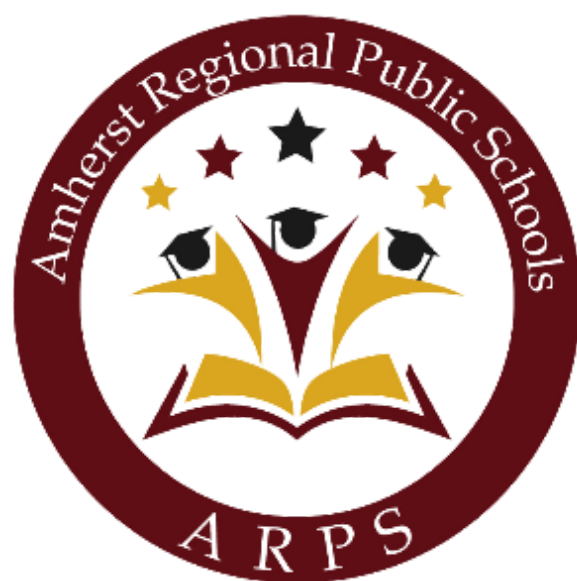


Amherst Regional Middle School

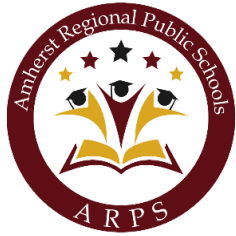


Program of Studies 2023-2024

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Note: The Program of Studies reflects current course offerings at the Middle School. The school budget for 2019-2020 is approved in late spring. This budget process may result in changes in our course offerings.



AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL
170 CHESTNUT STREET AMHERST, MA 01002
TEL. (413) 362-1800
FAX (413) 549-9812

Dear Students and Families,

It is our pleasure to present the Amherst Regional Middle School (ARMS) Program of Studies. We aim to provide students with a comprehensive middle school experience. This program of studies illustrates the wide range of learning opportunities for students to explore a variety of disciplines in standards-based curriculum.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAMS. Students are placed on a team with other students for their core subjects. Each team is comprised of teachers of English, social studies, math, science and special education. These Team Teachers collaborate to teach one group of students and integrate curriculum across content areas. This team model of middle school philosophy allows teachers to get to know the students' learning needs in depth. The team model provides a bridge between the elementary experience to high school school-life. Each team is supported by Special Education teachers. This allows for students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to fully participate on teams. Additionally, an English Language Education (ELE) is provided in each grade to students who qualify.

EXPLORATORIES and ELECTIVES

- All students participate in Exploratory Courses: Art, Drama, Health, Music, Physical Education at ARMS.
- World Languages are offered as electives. The options include Chinese, French, Latin, and Spanish
- Music courses are offered in two models: ensembles and classroom music. The ensemble choices are *yearlong* and include Band, Chorus, Orchestra; and the introductory music options last for one semester and include Introduction to Music, Introduction to Songwriting and Music Production, and Rhythm and Percussion.

CHOOSING WORLD LANGUAGE and MUSIC ENSEMBLES. The two disciplines of World Language and Music offer students the opportunity to rank their choices. The registration form asks families to indicate preferences for World Languages and Music ensemble options. Parents/guardians of students with an IEP will be able to make final support and elective decisions at their child's spring transition IEP meeting.

LEARNING ABOUT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL. There are many opportunities for incoming 7th graders and new 8th graders to get to know the Middle School. Between April and May, ARMS Guidance along with virtual visits from Administration and key Middle School Staff will be visiting the 6th grade classrooms in each school, and 6th grade students will visit the middle school for a half day called "Stepping Up Day" at the end of May. Furthermore, parents/guardians are invited to an orientation evening on Wednesday May 4 at 7PM virtually. Additionally, we have orientations in August for those who were unable to attend the spring events.

Anticipating the transition to middle school often generates excitement along with many questions for both students and families. This is a natural part of the process. Please allow us to help you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or your guidance counselor. You can email us or call the main office (362-1800) for assistance. We look forward to meeting you and working together to shape a fruitful and productive 2021-2022 school year!

Sincerely,

Diego Sharon, Principal

Foundations of ARMS

The ARMS community challenges and inspires students to:

- be engaged and curious learners
- be collaborative and creative problem solvers
- value diverse perspectives
- care for themselves and each other

By the end of 8th grade, ARMS students will meet or exceed the standards from the Massachusetts Frameworks or an Individual Education Plan. Students will:

- use the content and skills they have learned to ask and answer meaningful questions.
- work collaboratively with peers and adults.
- use critical thinking skills to gather and analyze information, pose questions, synthesize data and ideas, and explore real world problems.
- communicate ideas in written, visual, and oral form.
- make healthy physical, academic, and interpersonal choices.
- reflect on their processes and learning styles in order to assess their academic progress.
- believe in their ability to learn.

To accomplish these student outcomes, we are committed to a school in which:

- Staff creates a climate of high expectations for each student's success.
 - Staff clearly communicates to students, parents/guardians, and each other the knowledge, skills, and understandings that students are expected to acquire.
 - Staff monitor student learning on a timely basis. When students experience difficulty, the staff has structures in place to ensure they receive additional support for learning. There is a specific plan to enrich and extend the learning of students who have achieved the required standards.
 - All programs and structures provide open and equal access to each student.
 - Each student has frequent and meaningful opportunities to connect with an adult to support the student's academic, personal, and social development.
 - The leadership system allows for substantive involvement in decision making by students, staff, family members, and the community.
 - Student data is routinely analyzed and reported to the staff and parent/guardians to foster collective responsibility for continual school improvement.
 - All staff members continually grow in their professional expertise. There are structures to support their ongoing, job-embedded learning and continuous improvement both individually and collaboratively.
 - School-wide structures facilitate a safe, positive school climate.
-

REGISTRATION FOR SEVENTH GRADE

All sixth graders receive a copy of this Program of Studies and an online Registration Form. Sixth grade teachers are asked to collect all registration forms and return them to the middle school by the end of May. Please complete and submit the Registration Forms to your sixth grade teacher on time. Your timely return of forms will allow us to schedule classes for your student when that Registration Form, ***signed by a parent or guardian*** is received.

