

Mill River Union High School



Middle School Program of Studies 2025-2026

Mill River Union High School

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Mission Statement

Mill River Union High School seeks to engage each student with a contemporary, personalized education in preparation for a successful, responsible, and rewarding life.

Academic Offerings Overview - Middle School

All Middle School students will take four required year-long, core academic courses, including English, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science and one semester of Physical Education/Health.

Core Academic Offerings:

ELA 7

Credits - N/A

This year-long English course will continue to build upon your knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing. You will be reading and analyzing a variety of literature and informational texts, responding to the texts through your writing, and participating in discussions. The texts that we read will connect back to our year-long theme: understanding others.

ELA 8:

Credits - N/A

This year-long ELA course will build on the knowledge from 7th grade, continuing with the Book Worms curriculum. In this course, students will study vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing. They will read and analyze a variety of mediums, including, but not limited to, fiction, nonfiction, videos, infographics, and first-person testimony. Students will respond to various topics, whether through their writing or participating in class discussions. All mediums and discussions within the 8th-grade curriculum will connect to our year-long theme: Advocating for Others.

7th Grade Math

Credits - N/A

Throughout this year-long course, students utilize the Great Minds Eureka Math program as well as supplementary materials including worksheets, IXL, and Delta Math. In addition to reviewing basic skills, students build upon their knowledge of proportional relationships, integers, rational numbers, expressions, equations, and properties of shapes.

8th Grade Math

Credits - N/A

Throughout this year-long course, students utilize the Great Minds Eureka Math program as well as supplementary materials including worksheets, IXL, and Delta Math. Students build upon their mathematical knowledge by exploring exponents and scientific notation, similar and congruent figures, expressions, and equations. Students will spend a significant portion of this course on linear equations.

Consumer Math**Credits - N/A**

Throughout this year-long course, students will practice real-life mathematical skills including time, money, budgeting, and measurements. In addition, students will build on their foundational skills by practicing place value, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with whole numbers and decimals, as well as fractions.

7th Grade Science**Credits - N/A**

This course provides an engaging exploration of foundational concepts in physical science, biology, and Earth science. Students will develop scientific inquiry skills through hands-on experiments, interactive activities, and critical thinking exercises.

This year-long science course builds on prior knowledge and engages students in hands-on learning through inquiry and experimentation. Students will explore chemical reactions and matter, chemical reactions and energy, metabolic reactions, photosynthesis and matter cycling, ecosystem dynamics, and Earth's resources and human impact. They will analyze scientific concepts through labs, data interpretation, and real-world applications. The course integrates various resources, including experiments, models, diagrams, and case studies. Students will engage in discussions and problem-solving activities to strengthen their critical thinking skills. All topics will connect to our year-long theme: The Interconnectedness of Matter, Energy, and Life.

8th Grade Science**Credits - N/A**

The 8th grade science curriculum is divided into three core disciplines of scientific study, Physical science, Earth science, and Life science. All units will begin with an anchoring phenomena to engage students in the exploration of the natural world around them. Throughout each unit, students will engage in scientific practices and integrate cross cutting concepts to make connections between the field of science and all other disciplines. Students will analyze scientific concepts through labs, data interpretation, and real-world applications through a variety of learning experiences, including; conducting experiments, developing models, and reviewing case studies. Students will engage in discussions and problem-solving activities to strengthen their critical thinking skills. Physical science concepts will include: Contact Forces, Sound Waves, and Forces at a Distance. The focus for the Earth Science unit will be the Earth in Space. During the Life science units we will focus on both Genetics and Natural Selection and Common Ancestry.

7th Grade Social Studies**Credits - N/A**

7th Grade Social Studies is a basic introduction to United States geography, government, and history. Students will be introduced to the study of geography through the use of the Five Themes of Geography as well as various maps, globes, and atlases. Students will use a variety of modes to learn about the location of states, location and importance of physical features, and how physical features impact humans. Students will be introduced to the three branches of government, historical documents, and the people and roles they play in our government. Students will also be introduced to basic U.S. history from colonial times through as far as we can get! This usually includes colonial times, the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, immigration, industrialization, etc. Students will experience a variety of ways in which to illustrate their learning throughout all different topics.

