instruction will be supplemented with work conducted in our digital language lab. Students will be encouraged to use both grammar and vocabulary for self-expression and as communication tools for discussing work in other areas of study. Homework will be assigned on a daily basis, and more traditional and project-based assessments will replace the less formal methods used in Spanish classes at the elementary school level. An important focus of language education at this level will continue to be the acquisition of oral/aural skills. In addition, reading and writing will become a more integral part of instruction. Students will be introduced to linguistic structure as an abstract construct that enhances the precision of speech. Work in grammar and vocabulary will be supported by a traditional language text as well as by teacher-designed materials. Classes will be conducted as much as possible in Spanish, and the use of English will be reserved for more complex explanations of grammar or for ensuring student comprehension of less easily understood classroom procedures.

Course M581 SPANISH NOVICE II

Full Year

Prerequisite: Spanish Novice I

This Grade 8 course is designed for students who have successfully completed Spanish Novice I (Course M573). As is the case in Spanish Novice I, the class will be conducted primarily in the target language with English reserved for grammar explanations and for some classroom procedures. Weekly use of the digital language laboratory will supplement class work. The year will begin with a brief review of the material covered in Spanish I. However, at this level, our study will focus beyond everyday situations to include storytelling and histories, both personal and cultural, using the two past tense conjugations of verbs. Additionally, students' language production will be expanded to include command forms, all object pronouns and more idiomatic expressions.

Independent use of the language continues to be an overarching goal of the program, and students will be encouraged to speak and write creatively in

Spanish. Reading and listening selections will provide cultural material from the Spanish speaking world as well as reinforcement of the grammar and vocabulary in each lesson. A traditional language text will serve as a guide for the work; however, much of the sequence and pacing is determined by the teacher in response to the needs of the class. Hands-on projects and interdisciplinary work will help students make connections between the language they are learning and other aspects of their lives. Whenever possible, native speakers will be invited to classes for both formal and informal presentations, and students will be encouraged to use their language skills in real life situations.

Students completing this level of language instruction will be prepared for the Intermediate level at the High School.

Course M570 FRENCH NOVICE I Full Year

This Grade 7 course introduces students to basic concepts of language study, familiarizes them with the various French speaking cultures, and begins the process of building a foundation in vocabulary and grammar which will allow them to communicate in the target language. Traditional teacher-centered instruction will be supplemented with student projects, use of the language laboratory for both drill and listening comprehension exercises, and reading selections. Units of study will include telling time; describing themselves and their friends and families; ordering in a restaurant; and asking for and giving information with regard to weather, daily schedules and activities.

Students will be expected to master the simple present tense; however, as the need arises other tenses may be introduced for comprehension only. Even at this early stage of language acquisition, students will be encouraged to use the language independently to express themselves.

Course M580 FRENCH NOVICE II Full Year

Prerequisite: French Novice I and teacher recommendation

Students in this Grade 8 course will expand their work with the language and culture by learning to express and comprehend simple command forms, personal preferences, object pronouns and many common idiomatic expressions. They also will begin their study of the simple past tense as it is used to tell stories, give personal histories, and describe occurrences in the past. Often major historical events from the target culture will be introduced at this point. Although vocabulary and grammar begun in Novice I will be reviewed, there will be an increase in both the pacing and amount of the material to be mastered. Reading and listening selections, while carefully constructed to reinforce the material presented, will continue to provide challenges for student comprehension. Written and oral assignments will be designed to allow creative, contextualized use of the language.

French Novice II will be conducted entirely in the target language with English reserved only for complex explanations of grammatical structures.

LATIN

Course M511 LATIN NOVICE I Full Year

Students in this introductory Latin course will focus on the connections between Latin, English and the Romance languages; acquire basic vocabulary and grammar needed to read and comprehend the Latin language; and begin their study of ancient Roman history. In addition, students will explore such

cultural topics as the study of Roman houses, families, geography, professions, theater and slavery. Traditional classroom instruction will be enhanced by hands-on projects that encourage the integration of language skills.

Course M512 LATIN NOVICE II Full Year

Prerequisite: Latin Novice I and teacher recommendation

Latin Novice II will review all grammar and vocabulary taught in Latin Novice I and introduce more complex grammatical concepts needed to read, write, and comprehend modified Latin stories and passages. The course will continue to focus on Roman cultural topics, including religion and the stories of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*. Emphasis will be placed on gaining mastery of the concepts of case and the ability to translate and comprehend with ease. Traditional classroom instruction will be supplemented by projects.

