



SHAKER

MIDDLE SCHOOL



COURSE DESCRIPTION GUIDE

2023-2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Shaker Middle School Course Description Guide is designed to assist students and families in understanding the course offerings in sixth, seventh and eighth grade. You are encouraged to seek the guidance of your teachers and school counselor when planning your course selections for the following year.

CONTACTS.....	3
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS.....	4
ART.....	4
ENGLISH.....	5
FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES.....	7
HEALTH.....	8
MATHEMATICS	8
MUSIC EDUCATION.....	12
PHYSICAL EDUCATION.....	15
SCIENCE.....	15
SOCIAL STUDIES.....	19
TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION.....	20
WORLD LANGUAGES	21
ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE (ENL)	22
INNOVATION SPACES	23

Shaker Middle School will be a collaborative, innovative, and equitable community that prioritizes growth, learning, inclusivity and wellness as we model and foster lifelong learning.

SMS Administration	District Supervisors
Davis Chamberlain Building Principal davis.chamberlain@nccsk12.org	Art Anne Manzella anne.manzella@nccsk12.org
Nicole French Haystack Hall Principal nicole.french@nccsk12.org	Counseling & Mental Health Services Tricia Doyle tricia.doyle@nccsk12.org
Thea MacFawn Wright Hall Principal thea.macfawn@nccsk12.org	English Pamela Burns pamela.burns@nccsk12.org
Bill Pickett Skylight Hall Principal bill.pickett@nccsk12.org	Family & Consumer Sciences Eric Phillips eric.phillips@nccsk12.org
Lauren Sheeler Algonquin Hall Principal lauren.sheeler@nccsk12.org	Health David Stadtlander david.stadtlander@nccsk12.org
SMS School Counselors	Mathematics Nick Verdile nick.verdile@nccsk12.org
Stacey Angell Student Assistance Counselor stacey.angell@nccsk12.org	Music Education Deborah Keough deborah.keough@nccsk12.org
Annie Chu Haystack Hall / Wright Hall Grade 6 ann.chu@nccsk12.org	Physical Education David Stadtlander david.stadtlander@nccsk12.org
Margaret Demeter Haystack Hall Grades 7/8 margaret.demeter@nccsk12.org	Science Keith Bogert keith.bogert@nccsk12.org
Melissa Esannason Algonquin Hall / Skylight Hall Grade 6 melissa.esannason@nccsk12.org	Social Studies Robert Pollaro robert.pollaro@nccsk12.org
Robyn Hayes Algonquin Hall Grades 7/8 robyn.hayes@nccsk12.org	Technology Education Eric Phillips eric.phillips@nccsk12.org
Scott Iovinella Skylight Hall Grades 7/8 scott.iovinella@nccsk12.org	World Languages / ENL Brenna Muldoon brenna.muldoon@nccsk12.org
Lisa Suarez Wright Hall Grades 7/8 lisa.suarez@nccsk12.org	Special Education Elizabeth Pomerville elizabeth.pomerville@nccsk12.org

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ART

Visual and Media Art in Middle School

In grades 6-8 students will build upon their elementary visual art and design work. Art is scheduled for the equivalent of ten weeks in each grade. Units of study over grades 6-7-8 cumulatively provide the foundation for the full year HS Graduation Credit courses of Studio Art & Design and Media Art & Design. Creative career exploration, critical analysis and interpretation of visual content, art history and culture exposure and use of digital media for research, art making and self-expression are prevalent each year. Sketchbook assignments for practice and reinforcement of concepts and techniques support the classroom experience.

NYS Learning Standards Links

VISUAL ARTS and MEDIA ARTS

Art 6

The main units of study in grade 6 are:

- Composition: developing an understanding of the elements and principles of design and to organize visual information
- Animation/Film Video: storyboard, moving images to deliver a message
- Observational Drawing: with a focus on contour and gesture line drawing
- 3D Design: with focus on ceramics building clay forms focused on relief

Art 7

Units of study in grade 7 art include:

- Color Theory & Painting: applying color theory relationships to compositions using watercolor and/or tempera media
- Observational Drawing: with a focus on value rendering
- 3D Design: with a focus on sculpture using non-ceramic media
- Digital Photography: composition, rule of thirds, effects of light and shadow

Art 8

Units covered in grade 8 art include:

- Illusion of Depth: involving linear and atmospheric perspective techniques.
- Human Proportion: with focus on capturing accurate facial and figure proportions
- Graphic Design: focus on 2D design layout, typography & image commercial messaging
- 3D Design: Creating sculptural form in the round using clay as a medium.

Accelerated Studio in Art 8

Prerequisite: Teacher Recommendation and a grade of A in 7th grade Art

Studio Art & Design, a high school foundation level course, incorporates a wide variety of art disciplines, including drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, and digital media. Exposure to art history and art criticism enhance the program. Studio Art & Design is required of all students planning a high school art sequence, and it satisfies the fine arts high school graduation requirement. Admission is based on effort, conduct, achievement, teacher recommendation, and invitation of the department supervisor. Students are notified of the recommendation for Studio Art in writing before the end of June. An art sequence commitment is expected for high school, including Drawing & Painting, which will be scheduled freshman year. Important to note, Studio Art & Design is taken in addition to the required 10 week grade 8 Art.

ENGLISH

English 6

The English 6 course is designed to emphasize Next Generation ELA standards and develop students' skills in the areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students in grade 6 are expected to apply close reading techniques to analyze both fiction and nonfiction works and are exposed to a wide variety of literary works as an introduction to the formal study of literature and literary analysis.

