

WEST ALLEGHENY
MIDDLE SCHOOL
PROGRAM OF STUDIES

2022 - 2023



A Tradition of Excellence... A Vision for Tomorrow



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District Mission Statement:

The mission of the West Allegheny School District, a leader in quality education, is to ensure that each student acquires the necessary knowledge and skills to be a responsible citizen, prepared for life-long learning and employment; this is accomplished by providing meaningful and personally challenging learning experiences within a safe, nurturing environment in partnership with family and community.

The Goal of the West Allegheny educational experience is to promote high student academic expectations and achievements. This goal is accomplished through the development of innovative instructional programs as well as the review of data to address strengths and weaknesses and develop appropriate action plans.

District Vision Statement:

The West Allegheny School District will create a learning environment in which students maximize their potential and achieve success in a cooperative partnership with students, parents, staff, administration, and community through a positive, supportive, caring climate which promote the dignity of all individuals.

District Shared Values:

- Quality education is essential to sustain our democratic society.
- Education benefits people throughout their lives.
- Every person is valuable and worthy of respect.
- All people can and want to learn.
- Quality education is a shared responsibility among students, family, school, and community.
- Higher expectations lead to higher performance.
- Family support provides a strong foundation for individual learning.
- Each individual is unique and capable of reaching higher levels of performance given the proper conditions.



Dear West Allegheny Middle School Students and Parents,

Welcome to West Allegheny Middle School! We take great pride in forming and enriching lasting relationships that capture the best attributes of our talented student body and staff. This Program of Studies handbook describes the courses we currently offer and their pre-requisites. A summary chart also provides an overview of grade level academic options and exploratory arts. We encourage parents and students to review the handbook together to learn about Middle School programming.

Each student will attend a meeting with a counselor to make any course requests that are necessary. At that time, parents are encouraged to email with questions or make changes to the list of courses for their child.

A focus at the West Allegheny Middle School is to prepare students for high school success and to begin to prepare students for college and/or career readiness. As the backbone of our efforts, we focus on three dimensions to define career and college readiness:

- **Academic preparedness** refers to key academic content knowledge and cognitive strategies needed to succeed in doing college-level work and in preparing for career training. Students should strive to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0.
- **Academic tenacity** refers to the underlying beliefs and attitudes that drive student achievement. Being in class and facing productive struggle and challenge help students develop into tenacious learners ready to face adversity. Students should strive to exceed 95% attendance rates.
- **Career and college readiness** is that knowledge base and contextual skills that enable students to successfully access and navigate college and career paths.

You should be mindful of these dimensions as you reflect on your courses for the upcoming school year and plan for your future.

Also included in the handbook are summaries of the grading system, homework policy, drop/add policy, support programs and remediation plans, and program eligibility for parent/student review. The staff of the West Allegheny Middle School is here to support and guide you. Please utilize your teachers, school counselors, and administrators to help you to be ready for a successful academic year.

Sincerely,

Patricia Nolan
Principal

Megan Huchko
Assistant Principal



A Tradition of Excellence . . . A Vision for Tomorrow

West Allegheny Middle School Administrators, Counselors, and Support Staff

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Course Overview

The following is a list of all courses offered at West Allegheny Middle School. The list is alphabetical by department.

Students may receive a weighted grade on the 4.5 scale for courses marked with an asterisk ().