We will be available to answer your questions and help you and your sixth grader complete your registration. We look forward to meeting you at the following events:

- An ARMS Guidance Counselor will visit each elementary school to meet with 6th grade students in their classrooms. At this time, students will learn about the offerings at the middle school.
- Special Education Transition Meetings jointly chaired by Elementary and Middle School Educational Team Leaders will be held for each student. These meetings are scheduled by your Elementary School, and are typically held on-site at the Elementary School.

In late spring, we invite all sixth graders to “Step Up Day”. This is when 6th grade students visit the middle school with their 6th grade teachers and peers. A day is set for each elementary school to come and visit. A group of 7th grade students will give 6th grade students a tour of the middle school, the 7th grade students will conduct a discussion about middle school life and answer questions. Sixth grade students then have lunch here at ARMS then return to the elementary schools.

REGISTRATION FOR EIGHTH GRADE

The Program of Studies and all Registration Forms are distributed in 7th grade Advisory by the end of May. Students consult with their Advisor, ARMS Teachers, and their family in choosing courses. Registration Forms are completed at home and returned to school ***signed by a parent or guardian***. Please return completed Registration Forms to the middle school by the end of May. Please help your 7th grade student promptly return the form for their 8th grade course registration to enable us to schedule classes after the parent/guardian signature is received.

REGISTRATION FOR STUDENTS NEW TO THE DISTRICT

Seventh and Eighth Grade students who move into the district begin their registration process with Registrar Erika Grundstrom. Please make an appointment with Ms. Grundstrom by calling 413-362-1703.

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Seventh Grade Students and 8th grade students who are new to the district arrive at 9:05 a.m. for the first day and additional orientation activities.

Seventh Grade

Courses: All students are enrolled in four core curriculum courses: English 7, Social Studies 7, Science 7, Math 7, and also Physical Education/Health classes. All 7th grade students are also enrolled in art and drama

classes. Students will be able to choose whether to take a World Language, and if yes, decide which one. They will also choose Music Ensembles and/or classroom music courses. Please note that Band and Orchestra require some previous instrument experience. Chorus is open to all students. See course descriptions for details.

We also offer courses designed to support students in their academic studies through our Special Education Program and English Language Learner Program.

Description of Seventh Grade Courses

English 7

OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

ARMS English Language Arts is a place where students use writing and literature to make sense of the world. Students use books as mirrors to think about themselves and as windows to think about the world around them. In writing, students develop their abilities to reflect, analyze, persuade, inform, and express themselves to the world around them.

The ARMS grade 7 English curriculum is designed to help students become more skilled and thoughtful readers and writers. 7th grade is a time when students grow their thinking from more concrete to more abstract to tackle new, tougher questions that may not have clear-cut answers. Throughout the year, students practice and deepen their close reading and analytic skills through thematic ideas of connection and identity in short stories, poetry, persuasive rhetoric, and both magically realistic fiction and speculative fiction, including *Ninth Ward* and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Students write with increasing depth as they write persuasively, analytically and creatively. 7th grade English classes are places for students to take academic risks and make mistakes, to learn organizational strategies that work for them, and to grow their thinking about themselves and their world.

ARMS English classes are heterogeneous learning communities where students are welcomed as unique and complex individuals who will be supported in their learning. All students will have an opportunity to develop their abilities to read with comprehension, to think critically, to express themselves clearly in speech and writing, and to listen with understanding.

Social Studies 7

OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING for Social Studies:

Acting as a member of a global society requires understanding the diversity of worldviews. An individual's worldview is shaped by their environment, family, community, culture and experiences. How does an individual develop a world view?

The Social Studies curriculum at Amherst Regional Middle School is based on a number of enduring understandings. Enduring understandings are based on "big ideas" uncovered by essential questions which guide learning. They help students to see relationships and patterns in the content of the course. While we begin with a common question, "How does an individual develop his/her world view?" The inquiry process enables students to discover their own unique answers.

The seventh grade social studies curriculum includes six units. In the introductory unit, students will apply the five themes of geography to projects focused on the question "Who Am I?" The next four units answer the question, "Who Are They?" by exploring the enduring understandings that help define an individual's worldview. The enduring understandings include how a person's environment, identity development, and diversity within and between cultures shape her/his world view. These enduring understandings will be examined through a series of case studies drawn from various regions of the world. The final unit asks

students to answer the question "Who Are We?" by applying the enduring understandings from the prior units in a culminating project about global connections.

To support student learning of essential knowledge, the use of a variety of skills is necessary. Some skills in Social Studies are content-specific, while others are shared across departments. In 7th grade, students begin to think chronologically, access and effectively use a variety of sources, engage in cultural analysis and interpretation, conduct research and engage in issues analysis and decision-making. In addition, students continue to practice and improve skills in reading strategies, writing, communication, organization, cooperative learning, studentship skills, and research.

Science 7

OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING FOR Science:

The natural world is composed of interdependent systems. Understanding how natural systems work enables us to take care of them.

