
ACADEMIC HANDBOOK

For Grades 6-7-8



STEEL VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

2010-2011

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MIDDLE SCHOOL CONCEPT

The 2010-11 school year begins an exciting new journey for our students. Middle school students need continuing assistance in comprehending, analyzing, accepting, and coping with the various emotional and social components of their lives. They need help in getting to know themselves, and sustained support in building and maintaining relationships with peers and adults.

The students' day will be divided into eight academic periods that include double periods of Language Arts and Math in all three grade levels in order to address the importance of raising competency in these areas. There will be a rotation of subjects during the year in order to explore various areas within the fine arts.

The National Middle School Association and the National Association of Elementary School Principals urge principals, teachers, counselors, parents, and students at both elementary and middle levels to work together. The planning and implementing of strategies will directly address students' concerns, ease the transition to middle school, and provide children with a foundation for success in school and life.

The Steel Valley community should:

- Provide young children with manageable tasks that will help them develop organizational skills and responsibility
- Encourage children to try new things and to regard failure as a necessary part of learning and growing
- Become knowledgeable about the needs and concerns of young adolescents in transition
- Help children turn their anxieties into positive action by learning about school rules, schedules, locker procedures and the availability of counseling
- Attend school functions and stay involved in children's schooling
- Maintain strong family connections with young adolescents
- Be alert to signs of depression or anxiety in their children and seek help

Collaboration among all adults who share responsibility and interest for our children's welfare, who ultimately plan and implement programs to address the needs and concerns of students moving from an elementary to middle school environment, is ultimately the most effective transition strategy we can employ.

STRUCTURE OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL DAY

Every student will take the courses below although not necessarily in the order listed.

Band/chorus students will take band or chorus in place of a related arts rotation.

Grade 6				Grade 7				Grade 8			
Language Arts <i>or</i> Advanced Language Arts (two periods daily)				Language Arts <i>or</i> Advanced Language Arts (two periods daily)				Language Arts <i>or</i> Advanced Language Arts (two periods daily)			
Mathematics <i>or</i> Advanced Math (two periods daily)				Mathematics <i>or</i> Pre-Algebra (two periods daily)				Pre-Algebra <i>or</i> Algebra (two periods daily)			
Integrated Science				Integrated Science				Integrated Science			
Phys. Ed./Health and PSSA/Computers (Split week rotation)				Phys. Ed. and PSSA/Computers (Split week rotation)				Phys. Ed./Health and PSSA/Computers (Split week rotation)			
World Geography				World History				U.S. History			
Related Arts Rotation (4 nine week courses)				Related Arts Rotation (4 nine week courses)				Related Arts Rotation (4 nine week courses)			
Tech Ed	Art	Music	Teen Life	Tech Ed	Art	Music	French	Tech Ed	Art	Music	Spanish

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



MIDDLE SCHOOL FINE ARTS ELECTIVES

INSTRUMENTAL BAND/MUSIC- Students have the opportunity to develop and improve playing skills, music reading skills, and musicianship. Students will experience playing in an ensemble and perform in public. The middle school instrumental music program is an extension of the elementary lesson classes and serves as a building block for the high school band.

CHORUS- Students in chorus have the opportunity to explore various styles of vocal music on a daily basis. All students will experience ensemble singing unless individualized instruction is requested. Musical ideas, techniques, and methods are explored and developed throughout the school year. Music technology will be available using computer software and the keyboard lab. Field trips will be made available to enthusiastic student performers. Grades 6-8 will be responsible for two annual concerts in the high school auditorium.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR GRADE 6

LANGUAGE ARTS 6 (Two Periods Daily)- The student will recognize and understand correct grammar and usage and will be able to apply these skills for the development of written and oral communication through various works of literature. The course will focus on the writing process. The focus on spelling and vocabulary will help students develop an extensive vocabulary while learning the patterns and conventions of the English language. The focus on oral communication will aid students in the development of skills for listening and comprehension as well as self-expression in an organized, concise manner.

ADVANCED LANGUAGE ARTS 6 (Two Periods Daily)- The student will draw upon prior knowledge of grammar and usage of written and oral communication through literature, compositions, research, and vocabulary development. In composition, a step-by-step writing program will be provided. Enrichment activities will be included that incorporate critical reading, writing, and speaking skills. The students will also read works additional to those covered in their literature text.

Prerequisites: Minimum "B" in 5th grade Language Arts
Minimum Proficient on 5th grade PSSA reading and/or end of the year assessment (4Sight)
Teacher recommendation

INTEGRATED SCIENCE 6 — This course is designed to introduce students to four main branches of science: Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, and Physical Science. Students will participate in class work and hands-on activities based on the PA Science Standards. Each student will conduct labs to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Assessments are to be arrived by the PA State Assessment Anchors and eligible content.