Art

Art 6
Art 7
Art 8
Advanced Art 7
Advanced Art 8

Computer Science

Computer Applications for CCR 6
Computer Applications for CCR 7
Computer Applications for CCR 8

English Language Arts

ELA 6
ELA 6 Enrichment
ELA 7
ELA 8

Family and Consumer Science

Exploratory FCS 8

Health

Exploratory Health 6
Exploratory Health 7

Innovation and Design

Innovation and Design 6
Innovation and Design 7
Innovation and Design 8

Math

Math 6
Math 7
Math 8
*Algebra I – 7th or 8th grade
*Geometry – 8th grade

U.S. Marine Junior Officer Reserve Training Corps (JROTC)

Grade 8 Only

Music

Band 6
Band 7
Band 8
Chorus 6
Chorus 7
Chorus 8
World Music 6
Introduction to Piano 7 or 8
Garage Band 7 or 8

Physical Education

Physical Education 6
Physical Education 7
Physical Education 8
Introduction to Fitness and Weight Training 8

Pre-Engineering Manufacturing and Fabrication

Pre-Engineering and Manufacturing 6
Pre-Engineering and Transportation Tech 7
Digital Layout and Design, Fabrication, and Manufacturing 8

Science

Earth Science 6
Physical Science 7
Life Science 8
Alternative Energy (elective)

Social Studies

World History I - 6
World History II - 7
US History 8

World Language and Cultures

Exploratory Spanish 7 or 8
Exploratory German 8
*German 1 (Grade 8 Only)
*Spanish 1 (Grade 8 Only)
American Sign Language 7 or 8



Course Requirements

	Grade 6
Math	Math 6
English Language Arts (ELA)	ELA 6 ELA 6 Enrichment
Science	Earth Science
Social Studies	World History I Career Exploration and Awareness
Related Arts (all 6 th grade students take these courses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Engineering and Manufacturing • Computer Applications for CCR • Innovation and Design • Art • Health • World Music • Physical Education
Electives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Band • Chorus • STAR (based on academic need) • Reading Horizons Elevate (based on academic need)
Other Academic Requirements	Edmentum Suite (Study Island, Exact Path) Accelerated Reader

Grades 7 and 8

In addition to the core subject requirements, we offer an elective scheduling model in 7th and 8th grade that allows students to choose their Related Arts classes based on personal and career interests. This model offers flexibility for students to choose high interest and new Related Arts classes while also providing a multi-tiered system of supports for students who may need guided academic support. This model is a result of collaboration and hard work from District and WAMS administration and was developed based on feedback from students and parents. They expressed interest in spending more time in Related Arts courses that are aligned to their interests. This model is a change from the previous format in which 7th grade electives ran on a 36-day rotation. By moving toward an elective model in 7th and 8th grade, we are able to more effectively support high school transition and our comprehensive career awareness program by engaging students in course work aligned to their skills, interests and aptitudes.

In 7th grade, electives will run in four 45-day rotations (quarters) during 2 periods, allowing students to choose up to 8 electives. Three of their electives are required: Health (1), Physical Education (1 required, up to 2 allowed), STEM courses (1). Band and Chorus will run during one period for the entire year. In 8th grade, electives will run in four 45-day rotations (quarters) during 2 periods, allowing students to choose up to 8 electives. Two of their electives are required: Physical Education (1 required, up to 2 allowed), STEM courses (1). Band and Chorus will run during one period for the entire year.



	Grade 7 Course Requirements and 45 – Day Electives	Grade 8 Course Requirements and 45 – Day Electives
Math	Math 7 Algebra	Math 8 Algebra Geometry*
English Language Arts (ELA)	ELA 7	ELA 8
Science	Physical Science	Life Science
Social Studies	World History II Career Exploration and Awareness	US History I – Colonization to Civil War Career Exploration and Awareness
Electives	<p>Required Electives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Physical Education (up to 2) <p>Must choose 1 of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Applications for CCR • Innovation and Design • Pre-Engineering and Transportation Technology <p>Additional electives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Advanced Art • Exploratory Spanish • Introduction to American Sign Language • Introduction to Piano • Garage Band • Alternative Energy • Band • Chorus <p>Electives based on academic need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAR • Academic Support Reading Clinic: Reading Horizons/Elevate 	<p>Required Electives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Education (up to 2) <p>Must choose 1 of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Applications for CCR • Innovation and Design • Digital Layout, Design, and Fabrication <p>Additional electives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Advanced Art • Family/Consumer Science • Introduction to Fitness and Weight Training • Introduction to Piano • Garage Band • Introduction to American Sign Language • American Sign Language II • Exploratory German • Exploratory Spanish • German I** • Spanish I** • Band • Chorus • JROTC <p>Electives based on academic need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAR • Academic Support Reading Clinic: Reading Horizons/Elevate
Other Academic Requirements	Edmentum Suite (Study Island, Exact Path) Accelerated Reader	Edmentum Suite (Study Island, Exact Path) Accelerated Reader