The science curriculum at Amherst Regional Middle School is based on a number of Enduring Understandings. These understandings are "big ideas" supported by essential questions that guide both exploratory learning activities and direct instruction. Science 7 is an exploratory general science course designed to enable our students to acquire knowledge of the natural world through understanding the systems that function within it. These systems focus on several topics included within life sciences. Units include: Nature of Science, Human Body, Cells, Classification, Reproduction and Heredity, Evolution, and Ecology.

During the year, students will develop an appreciation for the nature of science and how scientists do their work. This allows students to build a perspective on how science connects to the world and how they interact with it. Conceptual model building towards this goal is achieved through interactive laboratory activities, group discussion and projects designed to facilitate critical thinking and observation skills. Group and study skills are emphasized throughout the year. Students will use a variety of materials for curricular resources including the Holt "Cells, Reproduction and Heredity" textbook as well as teacher generated materials.

In an effort to differentiate instruction and provide challenge, students may elect to independently complete projects, labs or activities beyond the classroom in an area of interest or expertise.

Math 7

OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING FOR Mathematics:

Mathematics is a system for organizing the world quantitatively. We use mathematics to analyze, problem solve, and communicate about ourselves and our world.

The tools of mathematics allow us to:

- *Understand and model relationships.*
- *Compare quantities to make informed decisions.*
- *Efficiently measure and compare one, two, and three dimensional shapes.*
- *Make sense of situations that involve numbers that are not whole and/or positive.*

Seventh grade math focuses on four critical areas: (1) developing understanding of proportional relationships and applying proportional reasoning; (2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; (3) solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; and (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples.

With all units that are taught, the focus is on having students not only be able to acquire the skills needed to do the math, but to also understand the concepts behind the topic. This will help students understand the math that they are learning and apply this understanding to learn math in later years. In addition to this, students can appreciate the real world applications of the math they are learning.

We use the Desmos 7th Grade Curriculum and the Open Up Resources curriculum as a resource. This curriculum and our instruction are aligned with the 2017 Massachusetts Mathematical Frameworks, which includes the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

Math 7 is the general education math course. Course concepts include proportional relationships, statistics and probability, circle measurements, solid geometry, and expressions, equations, and inequalities.

Math 7 Elective is a small (6 students or fewer) general education class that is taken in addition to Math 7. It is designed for students who are seeking additional math support. The class helps students to master prerequisite skills for upcoming units, preview math material before it is seen in Math 7, and receive assistance on current math homework.

Math 7 Topics is for students with a specific Special Education plan. The course is taught by teachers with math and Special Education certification and is managed by the Special Education Department.

Eighth Grade

Courses: All students take four core curriculum courses: English 8, Social Studies 8, Science 8, Math 8 or Algebra 8 (Teacher recommendations are made toward the end of Math 7), and Physical Education/Health classes. Please note the prerequisites before signing-up for World Language. We also offer courses designed to support students in their academic studies through our Special Education Program and English Language Learner Program.

Description of Eighth Grade Courses

English 8

OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

ARMS English Language Arts is a place where students use writing and literature to make sense of the world. Students use books as mirrors to think about themselves and as windows to think about the world around them. In writing, students develop their abilities to reflect, analyze, persuade, inform, and express themselves to the world around them.

The ARMS grade 8 English curriculum encourages students to consider ideas in literature in increasingly abstract terms and understand relationships within and between readings. Through discussion, writings, and activities, students find parallels within literature and between these works and their own lives, including drama, historical fiction, historical nonfiction, and modern fiction, including *The Diary of a Young Girl* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Writing assignments grow from ideas in the reading, such as humanity and resistance, and include both analytical and creative writing. 8th grade English classes are steeped in both discussion and inquiry and in understanding the author's craft and multiple perspectives.

ARMS English classes are heterogeneous learning communities where students are welcomed as unique and complex individuals who will be supported in their learning. All students will have an opportunity to develop their abilities to read with comprehension, to think critically, to express themselves clearly in speech and writing, and to listen with understanding.

Social Studies 8

OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING FOR SOCIAL STUDIES:

The promise of America is one of opportunity. America's story must be told from diverse perspectives to understand how access to opportunities changes over time. We can be part of the story by advocating for opportunities for ourselves and each other. We have a responsibility to shape American society to make the promise a reality for all.

The Social Studies curriculum at Amherst Regional Middle School is based on a number of enduring understandings. Enduring understandings are based on "big ideas" uncovered by essential questions which guide learning. They help students to see relationships and patterns in the content of the course. While we begin with common questions, "*What is the evolving story of America? What is your part in the story?*", the inquiry process enables students to discover their own unique answers. An essential component of the course is to ask students to make connections between the past and the present and to see themselves as part of the story of the country moving forward.

Each of our thematic units look at concepts such as Community, Identity, Justice, and Action and connect to our overarching anti racist curriculum focus. Civics is a course that is contemporary in nature, and so an essential part of our work in exploring foundations of government is to examine ways in which the principles and promises can be used to expand equity in our local, state and national communities today.

The eighth grade social studies curriculum includes topics from the Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework for Civics: philosophical foundations of the United States political system; development and institutions of the United States government; rights and responsibilities of citizens; the Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court decisions; structure of Massachusetts state and local government; and freedom of the press and news/media literacy.

For many years, ARMS Social Studies students have been engaging with the community in civic action. We are pleased to be a model for other towns in the state as the new requirement for every 8th grader to have an opportunity to engage in student-led Civics Projects is implemented. A major component of our year will be a student-led Civic Action Project (CAP).

In addition to Civics content, we will develop and practice our skills in organization, studying, reading, writing, research, speaking and listening, and cooperative learning.

Science 8

OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING for Science:

The natural world is composed of matter and energy. Understanding how matter and energy change and stay the same in the natural world allows us to interact with the world responsibly.