The elements of grammar, usage, punctuation and capitalization are taught, through the student's own written work and through literature. Spelling and vocabulary requirements are drawn from assigned texts and other resources.

Effective writing techniques are emphasized and considerable time is devoted to the writing process. Most writing is done in response to texts read. In 6th grade we utilize peer evaluation, conferencing and other techniques, which are designed to improve written communication. Students will engage in whole class novel studies as well as in discussions and activities based on independently selected books. Students will be prepared to successfully complete the NYS grade 6 English Language Arts assessment.

ELA Skills 6

ELA Skills 6 is an Academic Intervention Service (AIS) for sixth graders who need extra assistance in language arts. Students included score below grade level on the i-Ready reading diagnostic assessment, are at risk of scoring at Level I or II on the NYS ELA assessment and are recommended for inclusion by their 5th or 6th grade English teacher. Students enrolled in ELA Skills 6 meet for an extra block of instructional time to receive remediation.

English 7

The English 7 course is aligned with the Next Generation English Language Arts standards and instructional learning activities are designed to emphasize skills and strategies in the areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students apply close reading techniques to analyze both fiction and nonfiction works and are exposed to a wide variety of literary works.

The elements of grammar, usage, punctuation and capitalization are taught, through the student's own written work and through literature. Spelling and vocabulary requirements are drawn from assigned readings and supplemental lists, and an integrated approach is used in the teaching of these skills.

Effective writing techniques are emphasized and considerable time is devoted to the writing process. Most writing is done in response to texts read. In 7th grade we utilize peer evaluation, conferencing and other techniques, which are designed to improve written communication. Reading is, of course, emphasized and students will engage in whole class novel studies as well as in discussions and activities based on independently selected books. Computer instruction, stressing word processing, is also included in the seventh grade language arts curriculum. Students will be prepared to successfully complete the NYS grade 7 English Language Arts assessment.

ELA Skills 7

ELA Skills 7 is an Academic Intervention Service (AIS) for seventh graders who need extra assistance in language arts. Students included typically score below grade level on the i-Ready reading diagnostic assessment, are at risk of scoring at Level I or II on the NYS ELA assessment and are recommended for inclusion by their 6th or 7th grade English teacher. Students enrolled in ELA Skills 7 meet for an extra block of instructional time to receive remediation.

English 8

The English 8 course is aligned with the Next Generation English Language Arts standards and instructional learning activities are designed to emphasize skills and strategies in the areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students apply close reading techniques to analyze both fiction and nonfiction works and are exposed to a wide variety of literary works.

The eighth grade program is designed to provide students with a strong background in English language arts skills. The development of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills is stressed within the language arts classroom. Students will be required to read several class taught novels as well as independently chosen titles. Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to appreciate and to respond to quality literature through discussion and independent writing assignments. Spelling and vocabulary requirements are drawn from literature and other teacher resources. This course stresses the need for effective written expression with an emphasis placed on the writing process and the mechanics of language. Students will be prepared to successfully complete the NYS grade 8 English Language Arts assessment.

ELA Skills 8

ELA Skills 8 is an Academic Intervention Service (AIS) for 8th graders who need extra assistance in language arts. Students included typically score below grade level on the i-Ready reading diagnostic assessment, are at risk of scoring at Level I or II on the NYS ELA assessment and are recommended for inclusion by their 7th or 8th grade English teacher. Students enrolled in ELA Skills 8 meet for an extra block of instructional time to receive remediation.

English Foundations

An English class based upon NYS standards that focuses on building reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The instruction is differentiated based upon students' literacy abilities and IEP goals. The student- teacher ratio is 15 to 1.

Reading Foundations

A reading class focused on developing phonological awareness and phonics skills. There is an emphasis on learning strategies for decoding and encoding words to improve overall reading skills. The student-teacher ratio is 15 to 1.

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES (FACS)

FACS 7

Important life lessons and 21st century skills are covered in this hands-on, engaging course.

The *Nutrition Unit* explores food safety and sanitation. Students will use the government website, www.choosemyplate.gov to learn the importance of a balanced diet, along with exercise. They will participate in various healthy cooking labs to reinforce food preparation skills.

The *Careers Unit* includes projects that allow students to discover their abilities, values, interests, and personality traits. Students will use the Naviance program to complete self-assessments and learn about careers that could be a good fit for them.

The *Childcare Unit* will help students learn how to be a safe sitter as the physical, emotional and social development of a child is discussed. They will learn how to care for infants along with proper procedures to follow before accepting a babysitting position.

The *Sewing Unit* will teach students how to properly secure a button so they understand the cost benefit of being able to repair their own clothing. They will also learn a basic hand sewing stitch and engage in a creative project.

Seventh grade students will attend FACS class every day for one quarter of the school year.

FACS 8

The 8th grade FACS program builds upon the important life skills learned in 7th grade.

The *Nutrition Unit* will engage students in culinary labs, which will reinforce material taught in class. They will learn about healthy lifestyle choices that combine both fitness and nutrition. Students learn how to read nutrition facts labels while paying attention to proper portion sizes.

The *Careers Unit* will focus on specific career research and exploration. Work within the Naviance program will continue and a career research project will be completed using www.careercruising.com. Students will learn the value of a firm handshake and how to create a resume, along with social skills to help them during an interview.

