

# EIGHTH GRADE PROGRAM



The eighth grade curriculum takes advantage of prior experiences to develop a deeper understanding of topics explored in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. In addition, students have the opportunity to develop the ability to synthesize knowledge and other skills necessary for future learning success. With this new found knowledge, students will be given opportunities to apply their learning to inter-disciplinary and performance based projects within the various subjects. Each subject area teacher is responsible for differentiating the material to ensure success for all students. The eighth grade team takes a holistic approach in order to address students' individual needs through team building.



# ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - 8

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The mission of the Weston Public Schools English Department is to empower each student to become a lifelong learner through the development of comprehensive English language communication skills. Through broad and increasingly complex reading, related research, integrated visual literacy and technology and a variety of writing opportunities, students master the skills and work ethic necessary to ensure future academic success.

The Weston Middle School English Language Arts curriculum has an overarching theme of *Emerging Character* reflecting the developmental level of this age group. Grade-level themes and concepts support this major idea. This focus promotes coherence and connections. In grade six the grade-level theme is *Decision Making* and the concepts which are explored and core texts used are:

- **Unit 1: Conflict**
  - *Stargirl (SummeRead)*
  - *Day of Tears (Integrated Social Studies/Research Project)*
  - *Salem Witch Trials*
  - *Selections from Native American Literature*
- **Unit 2: Relationships**
  - *Of Mice and Men*
  - *A Separate Peace*
  - *The House on Mango Street*
- **Unit 3: Society and Self**
  - *The House of the Scorpion*
  - *Animal Farm*

Essential questions are posed for each unit and students solve problems and formulate answers to these significant queries through the integration of close reading, annotation, literary analyses, scaffolded questioning, a variety of writing experiences which incorporate grammar lessons, classroom discussion, corollary readings, research, related viewings of film, audio opportunities and homework. Where appropriate there is liaison and parallel teaching with social studies.

English language skills as designated by the Connecticut Language Arts Standards are embedded and independent reading is supported and encouraged through independent reading experiences. *There is required summer reading.*



# MATHEMATICS - 8

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**CMP 8-1** is the grade level course for eighth graders and introduces students to algebraic concepts and skills utilizing problems that engage students with meaningful applications and is reinforced through the use of supplementary materials. This course goes beyond the traditional pre-algebra course with a deeper exploration of initial algebraic concepts. Concepts and complementary skills examined include: variables and patterns, proportionality and similarity, probability and statistics, area and volume, foundations of linear and quadratic functions, mathematical modeling, the Pythagorean Theorem, and problem solving. Trimester and final assessments are given in this course.

**Algebra 1** is a fast-paced course for the exceptionally talented and self-motivated student. The students have mastered the foundational skills and possess an extremely **strong aptitude** and interest in mathematics. Concepts and complementary skills examined include: language of algebra, the real number line, proportionality and direct variation, solving equations (linear, absolute values, and quadratic), solving linear inequalities, graphing equations on the Cartesian Plane, and solving systems of equations and inequalities, manipulation of polynomial expressions, factoring, rational expressions, and modeling mathematical problems utilizing algebra. Mid-year and final assessments are given in this course. *Students in Algebra must maintain at least a B average to remain in the course.*

**Geometry** is a rigorous and extensive study of plane geometry. The students have mastered the foundational skills and possess an extremely **strong aptitude** and interest in mathematics proof structures such as formal proof, indirect proof, and paragraph proof are covered. There is an emphasis on applying geometric properties to analyze problems and discover new properties and relationships. Coordinate geometry is examined as a means of linking the relationship between algebra and geometry. A strong algebraic background is required since students will be called upon to utilize algebra skills throughout this course. Mid-year and final assessments are given in this course. *Students in Geometry must maintain at least a B average to remain in the course.*



# SCIENCE - 8

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Eighth grade science is based on the CT Science Frameworks. The minimal expectations for all students are the conceptual understanding of the following overarching ideas.

***Forces and Motion – What makes objects move the way they do?***

8.1 - An object's inertia causes it to continue moving the way it is moving unless it is acted upon by a force to change its motion.

- The motion of an object can be described by its position, direction of motion and speed.
- An unbalanced force acting on an object changes its speed and/or direction of motion.
- Objects moving in circles must experience force acting toward the center.