The science curriculum at Amherst Regional Middle School is based on a number of Enduring Understandings. These understandings are "big ideas" supported by essential questions that guide both exploratory learning activities and direct instruction. Science 8 is an introductory general science course focusing on developing an understanding of how matter and energy change and stay the same in the natural world. During our exploration of physical sciences and technology, students will study the following units:

Measurement and Experimentation, Particle Motion and Heat, Atoms and Molecules, Chemical Change, and Forces, Motion and Energy.

During the year, students will develop an appreciation for the nature of science and how scientists do their work. This allows students to build a perspective on how science connects to the world and how they interact with it. Conceptual model building towards this goal is achieved through interactive laboratory activities, group discussion and projects designed to facilitate critical thinking and observation skills. Group and study skills are emphasized throughout the year. Students will use a variety of materials for curricular resources including the Holt “Introduction to Matter” textbook as well as teacher generated materials.

In an effort to differentiate instruction and provide challenge, students may elect to independently complete projects, labs or activities beyond the classroom in an area of interest or expertise.

Math 8

OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING FOR Mathematics:

Mathematics is a system for organizing the world quantitatively. We use mathematics to analyze, problem solve, and communicate about ourselves and our world.

The tools of mathematics allow us to:

- *Understand and model relationships.*
- *Compare quantities to make informed decisions.*
- *Efficiently measure and compare one, two, and three dimensional shapes.*
- *Make sense of situations that involve numbers that are not whole and/or positive.*

Math 8 This course addresses the 8th grade mathematics standards in the *2017 MA Curriculum Framework* for mathematics that includes linear relationships, geometry concepts, and data analysis.

Algebra 8 This course addresses the 8th grade mathematics standards plus additional Algebra standards in the *2017 MA Curriculum Framework* for mathematics. This includes linear, quadratic, and exponential relationships.

Math 8 Elective is a small group general education class that is taken in addition to Math 8. It is designed for students who are seeking additional math support. The class helps students to master prerequisite skills for upcoming units, preview math material before it is seen in Math 8, and receive assistance on current math homework.

Math 8 Topics is for students with a specific Special Education plan. The course is taught by teachers with math and Special Education certification and is managed by the Special Education Department.

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

All students participate in our Exploratory program which includes the following courses:

Art

The visual art curriculum at ARMS guides students to explore conceptual ideas while developing and practicing foundational skills in various art mediums. Students will examine the work of contemporary and historical artists that can inspire and challenge creative thinking and art-making. All art classes integrate ideas and concepts from other subject areas, contemporary culture, and help students build connections between their practice and the world. Art classes are designed to help students find and strengthen their own artistic voices and critical thinking skills. The art offerings at ARMS include 7th and 8th grade courses.

Dance

Introduction to Hip Hop Dance (7th grade only)

Students in this class dance every day, building skills and technique in the street dance styles of House, Hip Hop, and Locking. Groove, improvisation, and personal style will be steadily developed over time. Because Hip Hop is a culture with historical roots, students will engage with the communities, values, and traditions that gave rise to these dances. All levels are welcome.

Afro-Puerto Rican Bomba (8th grade only)

Students will learn to practice the dance, drum, songs, and history of Bomba. Bomba is an Afro-Puerto Rican cultural art form developed as a tool of resistance to enslavement. Interested students will have the option to continue in high school, practicing and performing with the ARHS Conjunto de Bomba. All levels are welcome.

Hip Hop Arts and Culture (8th grade only)

Students will learn to practice the 5 original elements of Hip Hop culture: Dance, DJing, Rap/Poetry, Graffiti, and Knowledge of Self. Because Hip Hop is a culture with historical roots, students will engage with the communities, values, and traditions that gave rise to these art forms. Interested students will have the option to continue in high school, practicing and performing with the ARHS Hip Hop Arts Ensemble. Past experience is welcomed but not required.

Drama

Drama class is designed to give students an opportunity to study and practice the art of creating for the stage. Students will learn a variety of acting techniques such as improvisation, mime, and characterization. Students will read a variety of scripts and work on adapting text for the stage. Students will also explore technical design elements for the stage such as lighting and costume design. During rehearsal time, there is a focus on the skills of staging and character development. In addition, students evaluate their collaborative process which is necessary for successful rehearsals and final performance product. Drama class will include a variety of performance projects.

Health

The purpose of this course is to examine the impact of health-related decisions on personal well-being. Students will develop skills through the National Health Skills-Based Standards on Accessing valid and reliable information, products, and services, Analyzing Influences, Interpersonal Communication, Decision Making, Self-Management, Goal Setting, and Advocacy. An introduction to these skills will be in the 7th grade curriculum continuing to strengthen them with new topics in the 8th grade curriculum. Students will gain an understanding of the importance of how to balance physical, emotional, and social healthy behaviors.

Physical Education

The Middle School Physical Education Program introduces students to a variety of team, individual, and partner activities. We also work on group games that provide social and cognitive interaction in a physically active environment which is inclusive to many different skill levels. The program provides students with activities and games so they can become more active in their daily lives. The program is designed to not only catalyze lifelong physical, mental and emotional fitness exploration but to also have fun!!

The fitness segment of the curriculum includes warming up and stretching and strengthening. Fitness concepts are introduced to students to use as a basis for understanding exercise and activity in relation to being fit.

INTRODUCTORY MUSIC COURSES

Introduction to Music Sampler: Percussion, Ukulele, and Technology

This class is split into 3 units Percussion, Ukulele, and Music Technology. Students will learn the fundamentals of music through playing percussion instruments in the beginning. Then we will switch over to the Ukulele unit where students will learn the history and anatomy of the instrument, then learn the basic technique of ukulele playing. Eventually students will learn how to play the ukulele as an ensemble. In the music technology unit students will learn how to produce music through the Digital Audio Workstation called *Soundtrap*. In this unit, students will learn how to compose music through sampling, recording, and manipulating the preexisting sounds.