*Pre-requisites for electing Geometry include: Average grade of 80% or higher in Algebra I, and a Proficient or Advanced score on Algebra I Keystone Exam or Study Island Keystone Benchmark.

**Pre-requisites for electing a World Language include: A final grade of 83% or higher in 7th grade ELA, a final overall QPA or 3.0 or higher in 7th grade, High Proficient/Advanced (1085) on 7th grade ELA PSSA, 90% or higher ELA Study Island Benchmark Exam score. Students are not permitted to waive into World Language if these requirements are not met.

Assessments: Part of College and Career Readiness is having the ability to demonstrate mastery of skills and standards. The assessments available to students at West Allegheny Middle School further develop learning and validate the knowledge gained throughout a student’s middle school career, while also identifying areas that require remediation.

PSSA Exam – ELA, Math (6-8), Science (Grade 8 Only)	Spring	Required
The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is given to all students in the spring of each school year. All students take the ELA and math PSSA and students in 8 th grade also take the science PSSA in addition to the ELA and math exams. The PSSA is a standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment which provides students, parents, and teachers with an understanding of student and school performance related to the attainment of proficiency of the academic standards. These standards identify what a student should know and be able to do at each grade level.		
Algebra Keystone Exam	End of course (Algebra 1)	Required
The Algebra Keystone Exam is an end-of-course state assessment designed to evaluate proficiency in algebra. As part of the high school graduation requirements, each student must demonstrate proficiency on the Algebra Keystone Exam, or fulfill one of the other pathways provided, to earn a diploma from West Allegheny. Each student is provided the opportunity to take the Keystone Exams in May of the year they are taking a Keystone affiliated course. Additionally, any student who has taken a Keystone Exam and did not score Proficient may re-take the exam.		
Study Island Benchmarks	3 assessments per year	Required
Study Island Benchmarks are administered in ELA and mathematics three times during the school year. These assessments are used to measure student growth on the academic grade level standards. The data is used to identify areas where reteaching and remediation may be needed. Scores from the Study Island Benchmarks are also used as criteria for entrance into advanced level math and world language classes.		
End of Unit Assessments	End of each curricular unit	Required
End of Unit Assessments are administered in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies at the end of each curricular unit throughout the school year. These assessments are used to determine the level of mastery of academic standards addressed in the unit.		



ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Canvas: Canvas is the Learning Management System launched in the Fall of 2020 for West Allegheny students in grades K-12. A learning management system, (or LMS), is a software-based platform that provides a framework and tools to facilitate learning both inside and outside of the school building.

Canvas was chosen by a team of administrators and teachers as the District's Learning Management System for its wide range of easy-to-use tools for teachers, students and parents. Teachers utilize Canvas for assignments, assessments, important class announcements, messaging, and additional student resources. Canvas has not replaced Skyward, which is the Student Information System that teachers use to track student progress and record grades.

Canvas not only engages the student both in and out of the classroom, but it allows parents to take part in their children's education by providing access to important class information. We encourage all parents to activate their Canvas parent accounts.

Edmentum Suite: Study Island is an online learning resource through Edmentum that helps students learn, practice, and master grade-level academic standards in a fun and engaging manner. Students are able to engage in mini-lessons, content specific questions, and game simulations in ELA and Math. Study Island is also used as a data measurement tool through Benchmark exams and to support students with both academic enrichment and remediation. Research based best practices regarding Study Island use suggest a positive relationship between student achievement and when students spend 30-40 minutes per subject per week engaged in Study Island activities that are aligned to their learning in class. At West Allegheny Middle School, Math and ELA teachers assign on average one-to-two Study Island assignments per week that are often aligned to the learning content being covered in class.