The *Financial Management Unit* will engage students in hands-on activities that will help them understand the various aspects of banking. The pros and cons of credit, debit, and ATM cards will be discussed, as will the details of managing a bank account.

The *Interior Design Unit* will help students learn how to utilize space well. They will utilize the Naviance program to determine how they learn best and create their ideal study space.

Eighth grade students will attend FACS class every day for one quarter of the school year.

HEALTH

Health 6

Health is scheduled for all students on an every other day basis for one semester. This course includes basic self-Health assessment, organization, decision making, personal responsibility, communication, Adolescent Growth and Development and HIV/AIDS.

Health 7

Health is scheduled for all students on an every other day basis for one semester. This course includes detailed self-Health assessment, planning and goal setting, communication skills, decision making, drug education and a continuation of Adolescent Growth and Development.

Health 8

Health is scheduled for all students on an every other day basis for one semester. This course includes the study of the dimensions of wellness, mental health, substance abuse, social media awareness, relationships and sexual health.

MATHEMATICS

The Shaker Middle School mathematics program provides students with the mathematical skills, understandings and attitudes that they need to be successful in their future careers and daily lives.

The primary goals of the Mathematics program are as follows:

Students will:

- Become mathematical problem solvers
- Learn to communicate mathematically
- Learn to reason mathematically
- Learn to value mathematics
- Become confident in their own ability

Math 6

The Math 6 course will cover the New York State Grade 6 Common Core standards and is designed to prepare students to be successful on the NYS Grade 6 math assessment. Topics include:

Ratios and Proportional Relationships:

- Understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems.

The Number System:

- Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division to divide fractions by fractions; multiply and divide multi-digit numbers and find common factors and multiples; apply and extend previous understandings of numbers to the system of rational numbers.

Expressions and Equations:

- Apply and extend previous understandings of arithmetic to algebraic expressions; reason about and solve one-variable equations and inequalities; represent and analyze quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables.

Geometry:

- Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume.

Statistics and Probability:

- Develop understanding of statistical variability; summarize and describe distributions.

Math 6 Accelerated

Prerequisite: High i-Ready EOY Math Score, Teacher Recommendation, and Overall Grade Performance in Grade 5 Math.

This course covers all of the Grade 6 content standards and half of the grade 7 content standards. The course is designed to be accelerated and enriched to challenge our highest level math students. Students in this course need to demonstrate a high level of motivation and ability in mathematics. Students should be prepared to move through and apply concepts at a rapid pace. This is the first course in the accelerated pathway and leads to students taking CC Algebra 1 in 8th grade.

AIS Math 6

AIS Math 6 is an Academic Intervention Service (AIS) for sixth graders who need extra assistance in mathematics. This program is for students who scored at Level I or II on the 5th grade NYS math assessment or were recommended for inclusion by their 5th grade math teacher or tested below grade level on the EOY i-Ready Diagnostic assessment. Students enrolled in AIS Math 6 meet for an extra block of instructional time to receive remediation.

Math 7

The Math 7 course will cover the New York State Grade 7 Common Core standards and is designed to prepare students to be successful on the NYS Grade 7 math assessment. Topics include:

Ratios and Proportional Relationships:

- Analyze proportional relationships and use them to solve real-world and mathematical problems.

The Number System:

- Apply and extend previous understandings of operations with fractions to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers

Expressions and Equations:

- Use properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions; solve real-life and mathematical problems using numerical and algebraic expressions and equations.

Geometry:

- Draw, construct and describe geometrical figures and describe the relationships between them; solve real-life and mathematical problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume.

Statistics and Probability:

- Use random sampling to draw inferences about a population; draw informal comparative inferences about two populations; investigate chance processes and develop, use, and evaluate probability models.

Math 7 Accelerated

Prerequisite: High i-Ready EOY Math Score, Teacher Recommendation, and Overall Grade Performance in Grade 6 Math.

This course covers the remaining Grade 7 standards and all of Grade 8 standards. The course is designed to be accelerated and enriched to challenge our highest level math students. Students in this course need to demonstrate a high level of motivation and ability in mathematics. Students should be prepared to move through and apply concepts at a rapid pace. This is the second course in the accelerated pathway and leads to students taking CC Algebra 1 in 8th grade.

AIS Math 7

AIS Math 7 is an Academic Intervention Service (AIS) for seventh graders who need extra assistance in mathematics. This program is for students who scored at Level I or II on the 6th grade NYS math assessment or were recommended for inclusion by their 6th grade math teacher or tested below grade level on the EOY i-Ready Diagnostic assessment. Students enrolled in AIS Math 7 meet for an extra block of instructional time to receive remediation.

Math 8

The Math 8 course will cover the New York State Grade 8 Common Core standards and is designed to prepare students to be successful on the NYS Grade 8 math assessment. Topics include:

The Number System

- Know that there are numbers that are not rational, and approximate them by rational numbers.

Expressions and Equations:

- Work with radicals and integer exponents; understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations; analyze and solve linear equations and pairs of simultaneous linear equations.

Geometry:

- Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software; understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem; solve real-world and mathematical problems involving volume of cylinders, cones and spheres.

Statistics and Probability:

- Investigate patterns of association in bivariate data.

Functions:

- Define, evaluate, and compare functions; use functions to model relationships between quantities.