Introduction to Songwriting and Music Production

This semester-long class will explore what makes great songs great. Students will learn how lyrics, melody, harmony, and rhythm can turn ideas into songs that both entertain and sometimes even change the world. This project based class allows students to learn through independent, small group, and whole class projects, games, musical and lyrical experiments, as well as recorded and sometimes live guest performances and presentations. During the second half of the semester, students will use digital audio tools like *Soundtrap* to record and edit sound and create, edit, and mix beats and loops for their final projects.

Rhythm and Percussion

Students will play and learn about a variety of percussion instruments, styles, and cultural contexts with an emphasis on playing djembes and auxiliary percussion, and West African and Latin American rhythms. 7th and 8th grade courses are different enough for students to take in one or two grades. 8th grade course includes a bucket drumming unit. *This is an instrument-driven course, and students in this course will be required to play drums every class, as well as occasionally sing.*

MUSIC ENSEMBLE COURSES

The musical ensembles in the Amherst Regional Schools are year long and are unique among course offerings in the schools; since their culminating activities involve performances in which all students participate together. Each person in the ensemble not only participates in but also contributes to the final result. Performances are the central activities of these ensembles. Each September, every student enrolled in a performing ensemble receives a schedule of performances and after-school rehearsals of the ensemble. This schedule will be available to parents/guardians the first week of school.

Chorus 7 and 8

Chorus is open without audition to any student seriously interested in singing in a choral ensemble. Chorus classes rehearse two to three days a week and present three evening concerts in addition to other scheduled performances each year. Chorus sings music in classical, jazz, blues, folk, popular, and show music styles. Students learn proper voice production, music reading, and singing in parts.

Students in Chorus will experience a diverse range of the choral repertoire. This will include both secular and non-secular music. The choosing of music is based on National and State Standards as well as the historical place of the piece in Choral repertoire. When singing a traditionally religious piece, time is taken to outline the musical value of the piece which will include elements pertinent to vocal pedagogy and touch briefly on what the piece's liturgical usage might have been.

Band 7

Seventh grade band is open to all students who play a woodwind, brass, or percussion instrument and have a minimum of two years of study on that instrument OR have met with and received permission from the instructor. Students will develop technical and musical skills on their instruments as well as individual and ensemble listening skills. Individuals are required to learn all of their parts and participate in all 7th grade band concerts. Private lessons are recommended but not required. Group lessons are not part of the instrumental program at the middle school level.

Requirements for enrollment: Students must have experience in elementary band or private lessons on your band instrument, or permission of the instructor.

Band 8

Eighth grade band is open to all students who have participated in Seventh grade band or have met with and have received permission of the instructor. Eighth grade band performs more advanced and varied literature. Students continue to refine individual technical and musical skills as well as the more advanced ensemble skills of intonation, balance, and blend. Individual practice outside of rehearsal and participation in all 8th grade band concerts are required. Private lessons are recommended but not required.

Requirements for enrollment: Seventh grade band or permission of conductor.

Orchestras Grade 7 and Grade 8

The Orchestras are open to all seventh and eighth grade students who play the violin, viola, cello or double bass. The Orchestras play varied literature, including Classical composers, world music, movie soundtracks, modern orchestra compositions and pop music. Students entering 7th Grade Orchestra should have played in elementary orchestra, or should take private lessons on their string instrument, or should obtain permission from the instructor. All students in orchestra should read music. These ensembles perform at least three evening concerts each year. They continue to develop technical skills and musicianship through the varied literature played in class. Sight-reading, practice skill, technical mastery, improvisation, and music literacy are emphasized throughout the year. Private lessons are recommended but not required.

CONCERTS

The Bands, Choruses and Orchestras present concerts throughout the year, averaging 3-4 per group. All members may also choose to audition to participate in the annual Massachusetts Music Educators Western District Junior Festival.

Please note: Ensemble classes have performances outside of the school day. Students are required to attend these performances, and it is part of their class grade.

WORLD LANGUAGES

World Language is available as a year long course that meets every other day in both 7th and 8th grades. The World Language Department offers students the opportunity to begin study of one of four languages: Chinese, French, Latin or Spanish. These courses taught in the Middle School are designed particularly for beginning language students in this age group. Many students choose the language in Middle School that they will study all the way through 12th grade. Sticking with one language for years 7-12 allows the student to achieve the highest level of proficiency.

The 7th grade course is designed for students beginning the study of a foreign language. These classes are for true novices and are not designed for heritage speakers. The 8th grade course continues students' study of their world language. A passing grade in this course prepares students for level 2 language study at the high school. Students may only participate in the 8th grade language class if they completed the prerequisite class in 7th grade. In each year of study, students will master essential skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In addition, students will explore the cultures that use the target language and compare these cultures to their own.

The combined 7th and 8th grade curriculum is the equivalent of level 1 at the high school level. Students wanting to continue at level 2 at the high school must complete both years of the language in middle school or they will start over in Level 1. Alternatively, students (such as heritage speakers) may demonstrate mastery of a language via a placement test and be placed at the appropriate level when they attend high school.

Upon completion of the middle school curriculum, students will demonstrate proficiency in such areas as greetings and leave-takings, expressing likes and dislikes, following directions, comparing and contrasting, expressing needs, and narrating in the present tense. Proficiency will also be demonstrated in interpretive reading and listening activities, and writing in the target language.