MATHEMATICS 6 (Two Periods Daily)- This course is designed to reinforce the concepts of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals in order to prepare the student for the next level of mathematics. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills will be enhanced. The double period will allow necessary time for remediation, practice, and enrichment activities incorporating the use of calculators, computers, and the Success Maker program.

ADVANCED MATHEMATICS 6 (Two Periods Daily)- This course is designed to draw upon students' prior knowledge of whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and data analysis and expand upon that knowledge in the area of critical thinking and problem solving. Algebra and geometry concepts are introduced and explored. The students complete enrichment activities and labs, as well as, engage in extension problems beyond traditional text and practice.

Prerequisites: Minimum "B" in 5th grade Math
Minimum Proficient on 5th grade PSSA
Teacher recommendation

WORLD GEOGRAPHY — Students will better understand and appreciate both the world and the people around them. The course includes our local geography with an emphasis on U.S. geography, eventually expanding to the earth's physical features, its people and finally, the development of various cultures and how each area is critically related to another. Students will be exposed to classroom lecture, discussion and hands-on activities. Students will complete both cooperative learning and individual projects.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION / HEALTH — All students will participate in co-educational physical fitness, team sports, and lifetime sports. Any student that is injured or unable, for any reason, to participate in the regular physical education class will participate in an adapted program. In Health, students will develop an awareness of factors that impact growth and development between adolescence and adulthood.

ART — Sixth grade art is a transition from elementary school art to middle school art. The student will study a variety of techniques and materials. The emphasis is placed on student development in certain medium areas and art vocabulary.

GENERAL MUSIC — This exploratory related arts class is designed for the student to study various elements of music through creating, performing, writing about, and appreciating music. The use of technology is incorporated into the class to enhance the studying of the elements of music. Students will also be exposed to various genres of music during this course. Students will work on individual projects as well as learn to work in small groups.

PSSA PREP / COMPUTER – The purpose of this course is to increase student exposure to the style and content of the PSSA tests. Sample questions and study materials will be utilized. The course also stresses the importance of increasing our students' exposure to computer technology by offering students an opportunity to explore different computer utilities and apply those programs to research and information seeking. Students with the need for extra assistance will be placed in a section that focuses more on reading and math tutoring and less on computer skills.

TEEN LIFE – Students will develop teen survival skills that promote the physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of their age group. Child development, cooking, and money management are areas of focus.

TECH ED 6 – This course provides an introduction to technology, which includes the fundamentals of measurement, sketching, drafting, product design, marketing, and manufacturing. These basic skills will be taught using hands-on experiences with professional drafting and manufacturing equipment.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR GRADE 7

LANGUAGE ARTS 7 (Two Periods Daily) – The student will use reading, writing, and language skills to communicate. These communication skills will be developed through a literature based curriculum, oral presentations, and projects. Additionally, spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and composition will be integrated into this course.

ADVANCED LANGUAGE ARTS 7 (Two Periods Daily)– The student will focus on the development of written and oral language. The course of study includes grammar concepts, note taking, research, vocabulary development, and continued writing instruction. Writing assignments will cover narrative, descriptive, informative, and literary analysis. Students will apply skills to writing and communication. The students will also read works in addition to those covered in their literature text.

Prerequisites: Minimum "B" in 6th grade Language Arts
Minimum Proficient on 6th grade PSSA reading and/or end of the year assessment (4Sight)
Teacher recommendation

INTEGRATED SCIENCE 7 – This course continues the students' exploration of the four main branches of science: Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, and Physical Science. Students will participate in class work and hands-on activities based on the PA Science Standards. Each student will conduct labs to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Assessments are to be arrived by the PA State Assessment Anchors and eligible content.

MATHEMATICS 7 (Two Periods Daily) – This course is designed to reinforce the concepts of fractions and decimals and to develop the concepts of percents, data analysis, integers, and geometry in order to prepare the student for the next level of mathematics. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills will be enhanced. The double period will allow necessary time for remediation, practice, and enrichment activities incorporating the use of calculators, computers, and the Success Maker program.

PRE-ALGEBRA 7 (Two Periods Daily) – This course is a transition from basic mathematics skills to those necessary for Algebra I. Students will draw upon prior knowledge of fractions, decimals, and data analysis to develop the concepts of percents, integers, and algebraic equations. Geometric concepts, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills will be enhanced. The double period will allow necessary time for practice and enrichment activities and labs incorporating the use of calculators, computers, and the Success Maker program.