***Heredity and Evolution – What processes are responsible for life's unity and diversity?***

8.2 - Reproduction is a characteristic of living systems and it is essential for the continuation of every species.

- Heredity is the passage of genetic information from one generation to another.
- Some of the characteristics of an organism are inherited and some result from interactions with the environment.

***Earth in the Solar System – How does the position of Earth in the solar system affect conditions on our planet?***

8.3 - The solar system is composed of planets and other objects that orbit the sun.

- Gravity is the force that governs the motions of objects in the solar system.
- The motion of the Earth and moon relative to the sun causes daily, monthly and yearly cycles on Earth.

***The WMS Science program is laboratory based with students engaged in a variety of investigations. A textbook is used for each of the content areas and serves as reinforcement for content as well as for the development of reading skills and vocabulary development.***



# SOCIAL STUDIES - 8

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## *American History*

**What is the original American dream that inspired people to move?**

**How do people work to make the dream happen?**

**What are people really fighting over?**

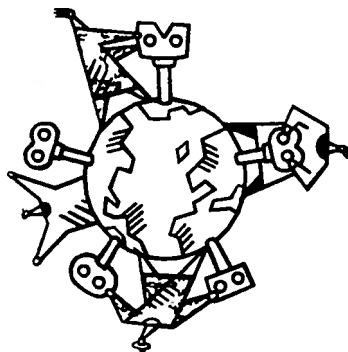
**How does government work to put the pieces back together?**

**What do you do when something or someone is in the way of your attainment that goal?**

**How does the drive to attain wealth affect the growth and change of the economy?**

**How does one's position in society influence the role they take in conflict?**

This is the first course of a four-year sequence the social studies department has constructed for students beginning in grade eight at Weston Middle School and continues through grade eleven at Weston High School. The sequence builds a conceptual and skills continuum that expands the knowledge and critical thinking of Weston students that will be utilized through their educational career. In this first year of the sequence, the middle school student will be introduced to Colonialism in America, and will continue their studies chronologically through the tragedies of the Civil War. This course emphasizes social studies skills through the reading, writing, researching and analyzing of primary and secondary sources in American History. Teachers utilize content and concepts to promote meaningful and challenging learning connected to key social studies' themes.





# WORLD LANGUAGE - 8

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*Our program is aligned with National and State standards with expected outcomes designed around the ACTFL proficiency guidelines for K-12 learners. Teachers use a variety of learning activities and differentiated instruction such as songs, cooperative learning groups, projects, dialogues, presentations, software and games to achieve desired learning goals. Students are evaluated on their communicative ability in the target language through a variety of linguistic tasks, listening, oral and written evaluations as well as authentic performance assessments. The goal of the program is for students to gain knowledge of world history, language and culture that will serve them throughout their lives in order to succeed in the global community.*

## **Program Goals and Outcomes:**

As a result of participating in the World Language course of study students will:

- Communicate in a language other than English. (*Communication*)
- Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures. (*Cultures*)
- Make connections to other disciplines and acquire knowledge using a second language. (*Connections*)
- Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world. (*Communities*)
- Gain insight into the nature of language and culture. (*Comparisons*)

The World Languages available are Spanish and French. Students engage in language study daily and are expected to commit to studying one language while in grades 7 and 8. At the end of grade 8 students enter a high school course appropriate to their performance level which may include: Spanish I, Spanish II, Spanish III, French I, French II or Latin I.



# WORLD LANGUAGE - 8

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## *Spanish*

This course is designed to reinforce previously learned linguistic structures and help students apply language to increasingly more complex communication tasks such as expressing their opinions on broader more global topics as technology, the environment, and health. At this level, students are guided towards oral proficiency while expanding proficiency in all four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Expected outcome at the end of grade 8 is communicative competence in the second language whereby the student is able to meet limited and practical linguistic tasks in both spoken and written form. This level of expression is characterized by the ability to utilize sentences, strings of sentences, and combinations of learned words, phrases, and expressions with frequency of error depending on the complexity of the language task. Students engage in a variety of activities to help them reach an intermediate level of proficiency by the end of grade 8 as outlined by the National Standards K-8 sequence of study. Students who achieve a grade of B or better along with a B or better on the placement exam are eligible to enter Spanish level III at the high school.