WORLD LANGUAGE COURSES

7th grade Chinese

7th-grade Chinese meets the needs of 7th grade middle school students beginning the study of Chinese. Emphasis is on developing oral proficiency and listening comprehension. Reading and writing skills will be addressed in introductory activities to reinforce oral and listening skills. Students will learn a certain amount of Chinese characters. Cultural aspects of the language will be introduced on an ongoing basis. Topics to be covered include: Greetings, likes and dislikes, describing people and things, talking about school, family and food. Homework is to be expected daily.

7th grade French

This introductory course is for students who wish to begin their study of French culture and language.

Emphasis will be on oral communication through creative manipulation of memorized vocabulary. Classwork assignments will be given to reinforce the classroom instruction and may be either oral, computer based, or written. Student assessment will include oral, project based or written evaluations. The course offers opportunity to practice in both written and oral expression.

7th grade Latin

7th-grade Latin is designed to introduce students to the language, history, mythology, culture, and daily life of the ancient Romans and peoples who lived in the ancient Mediterranean. Students will be challenged to consider the perspectives of a culture so far removed from ours in time while also being reflective of their own values. Students will read stories from *Ecce Romani* and other sources that speak to experiences of daily life. Students will read, hear, write, and speak Latin in this class. By the end of this course students will be able to conduct a simple introductory conversation in Latin, and read and write using present tense verbs and simple noun cases. Progress will be assessed with projects and frequent quizzes.

7th grade Spanish

7th-grade Spanish is designed to introduce the language to beginners. Emphasis is on conversation as well as writing and reading activities. Students can expect daily classwork assignments which will include memorization of vocabulary and written exercises. Students will undergo oral, written, and small project proficiency assessments. The course offers daily opportunities to practice in both written and oral expression.

8th grade Chinese

This course is recommended to students who have successfully completed Chinese 1A with a C- average or better. A continuation of beginning level Chinese, using the same teaching method as in Chinese 1A, material will be presented that builds on the knowledge gained in the first level course. All four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing will be further developed. There will be more emphasis on reading and writing than there was in Chinese 1A. Daily homework is required.

8th grade French

Prerequisite: 7th grade French

This course is recommended to students who have successfully completed French 1A with a C- average or better. Emphasis will continue to be placed on developing communicative proficiency through study of vocabulary and grammar using a variety of interactive activities. Daily classwork assignments will be both oral and written. Students will also continue to develop their writing skills and will be expected to do independent projects related to French culture and linguistic topics. The course offers opportunities to practice in both written and oral expression.

8th grade Latin

Prerequisite: 7th grade Latin

This course is recommended to students who have successfully completed Latin 1A with a C- average or better. Emphasis will continue to be placed on immersing students in the language through a series of stories about a fictional Roman family to increase their vocabulary and understanding of grammatical structures. Students will continue to study the cultures of the Ancient Mediterranean including topics such as housing, dining, early Roman history, and reading authentic Latin inscriptions. Quizzes and projects will continue to be used to assess students' mastery of linguistic concepts.

8th grade Spanish

Prerequisite: 7th grade Spanish

This course is recommended to students who have successfully completed Spanish 1A with a C- average or better. Emphasis will continue to be placed on developing communicative proficiency through study of vocabulary and grammar using a variety of interactive activities. In addition, students are expected to do independent projects on the Spanish-speaking world and its cultures, to develop their writing skills, and to comprehend reading selections. Classwork assignments may be both oral and written.

English Language Education Program (ELE)

Identification of Students Acquiring English as a Second Language

The Amherst-Pelham Regional Middle School provides a range of instructional programs for students who are English Language Learners (ELLs). Identification and placement of students is made by the English Language Education [ELE] staff through the use of both state and district wide language assessments. These assessments are administered upon enrollment and annually. They are administered in order to determine each student's English language proficiency. Students who are not yet proficient in English are provided with ELE instruction and native language support in science and math.

Description of Instructional Programs for Students Acquiring English

Note: The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education participates in the WIDA Consortium, which has created changes in the way we support and deliver instruction to English Language Learners.

The ELE Program and Levels

There are 6 levels of ELL according to WIDA:

1- Entering; 2 – emerging; 3- developing; 4 – expanding; 5 – bridging; 6 – reaching

Students are identified according to their English proficiency levels. Students receive Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) until they are proficient in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. Once English language is acquired at an advanced level, they exit the ELL program. All students participate in math, science and other grade level required courses. The ELE curriculum leader monitors the academic progress of exited ELLs for two years (four years as mandated by the Massachusetts DESE, but only two of those years are at the middle school.)

Interpreter Services

The district provides bilingual translation support for beginner level students. Bilingual interpreters are assigned to work with the students in math and science classes.

DESCRIPTION OF ELE COURSES

ELE English 7/8 (level 1- low 2: beginners/level 2-3: intermediate)

Students in the course develop English language skills through the study of selected topics from the 7th and 8th grade English Language Arts curriculum. Students will study themes such as immigration, identity, and coming of age. Students read independently outside of class, and in class will read a variety of literary pieces in fiction/nonfiction. They will take part in discussions, reading guides, writing responses, and projects. The course helps students acquire and build academic vocabulary, improve communication, reading comprehension and writing skills. English grammar, usage and mechanics are integrated in daily instruction.

ELE Social Studies 7/8 (level 1- low 2: beginners/level 2-3: intermediate)

This course is designed for students of English as a new language at the beginning and intermediate levels. Students in the course develop English language skills through the study of selected topics from the 7th and 8th grade social studies curriculum. Students will be introduced to world geography and cultures as well as Civics and U.S. History. Students work on developing and improving skills in reading strategies, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking. The course will help students acquire concepts and vocabulary in geography, U.S. history, current events, world cultures and global issues. It also provides the space for students to share, learn, and appreciate each other's experiences and backgrounds.