8th Grade Social Studies**Credits - N/A**

8th Grade Social Studies is a basic introduction to world cultures. Students begin with an introduction to what culture is, several examples of culture, and will research ways in which cultures differ throughout the world. Students will focus on world geography, government, economics, religions, history/historical people, etc. Students will use the ABCs of Culture as a guide to their learning. Students will experience a variety of ways in which to illustrate their learning throughout the year as well.

Middle School Physical Education / Health**Credits - N/A**

This Physical Education and Health half-semester course cycles between alternating two-week modules of physical education and health instruction. Physical conditioning, sport, and team-building will be utilized by students to enhance their physical well-being, as well as learn the core health concerns of nutrition, mental health, prevention of drug abuse, and sex education. The alternating model offers a balanced emphasis of personal welfare through physical conditioning, balanced with the proper health information. The course promotes an active way of living and also provides students with the tools to make informed decisions about their well-being. This course is a single semester each year 7th and 8th grade.

Performing and Visual Arts Electives / Ensembles:**Middle School Art****Credits - N/A**

Middle School Art is open to any 7th and 8th grade student, and no prior experience is necessary. This course teaches students to be creative and express their personal voices by making visual art. Assignments and projects are designed to push students to “think outside the box” while exploring the elements of art and principles of design. Students will work with a variety of materials and processes that may explore areas of the arts including Drawing, Painting, Pottery, Design, and Photography. Each student will be provided with a visual journal that will be used for daily art activities in class. At the end of the semester students will choose their best works and display them in class exhibit in the Middle School wing of the building.

Middle School Woodshop**Credits - N/A**

Any students 7-8 may enroll in woodshop. Students will learn tool safety, woodworking techniques, care and maintenance of tools, and how to maintain a clean and safe woodshop. Students will build 2 or 3 projects and display one of them in the art show. All projects will eventually be brought home for students to enjoy.

Junior Band - Grades 7 & 8**Credits - N/A**

Junior Band is for Instrumental Musicians in grades 7 & 8. Individual instrumentalists develop their abilities in operating their instruments so as to produce characteristic tone quality, a full range of pitches, varieties of rhythms, and a full range of volumes. Whenever two or more musicians are producing music together they work to blend tone

qualities, match pitches, integrate rhythms, and balance volumes. The student musicians in this ensemble will spend the class rehearsals using a wide variety of material created for concert bands to improve the skills listed above. Also, in order to develop and enjoy the benefits of using notation, much class time will be spent sight reading material. Some material will be rehearsed to a high level of proficiency for presentation in at least one public performance each semester. Student musicians are automatically a part of the Marching Band for up to four parades each year. Student musicians are provided opportunities for advancing their individual and ensemble skills by opting to prepare to audition for participation in Honors Ensembles at the Green Mountain Music District 5 Festival. Students are expected to have respect for other individuals, others' property and every aspect of the educational process. Students are expected to participate fully in every component of the ensemble process, including personal practice, rehearsals, and public performances. Developing good community skills, such as discipline and responsibility are an intrinsic part of full participation.

Requirements: Students must perform at evening school concerts in concert attire and march in parades in uniform on three weekend days.

Junior Chorus - Grades 7 & 8

Credits - N/A

Any student in grades 7-8 may enroll in Junior Chorus. No prior experience is needed, just an interest in singing. In chorus, students will advance in the skill levels of music: music theory, sight reading, and vocal technique. Students will be expected to come prepared to class with their chorus folder, music and pencil. Actively participate in all elements of the rehearsal process including: posture, vocal exercises, sight reading, repertoire preparation. Students will sing music literature chosen from world cultures, spirituals, major choral works, and a variety of time periods. Students are expected to have respect for other individuals, others' property and every aspect of the educational process. Student musicians are provided opportunities for advancing their individual and ensemble skills by opting to prepare to audition for participation in Honors Ensembles and the Green Mountain Music District 5 Festival. Students are expected to participate fully in every component of the ensemble process, including personal practice, rehearsals, and public performances. Student musicians develop solid community building skills, such as self discipline, perseverance and responsibility.