Algebra I

Prerequisite: In general, a student is expected to meet the following criteria to be placed in this advanced class:

- A. The student must have demonstrated high achievement in Math 7 Accelerated. Recommended grade of 80 or higher in Math 7 Accelerated.
- B. The student should be recommended by his/her current math teacher for placement into the program.

This course is an enriched version of the 9th grade Regents Algebra 1 course at SHS. It is available to eighth grade students who demonstrate a strong ability and interest in mathematics and who plan on pursuing a five-year mathematics sequence. It is also a prerequisite for further study in mathematics and science at the Honors level. While much of this course is focused on algebra with some geometry, other areas, such as probability and statistics, are also introduced. The final exam for this course is the New York State Common Core Algebra Regents exam; students in this course will not be required to complete the NYS eighth grade math assessment. Students successfully completing the course will receive one high school Regents credit. Students will be evaluated at the end of the school year and recommended to pursue either the Regents or Honors Geometry math program in ninth grade based upon the quality of completed work.

AIS Math 8

AIS Math 8 is an Academic Intervention Service (AIS) for eighth graders who need extra assistance in mathematics. This program is for students who scored at Level I or II on the 7th grade NYS math assessment or were recommended for inclusion by their 7th grade math teacher or tested below grade level on the EOY i-Ready Diagnostic assessment.. Students enrolled in AIS Math 8 meet for an extra block of instructional time to receive remediation.

Math Foundations

A math class based upon grade-level curriculum. The instruction is differentiated based upon each student's math concept abilities and their IEP goals. The student-teacher ratio is 15 to 1.

MUSIC EDUCATION

Music 6

Sixth-grade students are scheduled for one semester (twenty weeks) of General Music, which is divided into three units: Ukulele, Film Scoring, and West African drumming. In the ukulele unit students will review basic rhythmic reading skills and learn to apply these skills as they play the instruments. During the film score unit, students will explore film scores and composers, and use available technology to edit and mix sounds and music for film. In the West African drumming unit, students will explore various instruments from all over Africa and then learn to play a set of various percussion instruments as an ensemble. Students will end the unit by composing and then performing a musical piece.

Music Performing Groups (Elective)

Band 6

Chorus 6

Orchestra 6

In the middle school, Band, Chorus, and Orchestra rehearse every other day during the school day. On the opposite day, students in a performing group would have a study hall. Band, Chorus, and Orchestra perform in two school concerts per year and may have other performance opportunities. In addition, students in these performing groups are the only ones eligible to audition for Jazz Ensemble, Select Band, Treble Makers (for Soprano and Alto voices), Select Chorus, and Scherzo. Students are encouraged to be in both a choral and instrumental group, since the two musical experiences complement each other.

Students in Band and Orchestra will also have a required small-group lesson once each week. This is a class that students must attend. In lessons, students learn technique and work to improve their individual skills. A rotating schedule of lesson times is planned so that no student should be excused from the same class more than once in each four weeks of school. Private lessons, while encouraged, are not substituted for school lessons at the middle school level.

Students who wish to participate in a performing group must indicate their decision on the sixth grade Course Selection Form distributed from the middle school. A student must already play an instrument to play in an instrumental group, or should contact the District Music Supervisor under extenuating circumstances. When selecting a performing group, students are committing to participate for an entire year, to attend their school lesson, and to perform in all scheduled concerts. The decision to drop a performing group will only be made under seriously extenuating circumstances by the school counselor, administrator, and director.

General Music 7

Seventh-grade students are scheduled for one semester (twenty weeks) of General Music, which is divided into three units: Guitar, Keyboard and Musical Theater. In the two instrument units, students will review basic note-reading skills and learn new skills that will allow them to perform on the two instruments (electric keyboard and acoustic guitar). Students will learn these skills while performing individually, in small groups, and as a class. Students will play a mixed repertoire of music including folk, classical and blues styles.

In the Musical Theater unit, students will research and experience various works of musical theater. This unit will culminate in student-generated and led presentations. Students will use available technology to further explore the subject.

Music Performing Groups (Elective)

Band 7

Chorus 7

Orchestra 7

In the middle school, Band, Chorus, and Orchestra rehearse every other day during the school day. On the opposite day, students in a performing group may have a study hall. Band, Chorus, and Orchestra perform in two school concerts per year and may have other performance opportunities. In addition, students in these performing groups are the only ones eligible to audition for Jazz Ensemble, Select Band, Treble Makers (for Soprano and Alto voices), Select Chorus, and Scherzo. Students are encouraged to be in both a choral and instrumental group, since the two musical experiences complement each other.

Students in Band and Orchestra will also have a required small-group lesson once each week. This is a class that students must attend. In lessons, students learn technique and work to improve their individual skills. A rotating schedule of lesson times is planned so that no student should be excused from the same class more than once in each four weeks of school. Private lessons, while encouraged, are not substituted for school lessons at the middle school level.

Students who wish to participate in a performing group must indicate their decision on the seventh grade Course Selection Form distributed from the middle school. A student must already play an instrument to play in an instrumental group. When selecting a performing group, students are committing to participate for an entire year, to attend their school lesson, and to perform in all scheduled concerts. The decision to drop a performing group will only be made under seriously extenuating circumstances by the school counselor, administrator, and department supervisor.

Music 8

Eighth-grade students are scheduled for one semester (twenty weeks) of General Music, which is divided into three units: Guitar, Keyboard and Rock-n-Roll. In the two instrument units, students will review the skills they learned in seventh grade and learn new skills that will allow them to perform on the instruments (electric keyboard and acoustic guitar) at a more advanced level. Students will learn these skills while performing individually, in small groups, and as a class. Students will play a mixed repertoire of folk and rock music on each instrument.