Advanced ELL Language Development

In this course, students who are at the high intermediate level in learning English will practice using scholarly language in math, science, social studies and English. We will focus on academic writing and reading across the curriculum areas. Students will set goals for this class and their other academic subjects, and they will be supported in organization and work completion in other classes.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

At the Middle School, we provide a comprehensive continuum of services for students with special needs. Entrance into special education begins with the referral process outlined by the Massachusetts special education regulations. Each student participates in a comprehensive evaluation process designed to assess strengths and needs. If a student is found to have a disability which requires specialized instruction, an individual education plan is written. The plan includes student-centered goals, which are addressed in a variety of models. These services may be special education services which are documented in their IEP, or may be general education services. The ultimate goal is to give every opportunity for students to be supported in the least restrictive environment while receiving the academic and emotional supports they need to be successful at the Middle School. The following models for delivering programs and services are most often used, in a variety of combinations:

1. Consultation to staff and parents/guardians
2. Co-teaching and inclusion support when instruction in content areas is delivered in a general education setting
3. Organization support in general education and/or special education settings that focus upon developing and applying organizational skills and strategies when needed.
4. Direct instruction in content areas delivered in a special education setting.
5. Reading Tutorial- targeted instruction to address basic reading (decoding, accuracy and fluency) skills
6. Related Service Delivery in targeted areas such as Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech and Language, Vision and Mobility and Counseling.

SPECIALIZED SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

AIMS (Academic Individualized Mainstream Support)

The AIMS Program consists of specialized programming for students who have a high functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder or other neurological conditions with pragmatic language, executive functioning, socialization and sensory regulation difficulties. This program offers individualized, comprehensive, and intensive intervention to address these areas in the least restrictive setting. We design each student's education programming, support services, and schedule to meet individual needs. For example, some students in the AIMS program receive instruction in general education classes for the majority of their day, but take a special education Academic Skills class according to the IEP (Individual Education Plan). Activities within skills classes are tailored to support each student's organizational, academic, behavioral, sensory, and social-emotional needs. Other students in the AIMS program may be included in general education classes for some core academic subjects (e.g. Science), but receive intensive, individualized instruction in other academic subjects (e.g. Math). Students may receive speech/language services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, reading tutorial and/or counseling based on the specific needs outlined in their IEP. Also, students within the AIMS program may receive direct support within their general education classes from an instructional assistant. The focus and frequency of this support also varies according to the student's specific needs. The AIMS liaison directly supervises any instructional assistants working with students in the AIMS program and maintains the necessary communication with regular education teachers, other special education teachers, parents, related service providers, and school administration to foster students' success.

Essential Skills Program (ESP)

The essential skills program is designed to support the education of students identified as having intensive special needs. The students in the program have multiple disabilities including language, motor, behavioral, cognitive, and sensory impairments. The students receive their education in the least restrictive environment that meets the needs of individual students.

Individual programs may emphasize communication skills, adaptive living skills, academic skills, community and work skills, social engagement and positive behavioral support. Students may receive speech/language services, occupational therapy, physical therapy and counseling based on the specific needs outlined in their IEP.

Students typically receive direct support within their general education classes from an instructional assistant. The focus and frequency of this support varies according to the student's specific needs. The essential skills liaison directly supervises the instructional assistants working with students in the program and maintains the necessary communication with regular education teachers, other special education teachers, parents, related service providers, and school administration to foster students' success.

Student Support Program (SSP)

The ARMS Student Support Program is designed to support the education of students identified as having social, emotional, academic or behavioral challenges. We design each student's educational program, related services and schedule to meet individual needs. All students in SSP have access to the standards-based curriculum; the program provides a supportive and individualized setting with the potential for content subject areas to be taught in the general education setting or a small group setting. Some students may receive additional related services, depending on individual needs determined by the IEP team. A school adjustment counselor works directly with the student support liaison to provide a comprehensive program of supports and skill instruction. Counseling, either individual or in groups, is a routine and integral part of the Student Support Program. The professional staff of the SSP routinely collaborate with outside service providers to help ensure integrated systems of support designed for students to make progress on IEP goals. The student support liaison directly supervises the instructional assistants working with students in the program and maintains the necessary communication with regular education teachers, other special education teachers, parents, related service providers, and school administration to foster students' success.

GRADING

Marking System - For students and parents to become aware of the progress being made in each subject, report cards are distributed two times during the school year, at the end of each semester. In addition to those report cards, progress reports are available at the halfway point of each semester to notify families about mid-semester progress. We use letter grades to show achievement in each course. There is space on the report card for teachers to write comments, or teachers may use computer-coded comments that print on the report card.

Progress reports are available through the PowerSchool Parent Portal at the middle of each semester. For quarterly/semester courses, their final grades will be included on the report card printed after the closing date of the quarter/semester. These progress reports and report cards inform students about their current achievement in each subject.

Honor Roll

Students make the Honor Roll at the end of a semester if they achieve B- or better in each subject. The Honor Roll list is published in the Amherst Bulletin at the end of each semester.

REGISTRATION OF STUDENTS NEW TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Parents of a student new to the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools must first enroll their child in school with the Registrar, Michaela Tarr. Please call [\(413\) 362-1703](tel:4133621703) or email tarrm@arps.org to make an appointment, or write to the Registrar, c/o Amherst-Pelham Regional High School, 21 Mattoon Street, Amherst, Massachusetts 01002. Enrollment forms are available online at the ARMS website <http://arms.arps.org/> under the heading “Parents/Guardians” and may also be picked up at the Amherst Regional High School during normal business hours, 7:30am-3:30pm.