Requirements: Students must perform at evening school concerts in concert attire.

World Music & Guitar

Credits - N/A

Students explore world music genres by studying their origins, listening to the cultural sounds, techniques and instrumentation, play world music percussion instruments and learn to play guitar.

Vivace

Credits - .25

Soprano and Alto voices in grade 7-9 who are in chorus may audition for Vivace. In this ensemble, students begin to learn about gaining independence as a singer in a small ensemble. They will study a variety of repertoire and will perform at concerts. This class will be offered 2:45pm to 4pm one day per week - schedule to be announced.

Requirement: Perform in Evening Concert performances in concert attire.

Bel Canto**Credits - .25**

Soprano, alto, and baritone voices in grades 7-9 can audition for this group. In this ensemble, students begin to learn about gaining independence as a singer in a small ensemble. They will learn to blend part singing in small groups and build confidence in holding their part while performing with a small honors ensemble. They will study a variety of repertoire and will perform at concerts. This class will be offered after 2:45pm one day per week - schedule to be announced. **Requirement: Perform in Evening Concert performances in concert attire.**

Jazz Lab**Credits - .5**

Jazz Lab is open to ANY Instrumentalists who are already Members of the Concert Band for any one student's present grade level. This ensemble is open to any and all instrumentalists in either 7th, 8th, and senior band and will be made to accommodate every qualified musician. Many varieties of American Popular Music will be studied, with substantial focus on the "standards". Some of this material will be rehearsed to a higher level of proficiency to be performed for the public in at least one event each semester. In addition to developing the basic individual and ensemble skills, musicians will typically also have opportunities in every rehearsal to gain the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to improvise (using several forms of intelligence simultaneously to create music spontaneously!). This class will be offered after 2:45pm two days per week - schedule to be announced. **Requirements: Students must perform at evening school concerts in concert attire.**

Electives:**Career Exploration****Credits - N/A**

Students taking this elective will be able to learn about various paths for their future. They will be able to explore the option of Stafford Technical Center, what colleges look for in students, what options there are for the military, and they will have plenty of opportunities to research desired careers. This class will have some whole group instructions/discussions, but will also have a lot of independent time where students can individually decide what they want to learn about. There will also be time spent on how to properly fill out an application, conduct an interview, create a resume, etc. The hope is to also invite members of our community to speak about their career paths as requested by students.

Savory Sessions and More**Credits - N/A**

Savory Sessions and More is a hands-on course in which students learn essential cooking

skills, kitchen safety, baking, breadmaking, meal planning, and nutrition. They will also explore budgeting using a designated household income and maintaining a checkbook, time management, and problem-solving. We will also look at basic sewing skills. This class will be a mixture of discussion and project-based learning.

Max = 12 Students

The Holocaust

Credits - N/A

In this elective, students will learn some of the harrowing events that make up the Holocaust. We will look at all aspects of the Holocaust, including who was involved, the causes, and the journey these individuals had to endure for freedom. We will look at survivor testimony, primary sources, multimedia resources, and literature. We will also discuss the injustice in the world today and how we need respect for all humanity.

7th Grade ELA Workshop

Credits - N/A

In this class, students will practice English language arts skills. Students may read articles and/or short stories to practice reading comprehension or other skills. Grammar activities may include correcting common grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization mistakes. Students will also complete short writing practices focused on specific skills like citing evidence, providing elaboration, using descriptive language, and more. Any assigned work will be completed during class. Some days, students will be given the opportunity to work on any assignments they have for their other classes. This gives students the chance to get support from a teacher. For this class, students will be assessed on various transferable skills.

Animals in Literature

Credits - N/A

This semester-long course is designed to have you read, write, research, and talk about animals. You will be enhancing your ELA skills while learning about all kinds of animals. A major focus of this class will be developing our research and presentation skills.