The goal of the Rock-n-Roll unit is to develop an understanding and appreciation of the elements and history of this musical genre. In this unit, students will learn the history of Rock-n-Roll music and will make connections to historical events. They will learn how to identify different styles and performers through listening exercises, various projects, and available technology.

Music Performing Groups (Elective)

Band 8

Chorus 8

Orchestra 8

In the middle school, Band, Chorus, and Orchestra rehearse every other day during the school day. On the opposite day, students in a performing group may have a study hall. Band, Chorus, and Orchestra perform in two school concerts per year and may have other performance opportunities. In addition, students in these performing groups are the only ones eligible to audition for Jazz Ensemble, Select Band, Treble Makers (for Soprano and Alto voices), Select Chorus, and Scherzo. Students are encouraged to be in both a choral and instrumental group, since the two musical experiences complement each other.

Students in Band and Orchestra will also have a required small-group lesson once each week. This is a class that students must attend. In lessons, students learn technique and work to improve their individual skills. Private lessons, while encouraged, are not substituted for school lessons at the middle school level. A rotating schedule of lesson times is planned so that no student should be excused from the same class more than once in each four weeks of school.

Students who wish to participate in a performing group must indicate their decision on the eighth grade Course Selection Form distributed from the middle school. A student must already play an instrument to play in an instrumental group. When selecting a performing group, students are committing to participate for an entire year, to attend their school lesson, and to perform in all scheduled concerts. The decision to drop a performing group will only be made under seriously extenuating circumstances by the school counselor, administrator, and department supervisor.

Accelerated Credit in Music

Students can earn ½-unit of high school credit in music while enrolled at the middle school. Those who seek to apply for this accelerated credit in music must successfully complete both 7th and 8th grade band, chorus or orchestra. They also must perform a solo on a band or orchestra instrument, piano or voice at a level 3 or higher as ranked by NYSSMA, and have achieved at least a score of Excellent (21 or higher) on that solo by the end of eighth grade. If the student has met the necessary requirement, he/she will turn in a completed application form to the music teacher by early June of the eighth grade year. If it has been signed by the parent and approved by the teacher and principal, the student will receive ½-unit of high school credit.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education

Physical education is scheduled for all students in grades 6, 7 and 8 on an every other day basis for the full school year. Students with physically disabling conditions, either permanent or temporary, may be provided an adapted program designed for the individual student.

SCIENCE

The Shaker Middle School science program is dedicated to preparing all students for commencement level science courses in the high school. Our programs foster imaginative problem solving, effective collaboration, and responsible and appropriate communication skills in a safe, positive, and supportive environment. Students will meaningfully engage with science tools, techniques, skills, and concepts to raise their capacity as curious and critical thinkers.

New York State is undergoing a full overhaul to our science standards and the 2023-2024 school year will represent the first year that all non-accelerated science courses at Shaker Middle School are operating fully within those standards. In addition, May of 2024 is anticipated to be the first new 8th grade assessment within the new standards. COVID substantially delayed the original k-12 transition plan, and so our regular high school courses have not yet transitioned. Due to this, our accelerated Earth and Space Science program will operate only partially within the new standards and will also remain partially within the old standards to ensure student success on the June 2024 Regents Exam, which will still be based on old standards. For more information about the new standards in science, called the New York State p-12 Science Learning Standards (NYSp-12SLS), please visit: <http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/science>

A QR code for the web page is available here:



Please see the table below to learn more about the multi-year transition to new science standards at the middle school. The shaded boxes represent courses operating (or planned to have been operating) under the new standards.

NEW STANDARDS TRANSITION AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL:

School Year	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
2020 – 2021	Physical Science (fully new standards compliant)	Life Science (first expected year under new standards) COVID impacted - transition delayed	Physical Science/Earth Science (acceleration)
2021 - 2022	Physical Science (fully new standards compliant)	Life Science COVID impacted - transition delayed	Middle School (MS) Earth and Space Science (first expected year under new standards)/Accelerated <i>and</i> MS Earth and Space Science COVID impacted - transition delayed
2022 - 2023	Physical Science (fully new standards compliant)	Life Science (first year under new standards after COVID delay)	MS Earth and Space Science <i>and</i> Accelerated Earth and Space Science are not fully transitioned to new standards, but will operate as a “hybrid” of both old and new standards. Final year of old 8th grade assessment.
2023 - 2024	Physical Science (fully new standards compliant)	Life Science (fully new standards compliant)	MS Earth and Space Science - first year under new standards and first year of new 8th grade assessment.
			Accelerated Earth and Space Science - will operate as a “hybrid” of both old and new standards. Final year of old NYS Regents Exam in Earth Science.

Note: For 8th grade during the 2023-2024 school year, all students will take Earth and Space Science. Students who qualify for acceleration in science, may take a combination course, which will include middle school (MS) and high school (HS) Earth and Space standards, completion of 1200 minutes of laboratory, and the NYS Regents exam in Earth and Space Science.