Prerequisites: Minimum "A" in 6th grade Math or
Minimum "B" in Advanced 6th grade Math
Minimum Proficient on PSSA
Teacher recommendation

WORLD HISTORY – Students learn that people refashion their ideas and institutions to meet the needs of new times and conditions as they measure progress in the present in comparison to values of people from the past. Students will appreciate that we struggle with many of the same problems faced by past generations.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – All students will participate in co-educational physical fitness, team sports, and lifetime sports. Any student that is injured or unable, for any reason, to participate in the regular physical education class will participate in an adapted program.

PSSA PREP / COMPUTER – The purpose of this course is to increase student exposure to the style and content of the PSSA tests. Sample questions and study materials will be utilized. Students will spend time developing touch-typing skills using keyboarding software and will also be introduced to basic Microsoft Office applications. Students with the need for extra assistance will be placed in a section that focuses more on reading and math tutoring and less on computer skills.

TECH ED 7 – This course expands on student knowledge in measurement, product design, transportation, rocketry, manufacturing, and shop safety. Vocabulary development will include the manufacturing process as described within the Universal Systems Model.

ART – Students develop awareness of their environment and their experiences, and to relate those through their art experiences. A variety of techniques and materials will be used to reach those aims while simultaneously improving students' skills and techniques.

GENERAL MUSIC – This exploratory related arts class is a more advanced music class designed for the student to study the various elements of music through creating, performing, writing about, and appreciating music. Technology is incorporated into the class to further enhance the studying of the elements of music. Students will have an opportunity to study various genres of music during this course. Students will work on individual projects as well as learn to work in small groups.

ADVENTURES IN WORLD LANGUAGES: FRENCH – Students will begin their adventure in world languages. They will have the opportunity to study the French language and its culture. Students will learn basic phrases and expressions in French, as well as, explore the varied geography, customs and people who speak French.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR GRADE 8

LANGUAGE ARTS 8 (Two Periods Daily) – This course includes grammar/usage, vocabulary, public speaking and the writing process with emphasis on writing single and multi paragraph essays. The students will be exposed to poetry, creative writing, classic literature, short stories, and web design, in addition to exercises given for PSSA preparation. They will also read monthly self-selected books and material from their literature texts.

ADVANCED LANGUAGE ARTS 8 (Two Periods Daily)– In this course, the student will be presented with thematic units that integrate literature, writing, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. The student will also continue to utilize the writing process, improve grammar skills, develop public speaking skills, enrich vocabulary, and research. Writing workshops stress personal, narrative, persuasive, descriptive, and informative composition. The students will also read works additional to those covered in their literature text.

Prerequisites: Minimum "B" in 7th grade Language Arts
Minimum Proficient on 7th grade PSSA reading and/or end of the year assessment (4Sight)
Teacher recommendation

INTEGRATED SCIENCE 8 – This course continues to build upon the students' knowledge of the four main branches of science: Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, and Physical Science. Students will participate in class work and hands-on activities based on the PA Science Standards. Each student will conduct labs to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Assessments are to be arrived by the PA State Assessment Anchors and eligible content.

PRE-ALGEBRA 8 (Two Periods Daily) – This course is a transition from basic mathematics skills to those necessary for Algebra I. Students will draw upon prior knowledge of fractions, decimals, and data analysis to develop the concepts of percents, integers, and algebraic equations. Geometric concepts, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills will be enhanced. The double period will allow necessary time for practice and enrichment activities and labs incorporating the use of calculators, computers, and the Success Maker program.

ALGEBRA 8 (Two Periods Daily) – This course is designed to develop skills in computing with signed numbers and variables in equations. Word problems are used to promote logical and orderly thinking. The content contains basic operations with polynomials, simplifying algebraic equations and inequalities, graphing systems of linear equations, and factoring algebraic expressions. The double period will allow necessary time for practice and enrichment activities and labs incorporating the use of calculators and computers.

Prerequisites: Minimum "B" in 7th grade Pre-Algebra
Minimum Proficient on PSSA
Teacher recommendation

U.S. HISTORY – Students will study the cultural diversity and history of the people and events that have contributed to the foundation of the United States. Students investigate America's earliest people, the Age of Exploration & Discovery, Colonial America, the reasons for separation from Britain, the Revolutionary War, and the starting of a new nation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION / HEALTH – All students will participate in co-educational physical fitness, team sports, and lifetime sports. Any student that is injured or unable, for any reason, to participate in the regular physical education class will participate in an adapted program. In Health, students will develop an awareness of factors that impact growth and development between adolescence and adulthood.

PSSA PREP / COMPUTERS – The purpose of this course is to increase student exposure to the style and content of the PSSA tests. Sample questions and study materials will be utilized. The student will review correct keyboarding techniques and basic Microsoft Office applications. Students with the need for extra assistance will be placed in a section that focuses more on reading and math tutoring and less on computer skills.