The Edmentum Suite also offers an additional online resource to support students who may have grade-level gaps in their understanding and achievement. Exact Path is a program through Edmentum that requires students to take a diagnostic assessment to determine their grade-level ability according to PA Core Standards in Math and ELA. Students who score below grade-level are then provided mini-lessons, content specific questions, and a learning path designed to help them remediate academic gaps and catch up to grade-level ability through engagement with Exact Path. Once students complete their Exact Path pathway, they will take an additional exam to determine readiness for them to return to Study Island engagement. Students who score on grade-level return to Study Island engagement while students that need additional practice may return to Exact Path.

Accelerated Reader: Accelerated Reader is a program used by the English Language Arts department to strengthen students' skills in reading comprehension. Students are required to read books outside of class at their independent reading level. Upon completion of reading, the student must take an on-line assessment that measures comprehension of the text. Students must earn a designated amount of AR points as part of their ELA grade.

STAR: Students are enrolled in STAR (Student/Teacher Academic Resource) based on either their past year's academic performance or their current performance in either Math or ELA class. STAR exists to help students remediate and improve key ideas and concepts from Math or ELA class that multiple forms of assessment indicate to be below grade level. These forms of assessment include PSSA, Study Island Benchmark, and/or Exact Path scores. During STAR, teachers work directly with students to re-



teach key concepts from class, pre- teach upcoming learning targets, and support students with Study Island and/or Exact Path assignments. Student enrollment in STAR may range from 2-3 days per six-day rotation to being assigned all six days of the rotation. When these decisions are made, parents/guardians and students are notified in advance and notification includes the rationale for student placement in this course as well as details on how student engagement will lead to improved learning outcomes. Student placement in STAR may be fluid throughout the year.

Reading Clinic: The Reading Horizons Elevate program is used to support our students that are behind grade level expectations in Reading. This program is systematic and research-based, allowing all readers to build and strengthen their fundamental skills. The instruction is based on the Orton-Gillingham principles. Students will be engaged in activities and instruction that is language based, multi-sensory, explicit, and sequential. There are two components, direct instruction and online activities. Our hope is that the students who have the largest skill deficits will be able to use strategies to decode accurately and fluently, which will lead to their ability to better comprehend.

Advanced Course Work: Students in 7th and 8th grades have an opportunity for advanced coursework in mathematics and/or World Language (8th grade). These classes are Algebra (Grades 7 and 8), Geometry (Grade 8), Spanish I (Grade 8), and German I (Grade 8). These courses follow the high school curriculum and students may earn a weighted grade on the 4.5 grading scale.

Students are recommended for Algebra (7th and 8th grade) based on multiple criteria including teacher recommendations, class performance, Study Island Benchmarks and PSSA results. To be recommended for Algebra in 7th grade, the criteria includes an average grade of 90% or higher in 6th grade math, and Advanced scores on the Study Island Benchmark and/or Math PSSA exam. To be recommended for Algebra in 8th grade, the criteria include an average grade of 80% or higher in 7th grade math and Proficient or Advanced scores on the Study Island Benchmark and/or Math PSSA Exam.

If a parent is not in agreement with the recommended course, they have the opportunity to request that their child waive into the advanced math course. This process is completed over the summer. Waivers must be signed and returned to the school for consideration and final approval by the principal. Parents are required to meet with an administrator and guidance counselor to review and discuss their desire to waive their child into advanced math when criteria are not met no later than July 31st. Students in 7th grade Algebra will continue in the advanced math sequence (Geometry) unless concerns are raised by the parent and/or teacher.