Physical Science 6

This course is based on middle school topics in Physical Science and follows the new, New York State p-12 Science Learning Standards. The chemistry topics occur predominantly in the first semester and cover middle school depth in the following topics: Structure of Matter, Physical and Chemical Properties, Characteristics of Chemical Reactions, Heat and Matter, and Energy. In the second semester, the course moves to a physics based program and covers middle school depth in the following topics: Forces and Motion, Gravitational Forces, Electric and Magnetic Forces, Potential and Kinetic Energy, and Waves. Since this course is aligned with new standards, students will also engage in the Science and Engineering Practices and the Cross Cutting Concepts in Science. Please see the “**Additional Information Regarding the New York State p-12 Science Learning Standards**” section, below, for more details regarding the Science and Engineering Practices and the Cross Cutting Concepts in science.

Life Science 7

This course is based on middle school topics in Life Science and follows the new, New York State p-12 Science Learning Standards. Topics include: Structure and Function of Organisms, Information Processing, Growth and Development, Inheritance/Variation of Traits, Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms/Ecosystems, Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems, and Biodiversity. Since this course is aligned with new standards, students will also engage in the Science and Engineering Practices and the Cross Cutting Concepts in Science. Please see the **“Additional Information Regarding the New York State p-12 Science Learning Standards”** section, below, for more details regarding the Science and Engineering Practices and the Cross Cutting Concepts in science.

Earth and Space Science 8

This course is based on middle school topics in Earth and Space Science and follows the new, New York State p-12 Science Learning Standards. Topics include: Space Systems, History of Earth, Earth’s Systems (material cycles, energy flow, Earth resources), Weather and Climate, and Human Impacts. Since this course is partially aligned with new standards, students will also engage in the Science and Engineering Practices and the Cross Cutting Concepts in Science. Please see the **“Additional Information Regarding the New York State p-12 Science Learning Standards”** section, below, for more details regarding the Science and Engineering Practices and the Cross Cutting Concepts in science.

Accelerated Earth and Space Science

This course is based on BOTH middle school standards in Earth and Space Science AND high school standards in Earth and Space Science and will be a “hybrid” program which follows portions of the New York State p-12 Science Learning Standards as well as portions of the older MST standards in Earth Science at. Topics include: Space Systems, History of Earth, Earth’s Systems (material cycles, energy flow, Earth resources), Weather and Climate, Human Impacts, and Human Sustainability.

Because this program consists of standards from BOTH middle school and high school Earth and Space courses, students/families should be exceptionally thoughtful as they consider this placement. Students must exhibit outstanding work ethic, be independently responsible for their work/effort, and exhibit a high level of aptitude in both science and mathematics.

In addition to the above, students enrolled in this program will complete the NYS minimum laboratory requirement of 1200 minutes hands-on lab time, a mid-year test, and the NYS Earth Science Regents examination in June. In order to accommodate BOTH middle school AND high school standards, students enrolled in Accelerated Earth and Space Science must also attend an additional laboratory assignment. The extra laboratory assignment may interfere with a student’s ability to take certain elective courses such as music (multiple performing groups), Studio Art, or DDE.

A student must meet the following criteria to be placed in this advanced class:

1. Achieved an A average in Life Science 7.
2. No individual effort and conduct grade may be less than G throughout Life Science 7.
3. Recommended by his/her Life Science 7 instructor for placement.

Success in advanced sciences such as Chemistry and Physics at Shaker High School is strongly correlated to success in mathematics. Specifically, students having completed Geometry before entering Chemistry, and Algebra 2 before entering Physics, are most successful. Therefore, students qualifying and electing to accelerate in science by taking Accelerated Earth and Space Science in 8th grade, should most often select and be capable of successful acceleration in mathematics as well. In rare instances, exceptions to this may exist. Please seek the advice of your student’s science teacher and/or counselor if you qualify for and are considering acceleration in science *without* acceleration in mathematics.

Additional Information regarding the new, New York State p-12 Science Learning Standards

The new, NYS p-12 SLS standards are not only content standards, but they also emphasize particular practices as well as common themes found in all sciences. These practices and themes are found in all courses from Kindergarten through 12th grade, and differ only in complexity based on a particular age/grade. Therefore, in addition to the topics listed in the course descriptions above, students will also engage with the Science and Engineering Practices (practices) and the Cross Cutting Concepts (themes). The table below lists each:

Science and Engineering Practices:	Cross Cutting Concepts:
1. Asking Questions and Defining Problems	1. Cause and Effect
2. Developing and Using Models	2. Structure and Function
3. Planning and Carrying Out Investigations	3. Systems and System Models
4. Analyzing and Interpreting Data	4. Scale, Proportion, and Quantity
5. Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking	5. Stability and Change
6. Construction Explanations and Designing Solutions	6. Energy and Matter
7. Engaging in Argument From Evidence	7. Patterns
8. Obtaining, Evaluating and Communicating Information	

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies 6

Grade 6 Social Studies is based on the geography and history of the Eastern Hemisphere, including the development of cultures, civilizations, and empires; interactions between societies; and the comparison of trends in government and economics. It also incorporates some elements of other social sciences.

The course begins with an examination of the Eastern Hemisphere today, using geographic skills. This provides the foundation for making connections between the past and the present throughout the course. The remainder of the course is divided into seven Key Ideas that cover a time span from pre-history into the 1300s. Students are provided the opportunity to explore belief systems across time and to examine the foundations of democracy.

American History 1

Beginning in seventh grade, a two-year study of American History is initiated. The American History I course is a chronological exploration of American History from the pre-Columbian era through the period of Reconstruction and aligns with the NYS Framework for Social Studies education. The units of instruction include “America Prior to 1500”, “Exploration and Colonization”, “A New Nation”, “Experiments in Government”, “Life in the New Nation”, and “Division and Reunion”. Important historical, economic, geographic and governmental features of this period are studied, and specialized social studies skills are taught.

