

# **ROTOLO MIDDLE SCHOOL**

## **Curriculum Overview**

### **Grades 7**

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Carol Weimer, Assistant Principal

Dear Parents,

This general overview of instruction in both the ACADEMIC and EXPLORATORY areas is provided to help you to understand your student's activities throughout this current school year. All students are also involved in an **Advisory** curriculum that centers around six "pillars of character", which are: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship.

There have been many changes over the past few years in the way instruction is delivered to students. The structure of the school day is quite flexible. Very often, students receive their instruction through integrated lessons, i.e. a social studies project also becomes an LMC research assignment with a reading, writing, and technology component. This way as many as five different disciplines are used to complete one project.

RMS houses each grade level in a separate wing. Each grade is then divided into TEAMS of 60-90 students at the sixth grade level and 120-150 at the seventh and eighth grade level. Each team has BLOCKS of time during the day that are dedicated to academic or exploratory work. Your student will find many occasions when the academic and exploratory course work is also integrated, i.e., the interweaving of the study of Greece with the study of art/music.

Except for math at all grade levels, our classes are not tracked by academic ability. We have heterogeneous class groupings. At the 7th grade level, there is an advanced math class and an Algebra class for select students, and at the 8th grade level there are two levels of Algebra. All other students take the regular 7th or 8th grade math curriculum.

During their team meetings, teachers focus not only on lesson planning but on the learning and social needs of individual students. Every attempt is made to provide an excellent learning environment for our students.

You are encouraged to attend all co-curricular school events, to volunteer your service, share your talents, and to keep in close contact with your student's team. **YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AT ROTOLO MIDDLE SCHOOL.** It is very helpful, however, if you let us know when you are coming to visit so that we might arrange our time to give you the time you need. We recognize that your child's education is a joint effort between home and school.

Sincerely,

Donald McKinney  
Principal

Carol S. Weimer  
Assistant Principal

Steve Maciejewski  
Associate Principal

Seventh grade students have a special opportunity during this year to push toward academic independence as they reach higher skill levels and maturity in each area of study and social behaviors.

For most students, this is the year when it is wise to stress the development and practice of a consistent study model. As the year progresses, many students develop the maturity to take personal responsibility for work without parental or teacher “nagging”. Natural creativity that is not dependent on parental ideas should be encouraged...even when the product does not meet an adult standard of excellence.

## MATH

### Variables and Patterns

- Understand that variables are quantities that change
- Understand that patterns describe a predictable change
- Understand relationships between variables
- Create and interpret tables, graphs, and simple equations

### Accentuate the Negative

- Develop strategies for adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing integers
- Compare integers and represent them on a number line
- Graph ordered pairs
- Understand opposites and absolute values

### Stretching and Shrinking

- Enlarge and shrink shapes
- Understand properties of similar figures
- Perform transformations
- Find missing lengths of similar figures

### Comparing and Scaling

- Understand and use different ways to compare data through...
  1. Ratios/rates
  2. Percents
  3. Difference
  4. Fraction
  5. Scaling
  6. Proportions

### What Do You Expect?

- Understand and use experimental and theoretical probability
- Find possible outcomes using lists, counting trees, and area models
- Understand the distinction between equally likely and non-equally likely outcomes

### Geometry (Supplemented)

- Geometric concepts (point, line, plane, etc.)
- Measuring and classifying angles
- Finding area and perimeter of polygons and irregular shapes
- Finding area and circumference of circles

### Computational Review (Supplemented)

- All operations with decimals
- All operations with fractions
- Place value and rounding
- Finding mean, mode, median, and range

## LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Writing: Mechanics of writing, personal and public writing, sentence and paragraph structure and development, proper use of grammar, and research skills
2. Oral Communication: classroom presentations, group discussion, interviews, and book talks.
3. Reading:
  - A. Continue to develop an appreciation for good literature.
  - B. Improve fluency and comprehension.
  - C. Expand vocabulary and spelling skills. (Wordmasters and analogies taught)
  - D. Improve critical thinking skills.
  - E. Develop technical reading strategies.
  - F. Establish lifelong reading habits.

Each student will be exposed to a variety of genre. Students will be expected to share their reading in a variety of ways. The major goal of the reading program at RMS is to help students read with skill and enjoyment.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

Seventh grade curriculum continues the Social Studies spiral and builds on the Age of Exploration in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and starts with the First Contact. Students start the year focused on European exploration and colonization. Students then study the development of our nation and its government, stressing the revolution and the ensuing creation of our constitution.

Following our study of the foundation of American government, we will witness American expansion and division as we prepare to study the causes of our country's civil war. In addition to a historical study, each unit will cover local, state, and national objectives in the following areas: economic systems, history, political systems, geography, decision-making, and individual development and identity.