MANDARIN CHINESE

Course M510 GRADE 7 MANDARIN CHINESE I Full Year

Prerequisite: None

This course is designed to reflect the proficiency-based orientation of all our oral foreign languages. Classes are instructed primarily in the target language, with English reserved for complex directions or for grammatical explanations not immediately obvious to young students. Producing and responding to simple instructions, expressing wants, exchanging greetings and limited personal information, counting, and naming common objects comprise the bulk of the linguistic goals of this year's study. Cultural information about China, a familiarity with the written language, and an understanding of both similarities and differences between Chinese language and culture and that of the United States are also critical components of our curricular design. As Mandarin is a particularly difficult language for speakers of English to master, students enrolling in this class must commit to a full two years of study before deciding to continue with Chinese or to change languages at the High School.

Course M513 GRADE 8 MANDARIN CHINESE II Full Year

Prerequisite: Mandarin Chinese I

Building on the skills introduced in Mandarin Chinese I, students will add to their knowledge of the spoken and written language. Many of the topic areas covered in Mandarin I are revisited and expanded in the second year of the course. Again, the class is conducted primarily in Chinese, with English reserved for complex conceptual understanding. Entering students are expected to have mastered pin-yin, as well as sufficient characters to express the simple statements or questions presented in the previous year's study. Songs, simple traditional poetry, and folk stories adapted for beginning language learners serve as both a vehicle for developing additional linguistic skills and as an introduction to important components of Chinese culture and history. While the class continues to be teacher directed, independent projects, group projects and work in our digital language lab encourage students to use the language they are studying for creative self-expression.

HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

The history/social studies curriculum is designed to help students acquire the knowledge, judgment, and skills to participate intelligently and responsibly in civic life and continue to learn for themselves. Essential skills of writing expository papers, using library resources and technology,

reading maps, interpreting authentic documents and data, preparing research papers, and participating in discussions are taught and reinforced in all courses.

Course M360 GRADE 6 SOCIAL STUDIES Full Year
M361 This course will introduce all students to the general field of social studies. The first three quarters of the year will be organized around defining and understanding the basics of history, geography, economics, and government. Much emphasis will be placed on skill development in writing, using technology, conducting research, interpreting graphic organizers, and reading maps. Students will spend the fourth quarter studying archaeology and the prehistoric world.

Course M370 GRADE 7 HISTORY OF Full Year
M371 ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS This course will investigate the major components of civilizations in the ancient world. Some examples of cultural areas which will be explored are: government, law, religion, social structure, literature, art, geography, and architecture. This investigation will begin with the early civilization of Sumer. Other units to follow will include the Middle East, India, China, Greece, and the Roman Empire. Throughout the year, emphasis will be placed on refining students' basic skills in research, oral expression, and critical writing.

Course M380 GRADE 8 UNITED STATES HISTORY Full Year
M381 This course will expose students to a variety of materials and experiences designed to reinforce their understanding of history in general, and American history in particular. Besides a chronological survey of political and social events, much emphasis will be placed on the roots of our country's ideals, traditions, and institutions. The annual eighth grade trip to Washington, D.C., will provide the opportunity to make our nation's capital a key component of the course and allow students to see themselves as active participants in the process of government. Within the chronological survey, special emphasis will be given to the period prior to the Civil War. Throughout the year, students will continue to work on skill development; in particular, writing expository essays. Current events will also be integrated to help students connect the past to the present.

MATHEMATICS

The courses in mathematics emphasize the pattern, structure, and unifying ideas of the discipline. Since we have witnessed tremendous growth in uses of mathematics during the past thirty years, it is virtually impossible to predict all our future mathematical needs. We attempt to provide opportunities for students to achieve the mathematical, statistical, and computer literacy that will be required by tomorrow's society. Acquiring problem-solving skills is a major emphasis of the program.

The mathematics department recommends that students take alternate mathematics courses (summer school, on-line, or after-school mathematics courses) only if they have done poorly in the corresponding academic year course or desire such a course for enrichment. When encountering specific mathematics courses for the first time, students should not substitute such alternate courses for regular academic year courses in their mathematics programs. In general only academic year courses provide the time and group interaction necessary to develop an appropriate understanding of the concepts involved. Students will generally not be permitted to skip courses by taking alternate courses and students who take alternate courses prior to the academic year course should do so with the understanding that they will encounter some repetition of material in their academic year course.