Students are recommended for a full year of World Language (German or Spanish) in 8th grade based on specific criteria that includes final GPA in 7th grade, final grade in English Language Arts 7, Study Island Benchmark, and PSSA scores. This instruction will take the place of one half of their English Language Arts block. Please refer to Page 9 for specific criteria.



As we build the academic tenacity and mental grit needed for student success, we need to know if a problem arises. If your child is experiencing difficulty in one of their courses, we strongly encourage you to contact your child's teacher for that content area.

MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports): Many of the supports described above are a part of our MTSS. A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a systematic and inclusive, continuous-improvement framework in which data-based problem solving and decision-making is practiced across all levels of the educational system for supporting students in their academic, social, and behavioral development.

The MTSS framework is implemented as an early intervening strategy that allows educators to identify and address academic and behavioral difficulties and provided targeted interventions to support student needs.

The goal of MTSS is to improve student achievement using research-based interventions matched to the instructional and behavioral needs of students. Through monitoring student responses to a series of targeted, increasingly intense interventions assistance is provided to students in a timely-manner and data is gathered to make informed instructional decisions about how to best support students.

The following chart displays how literacy and math instructional time is scheduled across the three tiers of support at each grade level. Times under tier 1 represent what all students have access to within core instruction. Additional time and effective teaching are needed to accelerate student learning and improve performance for students who are not meeting grade level expectations. Therefore, students in tier 2 interventions are recommended to have an additional 30 minutes of intervention instruction (Core +30). Students in tier 3 interventions should have another additional 30 minutes of intensive instruction (Core +30 +30). When scheduling interventions, the MTSS team must take into consideration each individual student's schedule to make the best holistic decision for each learner.



West Allegheny School District Instructional Time Components of K-8 MTSS

Grade Level	Tier 1 Core	Tier 2 Core + 30	Tier 3 Core + 30 + 30
6th Grade Literacy/Math	80+ Minute Literacy Block 80+ Minute Math Block	<p>ELA Enrichment - 80+ additional minutes (2 periods) per 6-day cycle w/ literacy specialist</p> <p>STAR - up to 160+ additional minutes (4 periods) per 6-day cycle OR STAR+ - up to 160+ additional minutes (4 periods) per 6-day cycle w/special education teacher support</p>	<p>Reading Clinic- up to 160+ additional minutes (4 periods) per 6-day cycle with literacy specialist or special education teacher</p> <p>Math Support – up to 160+ additional minutes (4 periods) per 6-day cycle w/math teacher or special education teacher as schedule allows</p>
7th-8th Literacy/Math	80+ Minute Literacy Block 80+ Minute Math Block	<p>ELA Enrichment - 80+ additional minutes (2 periods) per 6-day cycle w/ literacy specialist</p> <p>STAR - up to 250+ additional minutes (6 periods) per 6-day cycle OR STAR+- up to 250+ additional minutes (6 periods) per 6-day cycle w/special education teacher support</p>	<p>Reading Clinic- up to 160+ additional minutes (4 periods) per 6-day cycle with literacy specialist or special education teacher</p> <p>Math Support – up to 160+ additional minutes (4 periods) per 6-day cycle w/math teacher or special education teacher as schedule allows</p>
8th Grade Advanced ELA/ Math	40+ Minute Literacy Period 80+ Minute Math Block	<p>STAR - up to 250+ additional minutes (6 periods) per 6-day cycle OR STAR+- up to 250+ additional minutes (6 periods) per 6-day cycle w/special education teacher support</p>	



College and Career Readiness

As a measure of Future Ready PA reporting, Pennsylvania schools are accountable for ensuring every student meets Career Education and Work (CEW) Academic Standards as established in PA Code Chapter 4. In alignment with our goal of ensuring career and college readiness for every student, West Allegheny continues to provide our students with experiences in Career Awareness and Preparation (13.1), Career Acquisition (13.2), Career Retention and Advancement (13.3), and Entrepreneurship (13.4). Throughout a student’s years at West Allegheny he/she will participate in multiple learning experiences designed to meet one or more of the CEW Standards. The culmination of these experiences will result in a comprehensive Career and Education Work Standards Portfolio for each student.