They include the following:

- A. reading maps, charts, and graph
- B. interpreting political cartoons
- C. reading, speaking, and listening skills
- D. essay writing
- E. research skills
- F. computer / technology skills
- G. study skills
- H. analyzing primary source documents.
- I. analyzing current events
- J. studying a given historical period *or* theme through an interdisciplinary lens

The teaching of lifelong, civic skills and the application of social studies skills are important components of the social studies program. At the conclusion of the American History I course, students will take a school-developed assessment which serves as their final exam.

American History II

The exploration of history in eighth grade concludes a two-year study of American History. The course begins with the post-Civil War Era and continues to the present including the following units: “An Industrial Society”, “The United States in an Interdependent World”, “The United States Between the Wars”, “Worldwide Responsibilities”, and “World War II to the Present.” The course aligns with and covers the breadth and scope of the NYS Framework for Social Studies Instruction. Students are involved in the study of historical, social,

geographic, political, and economic themes as they relate to the people and events of this time period. In June of eighth grade, students will take a school developed assessment, which serves as the final exam for American History II.

The teaching of specialized social studies skills continues in eighth grade and will include the following:

- A. reading maps, charts, and graphs
- B. interpreting political cartoons
- C. reading, speaking, and listening skills
- D. essay writing
- E. research skills
- F. computer / technology skills
- G. study skills
- H. analyzing primary source documents
- I. analyzing current events
- J. studying a given historical period *or* theme through an interdisciplinary lens

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

Technology 7

Technology 7 is the first half of the one unit NYS “Introduction to Technology” curriculum. This course meets every day for twenty weeks or one half year.

Technology 7 introduces students to human resources, technological processes and creative problem solving. The course is taught through a number of hands on activities and design challenges. Students will use their knowledge of materials, machines and available resources to solve technical problems. These activities develop critical thinking and decision-making skills vital to employment success in the twenty first century.

Technology 8

Technology 8 is the second half of the one unit NYS “Introduction to Technology” curriculum. This course meets every day for twenty weeks or one half year.

Technology 8 introduces students to more resources, and technological processes that can be used to solve technological problems. The course is taught through a number of hands on activities and design challenges. Students will use their knowledge of materials, machines and available resources to solve technical problems. These activities develop critical thinking and decision-making skills vital to employment success in the twenty-first century.

Design & Drawing for Engineering (DDE) Pre-Engineering Elective

Entrance into this course is by **Recommendation only**. DDE is the first course of the New York State Approved “Pre-Engineering Program” at Shaker High School. The approved program is a five-unit sequence with a **NOCTI** (National Occupational Competency Testing Institute) exam at the end of the senior year. Students who complete

the required coursework and pass the exam will receive a “Pre-Engineering” endorsement on their high school diploma. This course meets every day all year.

DDE at SMS is for high achieving Math, Science and Technology (MST) students. The Math, Science and Technology grades of students will be used to determine who will be recommended. Students who take DDE in grade 8 will be eligible to take “Manufacturing Processes for Engineering” in the ninth grade.

**Parents and students please note: Students who are enrolled in DDE may not be able to take Studio Art or a Performing Group at SMS in eighth grade. Passing DDE does fulfill the one unit Fine Art requirement for high school graduation.*

WORLD LANGUAGES

French 6

German 6

Russian 6

Spanish 6

Our world language program starts with exploratory in 6th grade where students have the opportunity to learn two different languages over the course of one year. Students will begin to acquire foundational language skills and will learn about the various cultures where the language is spoken.

At the end of grade 6, students will then select the language of their choice to study for two full years in grades 7 and 8. After completion of the 6th grade world language program, students will identify their first and alternate choices for their 7th grade language selection. Based on yearly enrollment, every effort will be made to accommodate a student’s first choice. However, the first choice cannot be guaranteed. Students will study this one language during seventh and eighth grade, and, given successful completion of the proficiency exam, continue and expand this study in the high school.

French 7

German 7

Russian 7

Spanish 7

The NYS graduation requirements mandate that all students (except those exempted by the Committee on Special Education) study two years of one world language and pass the examination that is aligned to the Checkpoint A learning standards for World Languages by the end of eighth grade. The seventh grade world language program is the first full year of language study and the first step in preparing for this exam.

During the course, the students learn basic vocabulary and grammar and begin to develop the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the classroom, they engage in a variety of participatory activities and learn to communicate in the target language using simple conversational patterns. In addition, the course introduces students to the target culture, covering such topics as history, geography, customs, foods, holidays and family traditions.

French 1

German 1

Russian 1

Spanish 1

The NYS graduation requirements mandate that all students (except those exempted by the Committee on Special Education) study two years of one world language and pass the examination that is aligned to the Checkpoint A learning standards for World Languages by the end of eighth grade. If a student fails to pass the exam he/she will have to pass a high school Regents level world language course at the end of ninth grade.

The eighth grade program is the second year of study in a rigorous middle school program. The course continues to stress the four basic skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a world language while highlighting the target culture. In this course students learn to discuss various topics with peers and how to interact in a culturally authentic environment. Upon successful completion of the course and demonstrated proficiency, students receive one high school credit for Level 1.