## *French*

Students who have completed grade 7 French are eligible to take this course which builds on the basic structures presented in grade 7. Students, who successfully complete two years of French at the middle school with a grade average of B+ or better and a B or better on the French grade 8 placement assessments, are eligible to enter French II at the high school.



# COMPUTER APPLICATIONS – 8

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Students continue preparing for their secondary education experience. Students build on their previous knowledge of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint by learning additional software functions and commands. Products include: tables, forms, templates, spreadsheets, graphs and charts, and graphic presentations. The latter project integrates all three software applications. Expository essays relating to Excel spreadsheet and graph assignments are required. Lessons on Internet safety and website reliability are incorporated into the curriculum.

All lessons are designed and presented within the context of the Connecticut Frameworks for Technology and are aligned with connected academic standards.

# TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION – 8

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In Tech Ed, students will learn about the nature, power, influence and effects of technology on our lives. The eighth grade students rotate through twelve modular stations. Each station focuses on a different technology area to give students a broad exposure to technology. The stations are: Electronic Communications, Alternative Energy, Automotive Technology, Robotics and Automation, Basic Electricity, Computer Applications, Construction Technology, Graphics and Animation, Navigation and GPS, Computer Aided Publishing, Multimedia Production and Digital Photography. Students also work with a computer simulation program that enables them to be a contractor who buys land, designs and builds a home and tries to sell it at a profit.





# FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE - 8

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This trimester course focuses on the concept of wellness through healthful food choices. Students use a computer software program to analyze their food choices by nutrient, learn about the roles various nutrients play in promoting wellness and therefore increase their ability to make informed decisions about their food choices. They obtain a personalized guide to healthful choices from MyPyramid.gov. Finally, they demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between food choices and wellness by planning a sample menu and writing a reflection where recommendations for food choices changes are made and supported with nutrition and health reasons. Foods as an expression of culture is another theme that runs throughout the course. Students prepare a variety of more complex cultural dishes requiring greater proficiency of management skills (safety, sanitation, time management, collaborative group work, reading and interpreting recipes, use of a variety of tools and equipment, and evaluation of process and products). Learning is applied at home when students prepare dinner for their family. Our community service learning project, to prepare and serve a lasagna lunch at the homeless shelter in Westport, addresses food and nutrition needs in our community. A final cultural dinner project involves menu planning and food preparation and serves as an assessment of progress. As time permits, visiting chefs from area restaurants share their culinary artistry with the class.



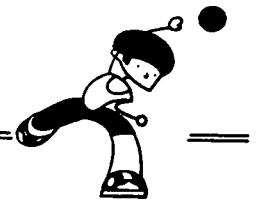


# HEALTH EDUCATION – 8

- Why do people sometimes act in a way that is different than their personal belief?
- Why is it important to be sexually responsible?
- How are relationships, self-esteem, and decisions connected?
- Why is it important to understand your physical and emotional body changes?
- How can your decisions impact your future?

The Health education program prepares students to deal with common teenage issues experienced during adolescence. Topic areas include substance abuse education, body image, stress, goal setting, sexual responsibility, sexual issues, and human growth and development. Class instruction focuses on developing skills needed to make healthful life choices. *The Health curriculum includes several mandates from the State of Connecticut. Parents, for personal or religious reasons, may submit a written request to the school to have their son/daughter(s) excused from portions of the curriculum related to Human Growth and Development and AIDS education. The remainder of the curriculum is mandated by the State of Connecticut and students are required to participate.*

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION – 8

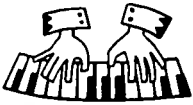


- Why is it important to be physically fit?
- How do you achieve and maintain a healthy fitness zone?
- How do you resolve conflicts in a positive way?
- Why is it important to cooperate with others?

The physical education program promotes adoption of physically active lifestyles by providing enjoyable physical experiences that promote the acquisition of the skills needed for an active lifestyle. A balanced program, which includes instruction in individual, dual and team sports, and indoor and outdoor activities, is provided. The skills developed become the basis for a physically active lifestyle.