During 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students will study the following units:

First Contact  
Founding New Societies  
Revolution  
The Constitution  
New Democracy and Expansion  
Division and Civil War  
Reconstruction

## SCIENCE

Seventh grade students use the inquiry method to observe, question, predict, evaluate, and draw conclusions. The science program is essentially experiential in nature. The focus of the seventh grade science program is to further student interest in their living environment; to recognize its relationship to themselves, and to give students the tools to work on scientific problems independently.

This is the first year when students have the opportunity to work in fully equipped science laboratories. The core units of study are:

- \* River Study (Plant & Animal Classification included as well as chemical testing & exotic species, data collection and analysis)
- \* Prairie Study (Plant & Animal Classification included as well as scientific tools used in field testing, data collection and analysis)
- \* Groundwater issues: The Fruitvale Story, Rocks and Minerals.
- \* Cells and Cell Processes
- \* Microscope Unit/Kingdom Protista
- \* Human Body Systems - structure/function; wellness and diseases
- \* Dissection - Earthworm, frog, chicken wing, bone, heart, and eye

## EXPLORATORY COURSES

ART - Students work with various medias, tools and processes to construct works of art. Students continue to study great artists, historical cultures and to learn the basic principles and language of art criticism.

P.E. - Students learn the importance of life-long fitness through physical education. Activities which promote fitness are: individual sports, team sports, skill development, and cooperative learning. Good citizenship, sportsmanship, responsibility, accountability, and respect are developed throughout the year.

**SHOP/DRAFTING** - Students are introduced to the use of basic shop tools/technology and construction materials. Through the construction of small items, students learn shop safety, to follow pattern/instructions, to be responsible for tools, machines, and materials, and to pursue timely task completion. Students also study basic drafting techniques that involve triangle and T-square use, measuring and design. Through these exercises, students practice basic math skills including: measurement, fractions, and computation.

**COMMUNICATION ARTS** - This is a beginning course in speech communication. The class meets the needs of students by joining simple instruction in communications theory with opportunities to develop skills through practical applications. Students deliver informative and persuasive speeches using extemporaneous and impromptu methods. Students learn how to apply good speech delivery techniques to all of their classroom presentations. They learn to analyze their own speaking and listening skills to identify areas for improvement and become active interpreters of and respondents to the speech communication encountered in their everyday lives.

**SPANISH** - Students are introduced to the fundamentals of the Spanish language. Emphasis is placed on developing speaking and writing skills using survival phrases and everyday conversational topics. During the trimester, students prepare for the Level I Spanish course offered in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or high school.

**FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE** - Students are introduced to basic living skills. Kitchen equipment, principles of cooking, nutrition, and kitchen safety are major areas of focus during the foods unit. Through the construction of sports bags or boxer shorts, students learn scissor/needle safety, following patterns/instructions, proper use of a sewing machine, and time management skills.

**COMPUTERS** - The goal for students in the seventh grade computer environment is to become an independent user. They review the operating system and basic vocabulary necessary for working in the lab. Students use applications for word processing, drawing, spreadsheet, as well as various presentation programs that incorporate the use of digital cameras. Students master Internet searching strategies, safety, and website evaluation.

**FRENCH** – In 7<sup>th</sup> grade French, students expand upon their knowledge of basic vocabulary learned in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Topics covered include personal descriptions, leisure-time activities, and telling time. Students also examine the geography and culture of French-speaking countries.

## **MUSIC PERFORMANCE GROUPS**

We are very proud of our music programs at Batavia Middle School. They offer the opportunity for students to develop skills individually as well as perform in a large group ensemble.

**ORCHESTRA** - Seventh grade orchestra students continue to learn the fundamentals of producing a good tone on their stringed instruments through proper bow hold, bow distribution, and left hand techniques. Vibrato and shifting are introduced. Students are challenged through more extensive ear training, more complex rhythms, and two-octave major scale patterns.

Instrument technique and basic music theory are supplemented through technique and theory books that students purchase. There are opportunities for students to have sectionals on a weekly basis and rehearsals every day as well as to perform several times during the year.

**BAND** - This course is the next step in the sequence of Batavia's musical performance-based Band program which begins at the 5th grade level. Seventh grade Band offers opportunities for solo, small and large-group performance through jazz ensemble, marching band, festival band, contest competition and concert band opportunities. This group meets on a daily basis during the school day and each member receives one weekly techniques class.

**CHORUS** - Chorus is geared toward leading each student to a greater enjoyment of music and singing. In addition, we know that successful performance experiences often help students in the areas of self-confidence and self-esteem. The vocal music opportunities serve as a valid foundation, not only for future singing experiences, but also in other pursuits where self-confidence is a factor.