By the end of 8th grade, students must:

- Have a minimum of seven (7) pieces of evidence (at least two in grades 6 and 7, at least 3 in grade 8)
- Address each career strand (13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.4) at least once

Our students experience a multitude of activities designed to build their CEW Portfolio. This portfolio begins in the elementary school and travels with the students from year to year as they collect artifacts pertaining to Pennsylvania’s CEW Standards and the West Allegheny School District career education program. Many of these activities take place in the Social Studies classes. A summary chart of the activities that students complete by grade level that are maintained in a student’s CEW Portfolio is below.

6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Job Shadow career inventory survey and lessons (13.1, 13.2, 13.3) • Secret Millionaires Club (13.4) • WAMS Career & College Fair - Virtual Visit (13.1,13.2,13.3) • 8th grade Career Project Presentations (13.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Job Shadow career inventory and lessons (13.1, 13.2, 13.3) • Parkway West CTC field trip (13.1) • WAMS Career & College Fair – Virtual Visit (13.1,13.2,13.3) • 8th grade Career Project Presentations (13.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Job Shadow exploration of 16 career clusters (13.1 – 13.4) • WAMS Career & College Fair (13.1, 13.2, 13.3) • Career Interest Project aligned to the 8 College and Career Pathways at WAHS (13.1 – 13.4) • 4 – Year High School Program of Studies (13.2) • Future Ready Field Trip (13.1, 13.2)



SAMPLE STUDENT SCHEDULES

Grade 6

Period	Class
1	Academics
2	ELA Block, Math Block, Sci or SS
3	Related Arts
4	Lunch
5	Academics
6	ELA Block, Math Block, Sci or SS
7	Related Arts/Band/Chorus
8	Academics
9	ELA Block, Math Block, Sci or SS

Grade 7

Period	Class
1	Elective Related Arts/Chorus/Band
2	Elective Related Arts
3	Academics
4	ELA Block, Math Block, Sci or SS
5	Lunch
6	Academics
7	ELA Block, Math Block, Sci or SS
8	Academics
9	ELA Block, Math Block, Sci or SS

Grade 8

Period	Class
1	Academics
2	ELA Block, Math Block, Sci or SS
3	Academics
4	ELA or Math Block, Sci or SS
5	Academics ELA or Math Block (Period 5/7), Sci or SS
6	Lunch
7	Academics ELA or Math Block (Period 5/7), Sci or SS
8	Elective Related Arts/Band/Chorus
9	Elective Related Arts (up to 4)

BELL SCHEDULES

Regular Bell



Pre-preparation Time	7:25 – 7:35	10 minutes	Faculty Only
Early Bell	7:33		
Period 1 + HR	7:35 – 8:21	45	Attendance and Announcements
Period 2	8:24 – 9:07	43	
Period 3	9:10 – 9:53	43	
Period 4	9:56 – 10:39	43	Lunch Grade 8
Period 5	10:42 – 11:25	43	Lunch Grade 6
Period 6	11:28 – 12:11	43	Lunch Grade 7
Period 7	12:14 – 12:57	43	
Period 8	1:00 – 1:47	47	PM Announcements
Period 9	1:50 – 2:35	45	
Post-preparation Time	2:35 – 3:15	40	Faculty Only

STAR/Advisor Bell

Pre-preparation Time	7:25 – 7:35	10 minutes	Faculty Only
Early Bell	7:33		
Period 1 + HR	7:35 – 8:19	44	Attendance and Announcements
Period 2	8:22 – 9:02	40	
Period 3	9:05 – 9:45	40	
Period 4	9:48 – 10:28	40	Lunch Grade 8
Period 5	10:31 – 11:11	40	Lunch Grade 6
Period 6	11:14 – 11:54	40	Lunch Grade 7
Period 7	11:57 – 12:37	40	
Period 8	12:40 – 1:20	40	
Period 9	1:23 – 2:03	40	
STAR/Advisor	2:05 – 2:35	30	PM Announcements
Post-preparation Time	2:35 – 3:15	40	Faculty Only