For further information about this policy, contact the department chair.

- Course M160 GRADE 6 LEVEL I MATHEMATICS Full Year**
M161 Students in this course should have a solid mastery of their number facts, skill in abstracting, and an active interest in mathematics. The course will include expanding skills with fractions and decimals; work with order of operations and addition of signed numbers; exploring graphs and analyzing data; two-dimensional geometry; an introduction to algebraic concepts; work on patterns in numbers and shapes and expressing those patterns algebraically; and studying special topics from probability. Students will be introduced to the use of spreadsheets as a mathematical tool. Throughout the course students will be exposed to a variety of problems and puzzles designed to develop problem-solving skills and encourage creative thinking.
- Course M162 GRADE 6 LEVEL II MATHEMATICS Full Year**
M163 Students in this course should be able to demonstrate mastery of most number facts. The course will include expanding skills with fractions and decimals; work with order of operations and addition of signed numbers; exploring graphs and analyzing data; two-dimensional geometry; an introduction to algebraic concepts; work on patterns in numbers and shapes and expressing those patterns algebraically; and studying special topics from probability. Students will be introduced to the use of spreadsheets as a mathematical tool. Throughout the course students will be exposed to a variety of problems and puzzles designed to develop problem-solving skills and encourage creative thinking.
- Course M165 GRADE 6 TOPICS IN MATHEMATICS Full Year**
This course is for students concurrently enrolled in Grade 6 Level II Mathematics (Course M162 or M163) who need additional mathematics instruction to succeed in that course. Instruction in Topics is designed to reinforce concepts from Level II Mathematics, address skill weaknesses, develop the habits of mind necessary for success in mathematics, and prepare students for upcoming lessons in Level II Mathematics. Grade 6 Topics meets 2 times a week; the course is a pass/fail course and has no required homework.
- Course M170 GRADE 7 HONORS MATHEMATICS Full Year**
M171 This course is designed to prepare students for Honors Algebra I in Grade 8. The year will be divided into five major topics: patterns and algebraic thinking; signed numbers and exponents; ratio, proportion, and percentages; three dimensional geometry; and probability. Only students with high motivation and demonstrated mathematical achievement should enroll in this course.
- Course M172 GRADE 7 MATHEMATICS Full Year**
M173 Grade 7 Mathematics is a college preparatory course that continues students' exploration of algebraic concepts. Students are recommended for this course by their 6th grade teacher. Course content will consist of five major topics: patterns and algebraic thinking; signed numbers and exponents; ratio, proportion, and percentages; three dimensional geometry; and probability. By the end of the year, students in this course will be prepared to take Grade 8 Algebra I.
- Course M175 GRADE 7 TOPICS IN MATHEMATICS Full Year**
This course is for students concurrently enrolled in Grade 7 Mathematics (Course M172 or M173) who need additional mathematics instruction to

succeed in that course. Instruction in Topics is designed to reinforce concepts from Grade 7 Mathematics, address skill weaknesses, develop the habits of mind necessary for success in mathematics, and prepare students for upcoming lessons in Grade 7 Mathematics. Grade 7 Topics meets 2 times a week; the course is a pass/fail course and has no required homework.