Future Ready: Developing 21st Century Skills

Credits - N/A

Any student in grades 7-8 are able to enroll in this class. Being a future leader, and the best student you can be, requires developing habits of work skills that will equip you with essential skills needed to thrive in the 21st Century, both inside a classroom and out in the real world. Through a combination of hands-on activities and interactive discussions, you will be empowered to become a Future Leader who is confident, flexible, and resilient to navigate an ever changing world. You can expect to learn and experience the following in this class: critical thinking and problem solving, communication skills, collaboration and teamwork, information literacy: self management and growth mindset, and global awareness and cultural competence.

Math Workshop

Credits - N/A

Throughout this semester-long course, students will practice various mathematical skills. Students will be given opportunities to work on their assignments with teacher support. In addition, students will receive a transferable skills grade based on using class time for learning and self-direction.

Maker Space: Competitive Robotics

Credits - N/A

Offered during the **fall semester only** and open to both 7th and 8th graders, students in

this class will work as a team to design, build and program a robot that can complete game missions on a 4x8' game space. Students will also identify and create a solution for a real-world problem related to the game theme. Students enrolled in this class will compete at the Vermont State FIRST Robotics Regionals and Championships in December and January (which are weekend events). **Participation at competitions is required for this class.** All work (except competitions) will be completed during class time.

BookVentures

Credits - N/A

Ever wish you could have time in your school day to just read? Dive into Mill River's collection of more than 12,000 books and experience the power of story. In this class, 7th and 8th grade students will spend three days a week reading or listening to books of their choice. Books from the Mill River collection, our ebook and audiobook collections and books obtained through Inter-Library Loan will all be available. Students will maintain a "Book of Books" where they track their reading in a scrapbook format, but no extensive writing is required. On our block day, students will share what they are reading, add to their "To Be Read" lists based on other students' presentations, create recorded book talks, posters, social media posts and engage in other ways to promote reading for fun throughout our school community. Students will be encouraged to read widely across genres and subjects, but the focus in this class is reading for pleasure and sharing book recommendations, and students have full autonomy in book choice.

French Speaking Cultures

Credits - N/A

This course is taught in English and is not credit bearing

Students will explore French-speaking cultures around the world through readings and other authentic materials. Students will learn about the products, practices and perspectives of these cultures by examining families and communities, personal and public identities, beauty and aesthetics, science and technology, contemporary life, and global challenges.

Spanish Speaking Cultures

Credits - N/A

This course is taught in English and is not credit bearing.

Students will explore Spanish-speaking cultures around the world through readings and other authentic materials. Students will learn about the products, practices and perspectives of these cultures by examining families and communities, personal and public identities, beauty and aesthetics, science and technology, contemporary life, and global challenges.

Middle School Theater

Credits - N/A

Students engage in scenes, dialogues, games, and improvisation to get an immersion into the craft. Working in groups, with partners, or alone, students gain experience in vocal skills and physical movement, and a basic awareness of stage presence. The class may lead to a student's participation in the Stage 20 show in the spring semester.

Medical Science

Credits - N/A

This elective course introduces students to the fundamentals of medical science, providing an early foundation in healthcare and biomedical studies. Students will explore human anatomy and physiology, microbiology, disease prevention, medical ethics, and healthcare careers. Through hands-on activities, laboratory experiments, case studies, and simulations, students will develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and basic clinical

skills applicable to real-world medical scenarios.

The course will also emphasize first aid training, medical technology, and public health awareness, fostering an understanding of the role of healthcare professionals in society. By integrating science, ethics, and practical applications, this course aims to inspire students to pursue future studies in the medical and health sciences while promoting informed decision-making about personal and community health.

Field Ecology

Credits - N/A

Students will study their local environment, including plants, animals, and microorganisms, and their interactions. We will survey both plants and animals of the MRU property, identify critical habitats, identify and remove invasive species, and develop plans to minimize human impact.

Students will learn to ask questions, make observations, collect data, and analyze results through field studies. Activities will include macro-invertebrate sampling, improve wildlife habitat, and create a guided nature trail around MRU. Students will be outside the majority of time, weather permitting. Sturdy footwear and appropriate clothing are required.