2 Hour Delay

Pre-preparation Time	7:25 – 7:35	10 minutes	Faculty Only
Early Bell	7:33		
Period 1 + HR	9:35 – 10:10	35	Attendance and Announcements
Period 2	10:12 – 10:43	31	
Period 3	10:45 – 11:16	31	
Period 4	11:18 – 11:49	31	Lunch Grade 8
Period 5	11:51 – 12:22	31	Lunch Grade 6
Period 6	12:24 – 12:55	31	Lunch Grade 7
Period 7	12:57 – 1:28	31	
Period 8	1:30 – 2:01	31	
Period 9	2:03 – 2:35	32	
Post-preparation Time	2:35 – 3:15	40	Faculty Only

Half Day

Pre-preparation Time	7:25 – 7:35	10 minutes	Faculty Only
Early Bell	7:33		
Period 1 + HR	7:35 – 7:59	24	Attendance and Announcements
Period 2	8:01 – 8:21	20	
Period 3	8:23 – 8:43	20	
Period 7	8:45 – 9:05	20	
Period 8	9:07 – 9:27	20	
Period 9	9:29 – 9:49	20	
Period 4	9:51 – 10:21	30	Lunch Grade 8
Period 5	10:23 – 10:53	30	Lunch Grade 6
Period 6	10:55 – 11:25	30	Lunch Grade 7
Post-preparation Time/ In-service/Clerical			Faculty Only

DROP/ADD PROCEDURES and WAIVER PROCESS



SUMMER THROUGH THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:

Schedule changes will be made only for students who are missing a class, waived into a new level of a class, or adding an elective. No schedule changes will be granted to allow students to change teams, class periods, or instructors for any course.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL TO THE 12th DAY OF SCHOOL:

Any waivers must be submitted to the guidance office on the appropriate form. Requests will then be reviewed by the counselors and/or Principal to determine if the change is appropriate and if there is space available.

ADDING/DROPPING AN ELECTIVE:

Course change requests for elective classes (like Band and Chorus) will be initiated by the parent putting the request in writing and forwarding it to the counselors. The change will then be instituted, if there is space available.

AFTER THE 18th DAY OF SCHOOL:

If a drop occurs in an academic course at this time, the grade earned in the original course will be transferred to the new course and calculated accordingly.

WAIVER PROCESS FOR MATH PLACEMENT:

Students are recommended for Algebra based on multiple criteria including teacher recommendations, class performance, Study Island Benchmarks and PSSA results. If a parent is not in agreement with the recommended course, they have the opportunity to request that their child “waive” into the advanced math course. This process is completed over the summer. Waivers must be signed and returned to the school for consideration and final approval by the principal. Parents are required to meet with an administrator and guidance counselor to review and discuss their desire to waive their child into advanced math when criteria are not met no later than July 31st. Students in 7th grade will continue in the advanced math sequence (Algebra and Geometry) unless concerns are raised by the parent and/or teacher.



PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Academic eligibility applies to any student participating in an athletic or extra-curricular activity.

STEP 1: A student on the weekly eligibility list who has an 'F' grade reported for any subject shall be formally informed with a 'warning' and shall have one week to bring it up to 'passing', defined as a 'D' or higher. The appropriate head coach/director shall notify parents expeditiously. Students are required to attend mandatory study hall starting with the first week on the eligibility list.

STEP 2: If the student appears on the eligibility list for two consecutive weeks in a row in the same subject there will be an extra week added on for the first week status. Consecutive appearances on the list in the same subject will be for one week only-no warning week extension. Mandatory study hall is required.