- Course M179 GRADE 7 ALGEBRA Full Year**
This course is a challenging introduction to algebra for selected seventh grade students. Enrollment is by invitation only. Major topics include graphs and functions, solution of linear equations, systems of linear equations and inequalities, quadratic functions, polynomials, factoring, algebraic fractions and their applications, and operations with radicals. Students who successfully complete this course will be eligible for enrollment in Course M189 Grade 8 Applied Advanced Algebra scheduled for introduction in 2010. Both course sequences 179-189 (Grade Seven Algebra followed by Grade Eight Applied Advanced Algebra) and 170(1)-180(1) (Grade Seven Honors Mathematics followed by Grade Eight Honors Algebra One) lead to Honors Geometry in Grade Nine.
- Course M180 GRADE 8 HONORS ALGEBRA I Full Year**
M181 This course is a challenging introduction to algebra. Major topics will include linear equations, graphs and functions, systems of linear equations, polynomials, factoring, and quadratic functions. Algebra I features hands-on investigations of interesting and meaningful problems. Students will use a practical blend of technology-related and paper-and-pencil problem-solving tools including graphing calculators. Only students with high motivation, exceptional ability and demonstrated mathematical achievement should enroll in this course.
- Course M182 GRADE 8 ALGEBRA I Full Year**
M183 This course is a college-preparatory introduction to Algebra. Major topics will include linear equations, graphs and functions, systems of linear equations, polynomials, factoring, and quadratic functions. Algebra I features hands-on investigations of interesting and meaningful problems. Students will use a practical blend of technology-related and paper-and-pencil problem-solving tools including graphing calculators.
- Course M185 GRADE 8 TOPICS IN ALGEBRA Full Year**
This course is for students concurrently enrolled in Grade 8 Algebra I (Course M182 or M183) who need additional mathematics instruction to succeed in that course. Instruction in Topics is designed to reinforce concepts from Algebra I, address skill weaknesses, develop the habits of mind necessary for success in mathematics, and prepare students for upcoming lessons in Algebra I. Grade 8 Topics in Algebra meets 2 times a week; the course is a pass/fail course and has no required homework.
- Course M189 GRADE 8 APPLIED ADVANCED ALGEBRA Full Year**
This course is for eighth grade students who have successfully completed a full year of algebra, usually by taking course M179. The course continues work in challenging algebraic topics such as factoring, rational algebraic expressions, multi-variable systems of equations and inequalities, and radicals. In addition, students will use algebra to explore other mathematical areas such as conditional probability, solid geometry, continued fractions, numeration systems, game theory and three-dimensional graphing. Both this course and Course M180/181 (Grade Eight Honors Algebra One) lead to

Honors Geometry in grade nine.

MUSIC

The Music Department provides opportunities for participation in vocal and instrumental groups, and offers general music courses at grades 6 and 7. The purpose of the music offerings is the cultivation of a lasting appreciation of music and the personal enrichment brought about through participation and study. Music students also have the opportunity to audition for the Junior Northeast Festival.

Course M901 GRADE 6 MIXED CHORUS Full Year
M902 GRADE 7 MIXED CHORUS Full Year
M903 GRADE 8 MIXED CHORUS Full Year

Students will be taught harmony, diction, and other vocal techniques needed for good choral singing. Music selections will include a range of styles representing different cultures and eras. The choruses will perform in the winter and spring concerts, and rehearsals and performances outside of regular school hours will be required.

Course M900 GRADE 7/8 MADRIGALS Full Year

This is a performing group established to enrich the serious chorus student. Admission to this group is by audition only. Students selected for Madrigals are also required to sing with the 7th or 8th grade chorus. Rehearsals and performances outside of regular school hours will be required.

Course M908 GRADE 6 BAND Full Year
M904 GRADE 7 BAND Full Year
M905 GRADE 8 BAND Full Year
M909 GRADE 6 STRING ORCHESTRA Full Year
M907 GRADE 7/8 STRING ORCHESTRA Full Year

The instrumental groups will offer instruction in the development and refinement of intermediate performing and ensemble techniques. Students will continue to broaden their knowledge of music fundamentals: scales, keys, rhythm patterns, dynamics, and expression of symbols. Rehearsals and performances outside of regular school hours will be required.

Course M906 JAZZ BAND Full Year

This course is a performing group established to enrich the serious band student. Admission to this group is by audition only and based on the instrumentation needs of the group. Students will learn the language of jazz through the study of jazz fundamentals: blues scales, swing rhythms, articulations, dynamics, and improvisation. Rehearsals and performances outside of regular school hours will be required. Students in the Jazz Band also will be required to play in the 7th or 8th grade band (7th/8th grade orchestra for string bassists).

The scheduling of all music electives is contingent upon class sizes, enrollments, and lack of conflicts. Students may have to choose between music electives under certain circumstances.

SCIENCE

The Weston secondary science and technology program is designed to guide students toward science literacy in our increasingly complex technological world. Our goal is to help students

learn to think scientifically in analyzing and evaluating important science-based questions, while at the same time encouraging curiosity and wonder about the details they observe in the world around them. Asking good questions is the first step in understanding the scientific issues that affect our lives, and students will have many opportunities to test their questions in our rich, laboratory-based curriculum. The curriculum content of all Weston science courses is consistent with the Massachusetts state science frameworks, thus Weston students are well prepared for the MCAS examinations in science.