A Note of Caution:

German 1R, French 1R and Russian 1R (Regents) are offered in grade eight only. Therefore, a student failing one of these three courses in eighth grade will be required to begin the study of Spanish in ninth grade in order to fulfill the world language graduation requirement. In Spanish, students have the option of repeating the Level 1 course in ninth grade if necessary.

ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE (ENL)

ENL

ENL services are delivered through a co-taught English class and/or stand-alone ENL classes depending on individual students' English language proficiency level as determined by the NYSITELL or annual NYSESLAT assessment. The co-taught ELA class is taught by an English teacher and an ENL teacher. The class includes both identified English Language Learners and non-English Language Learners. The curriculum mirrors the curriculum of the English class.

Bridges

The Bridges course is designed to help students develop foundational English language, reading, and writing skills. The course uses small group instruction and centers to target students' individual literacy needs. Students work on academic concepts, thinking, language, and literacy in English Language Arts. The skills and strategies learned also extend into the other core content area classes to help students be successful.

SMS INNOVATION SPACES

Shaker Middle School
Innovation Space Axioms



1. In this space we are all students, and in this space we are all teachers.
2. Mistakes will happen in fact, they are supported, expected, and respected.
3. Innovation spaces are brave-safe spaces for students to work collaboratively to practice helpful life long skills such as creativity, self-compassion, expression of authenticity, connection, vulnerability and courage.



Clean Technology Lab

This lab offers many different forms of clean technology that can be utilized by students to design, create and make products, solutions, prototypes and art.

Coding and Robotics Lab

Students will be the center of the learning process in the Robotics & Coding Innovation Lab. The lab will be designed to foster creativity and choice. In addition to supporting topics taught in other classes, stations will be set up with rotating challenges and other self-paced learning opportunities, giving students the chance to explore new ideas and topics. In the Robotics & Innovation Lab, wild ideas are strongly encouraged and all judgments are deferred. The lab will be a safe place for students to work both independently and collaboratively to create, discover new things, and learn how to solve problems.

Health, Wellness and Mindfulness Center

- *Gratitude and Note-Journaling*

Students list three gratitudes daily at the beginning of class in their note-journals. Students are able to listen and share with others what they are grateful for, what brings joy and what experience provided something that was valued/needed. Gratitude is practiced daily to support awareness of wellbeing. Daily gratitude allows for students to see patterns in what brings JOY, connection and comfort into their lives. Note-journaling is also used for taking notes on information provided in class that has value to the innovator. These notes are later used to create a Wellness Plan.

- *Mindful Moments*

Students practice paying attention, on purpose, without judgement daily. Mindful moments support increased focus, concentration as well as to support overall wellbeing such as pausing before responding

and making helpful choices. Within Mindful Moment opportunities students also practice breathing techniques such as: breath of equal duration, extended exhale, three-part breath, triangle breath and box breath. Students are learning and practicing qualities of breath such as smooth and steady inhale and exhale, belly breathing and breath that is barely audible.

- *Innovation:*

Our Note-Journals are used for our innovation. When students leave the innovation space they will have a daily gratitude journal, a wellness plan (two to three healthy habits that can be incorporated into each day) and a list of ways to calm the body (example: a list of Inner Resources, how to activate the restore and rest nervous system, positive self-talk examples, Mindful Moment practices, the importance of connecting with supportive people). Students also leave with messages on index cards from their inner coach. These positive, encouraging messages are displayed in a preferred space, such as a locker, mirror, and/or binder, to provide daily supportive messages.

Humanities Center

The Humanities Center will be a space for students to explore the art of storytelling and its impact on people and societies, dating back to as early as the ancient civilizations. Students will be inspired to develop and share their own stories using the variety of mediums and technologies available to them in the Humanities lab such as: screen writing, podcasting, interview simulations, and more. As students create their narratives, they will learn how powerful a role storytelling plays in cultivating human connection, building empathy, and developing acceptance of other human beings.

The Makerspace

In The Makerspace, students will be able to discover and explore their passions, work collaboratively to solve relevant, real-world problems, create, invent, and take risks in a safe and supportive environment. The Makerspace will be a place where *all* learners are welcome and where a "culture of making" will be cultivated as students gain confidence, develop a growth mindset by learning how to "fail forward", create their own meaning, and develop critical problem-solving skills. Students will engage in challenges, learn new technology, and create projects that integrate S.T.E.A.M. educational practices and support what they are learning in their core classes.

Simulation Center

Simulations are a form of experiential learning. These student-centered experiences will utilize a variety of analog and digital tools. In the Sim Center, students will explore how simulations can be used to develop skills and to create experiences that will imitate real-world activities and processes, in an engaging and safe environment.

Shaker Middle School

475 Watervliet Shaker Road
Latham, NY 12110
(518) 785-1341

Superintendent
Kathleen Skeals

Assistant Superintendent
Natélegé Turner-Hassell

Director of Pupil Services
Casey Bardin

Director of Counseling and Mental Health Services
Tricia Doyle

SMS Building Principal
Davis Chamberlain

Algonquin Hall Principal
Lauren Sheeler

Skylight Hall Principal
Bill Pickett

Haystack Hall Principal
Nicole French

Wright Hall Principal
Thea MacFawn

Board of Education

Linda Harrison, President

Pennie Grinnell

Matthew Cannon, Vice President

Samuel Johnson

Mary Alber

Mary Nardolillo

Nicholas Comproski

Sandy Pangburn

Michelle Dischiavo