### Areas of Instruction:

- |               |                   |                            |                    |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Soccer        | Gymnastics        | Field Hockey               | Indoor Lacrosse    |
| Flag Football | Swimming          | Fitness Training & Testing | Basic Water Safety |
| Volleyball    | Basketball        | Indoor Hockey              | Aerobics           |
| Softball      | Project Adventure | Track and Field            |                    |



# MUSIC - 8

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*The mission of the Weston Public Schools Music Department is to foster the innate musicality of each child. Musical skills and concepts are developed through specific aural, visual, kinesthetic, intellectual and aesthetic thinking/learning experiences:*

- *PERFORMING* – with the body, the voice, and instruments
- *CREATING* – vocal, instrumental and dramatic improvisation and composition
- *RESPONDING* – listening, interpreting and notating to understand and use the language of music.

## GENERAL MUSIC

The General Music program in the Weston Public Schools is designed to address performance, aesthetic training, and cultural foundations. It is an eclectic and integrated curriculum based largely, but not exclusively on the work of three eminent musical pedagogues: Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, Zoltan Kodaly, and Carl Orff. Using the natural locomotor rhythms of the human body, cultivating the innate listening and singing skills, and creating music through playing and improvising on various instruments, students assimilate musicality.

Music theory and aural training continue with the reading and playing of music, the comprehension and application of rhythmic concepts and note value relationships, and developing understanding and use of basic melodic and harmonic concepts. The guitar is used as a hands-on tool to study the role of the instrument in American and world cultures and as an instrument for musical, artistic, and personal expression. Students learn guitar basics, tuning, performance techniques, including rhythm guitar (chord-strumming) and classical finger-style playing. Students study the aspects of presentation in guitar performance, and maintain a written journal in which they evaluate performances of professional guitarists playing in a variety of styles and venues.



# PERFORMANCE MUSIC - 8

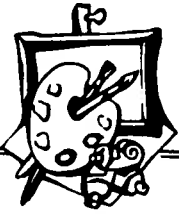
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*Performance music encompasses elective participation in choral, band and string ensembles, culminating in public performances. It provides the opportunity to develop and refine individual aptitudes, skills and understanding, experiences in group dynamics and communicative power.*

**EIGHTH GRADE CHORUS** is open to all eighth graders who enjoy singing. In addition to learning to improve their singing ability, students study music reading, aural perception and audiation. They learn and perform more complex vocal ensemble music. Attention is given to the changing voice. There is a minimum of three performances each year.

**EIGHTH GRADE ORCHESTRA** is open to all eighth graders who wish to continue the pursuit of excellence on their orchestra instruments. In addition to improving upon the technical aspects of playing, students begin to focus more on the total aesthetic possibilities of the instrument. Students are also involved in music sectionals and are excused from other classes on a rotating basis. They are expected to make up any class work they miss. Private lessons are encouraged. There is a minimum of three concerts each year.

**EIGHTH GRADE BAND** is open to all eighth graders who wish to further their skills and techniques on a band instrument. In addition to working on more technical aspects of their instrument, students continue with the background and aesthetics of the work they are studying. Students are also involved in music sectionals. They are excused from other classes on a rotating basis and are expected to make up any missed work. Private lessons are encouraged. There is a minimum of three concerts each year.



# VISUAL ART – 8

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*The mission of the Weston Public Schools Visual Art Department is to cultivate visual literacy and develop the manual and mental skills required for:*

- Heightened perceptual awareness
- Insight
- Alternative approaches to problem-solving
- Increased motor coordination

These skills will allow students to manipulate the various tools and media necessary to explore their creativity and to find their own aesthetic reality. Through exploration, production and response, skills are fostered and synthesized.

Students learn about the development of one-point perspective. They learn the properties and care of acrylic paints and create self-portraits based on a particular artist's style. They study gargoyles and create figurative clay sculptures based on this theme. They explore the development of modern art. Current trends in visual art and the artists who create them are studied. Students explore the history of the pottery wheel and learn the technique through teacher demonstration.

## CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Students gain an understanding of the historical context in which functioning and non-functioning handcrafted artwork is rooted. In the Decorative Arts Unit, students focus on the designing and making of jewelry and other body ornaments, and/or on individually designed, fully finished, hinged wooden boxes. In the Fiber Arts unit, students design a piece of clothing or a fabric wall hanging using the adinka stamping and dying technique as well as batik, and weave pieces meant to be worn or displayed. Other activities may include designed CD covers and/or collage assemblage from various media.