World Language:

All World Language classes are by teacher recommendation only

Spanish 1

Credits - .5 per semester

In Spanish 1 students will be introduced to common vocabulary, phrases, and concepts necessary for daily interpersonal interaction. Emphasis will be placed on basic communication and comprehension in everyday situations and about students' everyday lives, i.e. survival skills. Students will develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing and gain an understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures through selected authentic texts, discussions and projects.

Spanish 2

Credits - .5 per semester

Spanish 2 builds on the language skills learned in Spanish 1. In this course, students will increase their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. By the end of the course students are able to communicate in the present, past, and future tenses. Students further enrich their understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures through authentic texts and projects. ***This course is for 8th grade students who have successfully completed Spanish 1.***

French 1

Credits - .5 per semester

In French 1, students will be introduced to common vocabulary, phrases, and concepts necessary for daily interpersonal interaction. Emphasis will be placed on basic communication and comprehension in everyday situations and about students' everyday

lives. Students will develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing and gain an understanding of French-speaking cultures through selected authentic texts, discussions and projects.

French 2

Credits - .5 per semester

French 2 builds on the language skills learned in French 1. In this course, students will increase their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. By the end of the course students will be able to communicate basic information about themselves and others in the present, future, and past tenses. Students further enrich their understanding of French-speaking cultures through authentic texts and projects. ***This course is for 8th-grade students who have successfully completed French 1.***

Russian 1

Credits - .5 per semester

In Russian 1 students will be introduced to common vocabulary, phrases, and concepts necessary for daily interpersonal interaction. Emphasis will be placed on basic communication and comprehension in everyday situations and about students' everyday lives. Students will develop skills in listening and speaking and learn to read and write the Cyrillic alphabet. They will also gain an understanding of Russia and Russian-speaking cultures through select authentic texts, discussions and projects.

Russian 2

Credits - .5 per semester

Russian 2 builds on the language skills learned in Russian 1. In this course, students will increase their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. By the end of the course students are able to communicate basic information about themselves and others in the present, past and future tenses. Students further enrich their understanding of Russia and Russian-speaking cultures through authentic texts and projects. ***This course is for 8th grade students who have successfully completed Russian 1.***

Academic Assessment

Proficiency Level	Symbol
Exceeding	4
Exceeding	3.5
Proficient	3
Approaching	2.5
Approaching	2 Minimum Passing Score
Beginning	1.5
Beginning	1

Incompletes

Incompletes are used when there is an extenuating circumstance (example: medical needs) where the student is unable to access in-person learning for an extended period of time. Teachers and students should develop a plan to make up the material within 10 days upon returning to school. If the student does not complete the material missed within that time frame, the incomplete will turn into a 1.

Course Syllabi

Course Name	Length
ELA 7	Year
ELA 8	Year
Mathematics 7 - Moore	Year
Mathematics 7 - Stubbins	Year
Mathematics 8 - Moore	Year
Mathematics 8 - Stubbins	Year
Consumer Mathematics	Year
Social Studies 7	Year
Social Studies 8	Year
Science 7	Year
Science 8	Year
Physical Education / Health	Semester
Middle School Art	Semester
Middle School Woodshop	Semester
Junior Band	Year
Junior Chorus	Year
World Music & Guitar	Semester
Vivace	Year
Honors Clef Hangers	Year

Bel Canto	Year
Jazz Lab	Year
Honors Jazz Band	Year
Honors Jazz Combo	Year

Course Name	Length
Career Exploration	Semester

Savory Sessions	Semester
The Holocaust	Semester
7th Grade ELA Workshop	Semester
Animals in Literature	Semester
Future Ready	Semester
Math Workshop	Semester
Maker Space: Competitive Robotics	Semester
BookVentures	Semester
French Speaking Culture	Semester
Spanish Speaking Culture	Semester
Middle School Theater	Semester
Medical Science	Semester
Field Ecology	Semester
Spanish 1	Year
Spanish 2	Year
French 1	Year
French 2	Year
Russian 1	Year
Russian 2	Year