Course M460 GRADE 6 PHYSICAL SCIENCE Full Year
M461 The first semester of sixth grade science centers on science process skills and how scientists solve problems. Students learn how to conduct an experiment and write a formal lab report based on their work. Content topics in the semester will focus on the chemical principles that determine how matter combines and changes in the real world. In the second semester the focal areas will be forces, motion, energy, work, heat, and electricity. Frequent lab activities in all units are supplemented with selected readings, homework, and appropriate technology. Organizational skills will be emphasized throughout the year by use of a notebook as a place where class notes, papers, and other information are kept.

Course M470 GRADE 7 LIFE SCIENCE Full Year
M471 This beginning life science course gives students an introduction to the biological world around them. Central areas of study and investigation include cell structure and function, classification and the five kingdoms of living organisms, ecology, genetics, human body systems, and evolution. Significant skill-based learning goals for this course include teamwork in lab, effective note taking, personal organization, and meaningful participation in class and lab. Content and skills are developed through a variety of approaches including technology based activities, inquiry labs, and regular assessments. Students are encouraged to grow in skill and confidence as individual members of a cooperative team.

Course M480 GRADE 8 EARTH SCIENCE Full Year
M481 Planet Earth is the focus of this course in which students will develop an understanding of the interaction among Earth's systems: geosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, and cryosphere. Students will use the scientific process and inquiry to increase awareness of the complexities of the physical world around them. Major themes include: Earth's origin and the progression of its development; changes that occur in the interior and on the surface of Earth caused by internal geological and external meteorological forces; Earth's place in the universe; and climate change, which includes sustainable and non-sustainable energy resources. Major emphasis will be placed on the acquisition of organizational skills, discovery by inquiry and critical thinking, and presentation of experimental information. Technology proficiency will be stressed in all curriculum areas as students deepen their understanding of the scientific process, experimentation, and the importance of formulating essential questions in science.

WELLNESS

The Wellness Program, Grades 6-8, contains health and physical education courses that are designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to make good health decisions. The program has adopted the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework's core concepts: health, literacy, health self-management, and health promotion. The goals and objectives

of this program are met through the courses in health and physical education.

Course M760 GRADE 6 PHYSICAL EDUCATION Full Year
Grade 6 Physical Education will continue the themes addressed in grade 5. There will be an emphasis on fitness, and basic psychomotor skill acquisition in the context of team sports and developing healthy social relationships. Units offered include: basketball, field hockey, soccer, volleyball, track, swimming, volleyball, and badminton. The course will meet for two class periods each week.

Course M761 GRADE 6 HEALTH EDUCATION Full Year
This course for sixth graders will focus on health education topics. The course will provide students with opportunities to learn more about their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development, and help them develop health-related refusal and decision-making skills. This course will meet for one period each week.

Course M770 GRADE 7 PHYSICAL EDUCATION Full Year
Grade 7 Physical Education will provide the opportunity for students to further develop increased psychomotor skills and advance to game application of those skills. Fitness concepts are emphasized, with students encouraged to explore their own responsibility and skills needed for personal fitness. Units offered include: football, ultimate, basketball, field hockey, soccer, volleyball, track, swimming, strength training, cardiovascular health, volleyball, and badminton. The course will meet for two class periods each week.

Course M780 GRADE 8 PHYSICAL EDUCATION Full Year
Grade 8 Physical Education will continue the process of improving advanced psychomotor skills while also transitioning students from sport activities to individual fitness activities. The development of personal fitness goals, and increased responsibility and accountability for one's health, personal behavior, and self-efficacy are emphasized. Units offered will include: fitness concepts, strength training, volleyball, track, swimming, and racquet sports (pickleball, tennis, and badminton), rugby, and team handball.

Course M771 GRADE 7 HEALTH EDUCATION Full Year
Grade 7 Health Education focuses on personal responsibility and healthy decision-making. Students will cover a number of important topics for early adolescent emotional development, including communication skills, violence awareness and prevention, stress and anxiety management, human sexuality, disease transmission and prevention, and mental health.

Course M781 GRADE 8 HEALTH EDUCATION 2 Units
This course builds upon the grade 7 Health Education curriculum to assist students with improving the skills necessary to resist initiation of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use behaviors. Other health curriculum topics covered during this course includes AIDS/HIV education and participation in the human sexuality seminar program.