- We ask that parents provide proof of residence within the region at the time of registration (e.g., current lease, deed/mortgage documentation). Utility bills cannot be used as proof of residency, but should be provided as a secondary verification of residency. Parents/guardians must show proof of identification at the time of registration. Further information about residency requirements is included in the enrollment packet.
- If applicable to your family situation: proof of physical custody, which has been granted by a court of law, must be submitted.
- Massachusetts state law requires the following immunizations and documentation for all students before they can enroll. Parents must provide the dates that the immunizations were given by presenting documented records. Questions pertaining to immunization requirements can be answered by Health Services in your child's school.

Grades 7-12	
Hepatitis B	3 doses
DTaP/DTP/DT/Td (Diphtheria-Tetanus) Tdap Booster	4 doses DTaP/DTP or 3 doses Td Tdap booster must be within the past 5 years before entering 7 th grade
Polio	4 doses (unless third dose was given after the fourth birthday)
MMR (Measles/Mumps/Rubella)	2 MMR (First dose must have been after 1 st birthday)
Varicella	2 doses or documentation of having had chicken pox

- A copy of a physical examination that has been completed within the last Twelve (12) months must be provided. If the student intends to participate in school sponsored sports, sports physical examination must be submitted less than 13 months from start of sports' season. Medical and/or religious exemptions for immunizations require written documentation.
 - A birth certificate or passport must also be shown at the time of enrollment.
 - It is helpful if parents bring an unofficial transcript or recent grade report from the previous school to assist in grade level placement and selection of courses. We will send for an official transcript after enrollment takes place, or the parent can request in writing that the former school mail the transcript directly to the Registrar. Discipline and attendance records will be requested from your child's current school.
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- If applicable, a copy of the IEP (Individualized Educational Plan), 504 plan, or any special needs reports or testing that is necessary for proper placement.
- Students who are native speakers of languages other than English or whose home language is other than English are required to be tested by the English as a Second Language Department Head before they are placed in English and social studies classes.

After officially enrolling their child, parents are then ready to meet with a guidance counselor. If English Language placement testing is required, the Registrar will arrange for it. After all testing has been COMPLETED; the Registrar notifies the guidance department that a new student has been enrolled and that an appointment should be arranged with one of the counselors. In this conference, the counselor reviews the student's previous records, discusses selection of appropriate courses with the parents and student, and builds an appropriate schedule.

The ARHS total number of credits required to graduate has been adjusted for the class of 2025 and beyond due to changes impacting the total number of credits that can be earned each year. For the class of 2025 and those which come after, 96 credits are needed to graduate. The following number of credits are needed each year to be promoted for the class of 2025 and beyond: 16 credits are needed to be a sophomore, 40 to be a junior, and 64 to be a senior. For the class of 2024, 84 credits are needed to graduate, and 52 credits are needed to be promoted to 12th grade in the fall of 2023.

The entire process of registration may take several days to complete. We will be glad to send the parents any materials needed for registration prior to arrival in Amherst. This will speed up the process and will assist parents and students who are new to the system.

More information and a complete list of required registration documents can be found on the ARMS website <http://arms.arps.org/> under the "Parent/Guardian" heading.

Withdrawal and Re-enrollment Procedures for Families with long term out-of-town plans

When a family has finalized its plans for being out of town long term, we ask that the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student at the Middle School notify the student's guidance counselor **and** the secretary in the principal's office. Procedures for withdrawal and re-enrollment will be explained at this time.

Several weeks prior to departure, parents should request transfer forms, clearance cards, and information release forms. These forms must be completed, **signed by parents(s)/guardian(s)** and returned to the Middle School secretary.

Students who leave during the school year should understand that a grade with Withdrawn-Pass or Withdrawn-Fail is recorded on the report card and transcript unless **all** course requirements are completed. The receiving school may award grades for those courses completed under their jurisdiction. **Students who leave just prior to the end of a course should meet with individual teachers to negotiate the details of completing the course requirements.** When the student completes all of the requirements, the teacher may award a final grade.

Parents and students are requested to please meet with the appropriate school staff for academic planning before departure. They should meet with the student's guidance counselor to be sure that they

understand the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools District-wide requirements, such as ARHS graduation requirements if the student intends to return to ARHS, to plan an academic program for the new school, and to plan for courses that will be necessary when the student returns to ARHS. Parent(s) or guardian(s) should call the school health office to request a copy of the student's health records for the new school. The office secretary at the Middle School or the Registrar at the High School can provide unofficial copies of the student's transcript to be hand-carried to the new school.

If families are on a full-semester sabbatical in the spring, parents or students should write to the Principal at the Middle School during March to request course registration materials for the following school year.

Parent(s) or guardian(s) should also request that the temporary school forward the student's official records to the Registrar's Office as well as provide an unofficial copy of the records to be hand-carried to the re-enrollment appointment with the Registrar. The Registrar is Erika Grundstrome, and her office is located in the High School at 21 Mattoon Street, Amherst, MA 01002 (Phone: 413-362-1703, email: grundstrome@arps.org).

Upon return to the Amherst-Pelham Regional Public School District, the parent/guardian should first call the Registrar for a re-enrollment appointment. The Registrar will check the student's records and will notify the parent/guardian of the necessary re-enrollment procedures, such as proof of immunization or a physical examination. Finally, after completing all re-enrollment procedures, the family should call the office secretary for an appointment with the appropriate guidance counselor. At this meeting, the student, parent/guardian and guidance counselor will plan a schedule of courses unless the student previously requested, filled out, and returned a course selection worksheet and has already been scheduled. The school strongly encourages the parent/guardian to attend this meeting with the student to be sure that everything is in order and to begin reorientation to the Regional Schools.