ART APPRECIATION – Students develop awareness of their environment and experiences, and to relate those through art experiences. A variety of techniques and materials will be used to reach those goals while improving student's skills and techniques. Students will develop skills as a precursor to high school art.

MUSIC APPRECIATION – This exploratory related arts class is a class designed to study the historical periods of music. Students will have the opportunity to learn about these different time periods through various activities such as web-based reports, PowerPoint presentations, oral reports, written reports or class discussions. Technology is a crucial component of this course. Students will work on individual projects as well as learn to work in small groups.

TECH ED 8 – This course refines the students' skills in measurement, product design, and operation of tools and machines used in the manufacturing process. Students learn about transportation by building and racing model cars and writing about their experience.

ADVENTURES IN WORLD LANGUAGES: SPANISH – Students will continue their adventure in world languages. They will have the opportunity to study the Spanish language and its culture. Students will learn basic phrases and expressions in Spanish as well as explore the varied geography, customs, and people who speak Spanish.



ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK	The material contained in this handbook has been prepared to inform parents and students of the offerings at Steel Valley Middle School. Parents are urged to consult with the principal and/or the counselor concerning any point that is not made clear.
DISCLAIMER	Most courses listed in the handbook will meet once per day, five days per week unless specifically noted otherwise. However, the school district reserves the right to reduce or extend the number of periods per week for some courses, but only as it is consistent with Chapter IV curriculum regulations established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
ACCREDITATION	The Middle School program provides for grades 6 through 8 and has been approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Steel Valley Middle School is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.
DISCRIMINATION	<p>Consistent with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (43 P.S. SS 951-963), no student shall be denied access to a free and full public education on account of race, religion, sex, national origin, or handicap.</p> <p>It is the policy of the Steel Valley School District not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, handicap, or age in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Section 504, Title VI, Title IX, Chapter 14 and 15. For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact Section 504, Title VI and Title IX Coordinator, William H. Kinavey, 464-3600 X1505, or Chapter 14 and 15 Coordinator, Diana L. Borges, 464-3600 X1905, at the Steel Valley School District, Administration Building, Munhall, PA.</p>
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS	<p>JOE DUCAR, <i>President</i> VINCENT NATALE, <i>Vice President</i> SUSAN BALLAS BETH CANNON KIMBERLY KUBANCSEK EDWARD McCALLISTER CYNTHIA MCENHEIMER THOMAS OLSON PAMELA TERRICK</p>
CENTRAL OFFICE	<p>DR. KINAVEY, Ed.D. <i>Superintendent</i> ED COLEBANK, <i>Dir. of Academics, Information & Technology</i> DIANA L. BORGES, <i>Dir. of Pupil Personnel & Special Services</i> MARK CHERPAK, <i>Business Manager</i></p>
M.S. PRINCIPAL	KEVIN M. WALSH: (412) 464-3600 X3505
M.S. DEAN	JAMIE POLAK: (412) 464-3600 X3504
GUIDANCE	<p>SUSAN L. LARGE: (412) 464-3600 X3521 BRANDI CHALUS: (412) 464-3600 X3522</p>

DETERMINING QPA

All class selections are final. There will be no student requested changes to student schedules during the first month of school. The principal must approve any changes beyond that point.

Each grading period a student's Quality Point Average (QPA) is computed by dividing the total number of quality points by the total credit hours for the courses taken. The number of quality points in any single course is the product of the credit hours (2.0 for Language Arts and Math; 1.0 for all others*) and the numerical equivalent of the letter grade where A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1 & E=0.

(Listed below is an example of how to compute QPA for a nine-week grading period. Credit hours are subject to change with notification by the Principal).

Course	Credit Hours	Grade	Formula	Quality pts
Language Arts	2.0	A	2x4	8.0
Math	2.0	B	2x3	6.0
Science 8	1.0	B	1x3	3.0
U.S. History	1.0	D	1x1	1.0
Related Arts	0.25	C	.25x2	.50
Phys. Ed./Health	0.5	B	.5x3	1.5
PSSA Prep	0.5	A	.5x4	2.0
Totals	7.25			22.0

$$\text{QPA} = \text{Quality Points} / \text{Credit Hours} = 22.0 \div 7.25 = \mathbf{3.034}$$

* Related Arts is divided into 4 nine-week courses. Each course is 0.25 credits. The total credit for the year is 1.0. To calculate multiply numerical equivalent by .25.

HONOR ROLL

An honor roll is compiled at the end of each nine-week period. Students may qualify for Honor Roll as follows:

There must be no grades of D, E, or I (incomplete)

Honor Roll status is determined by the QPA for that 9 weeks:

Honor Roll 3.25 - 3.74

High Honor Roll 3.75 - 3.99

Highest Honors with Distinction 4.00 or higher