STEP 3: If a student does not bring that subject's grade up to at least 'passing' as indicated by a second 'F' grade reported the subsequent week, the student shall be suspended from competing/performing but shall be permitted to practice. The appropriate head coach/director shall notify parents expeditiously.

STEP 4: If a student does not bring that subject's grade up to at least 'passing' as indicated by a third 'F' grade reported the subsequent week, the student shall be suspended from both practicing/rehearsing and competing/ performing. The appropriate head coach/director shall notify parents expeditiously.

STEP 5: If a student does not bring that subject's grade up to at least 'passing' as indicated by a fourth 'F' grade reported the subsequent week, the student shall be suspended from participating for the balance of that team/ activity/organization's season. The appropriate head coach/director shall notify parents expeditiously followed by written communication from the Principal.

The existing high school and middle school attendance policies shall apply:

- A student that has been absent for 20 or more days in a given semester shall be ineligible to participate until he/she has attended school for a total of 45 days documented from the first day in attendance in the subsequent semester.
- Four (4) unexcused tardies shall be the equivalent of one unexcused absence. This policy also applies from the second semester to the next year's first semester. Days spent on 'out of school' suspensions are counted as 'absent'.
- Students **MUST BE IN ATTENDANCE BY 8:00 A.M.** to participate in athletic practices and competitions, and musical programs, as well as **ALL OTHER** extracurricular activities occurring that day.
- The **ONLY** exception to the 8:00 a.m. arrival time is for a medical or dental appointment. Students must have written verification on a printed form from the doctor's/dentist's office to participate.
- Students are not permitted to leave early without prior permission from an administrator or they will not be permitted to return for practice, competitions, musical programs or other extracurricular activities.



Academic Honors Night & Formal Recognition Eligibility

West Allegheny Middle School students will be recognized for formal Academic Honors and/or Honors Night based on the following procedure:

- Only the report card grades from Quarters 1, 2 and 3 will be used for Formal Academic Honors and Honors Night awards.
- Students who earned Honor Roll status (3.0 or higher with no Incompletes or “F” grades) in the first three consecutive quarters will be provided formal recognition in front of their peers, staff, and invited community members during a formal ceremony at WAMS. Individual rewards not based on academic honors will also be recognized at this time.
- Students will be recognized at the highest level for which they received Honor Roll, regardless of number of times. For example, a student who has highest honors for the first quarter, honors for the second quarter, and high honors for the third quarter; will be labeled as highest honors for Honors Night.
- Students who maintain a 4.0 in each of the first three quarters will be recognized with the Scholarship Award.
- Staff members will nominate 8th grade students for the American Legion Award based on qualities of honor, courage, scholarship, leadership, patriotism and service. Staff members will vote until there is a clear winner - 1 male and 1 female.
- 8th grade students with a cumulative middle school GPA in the top 10% of the class will receive the Presidential Academic Excellence Award. 8th grade students with a cumulative middle school GPA in the top 11-20% of the class will receive the Presidential Academic Achievement Award.
- Students at all three grade levels that earn Highest Honors for all three quarters will be recognized both at a school-level ceremony with their peers, staff, and invited community members but also at our formal Honors Night ceremony. To be eligible to be invited to Honors Night, a student must have earned Highest Honors for all three quarters. Additional non-academic awards, Presidential and Scholarship awards, etc. will also be awarded to students that qualify for Honors Night at this formal ceremony.



Honor Roll/Award Criteria:

- Honors: 3.0 – 3.4 GPA
- High Honors: 3.5 – 3.9 GPA
- Highest Honors: 4.0 or higher GPA
- Scholarship Award: 4.0 or higher GPA for the entire year
- 8th Grade Presidential Academic Excellence Award: Top 10% of class (cumulative Middle School GPA)
- 8th Grade Presidential Academic Achievement Award: Top 11% – 20% of class (cumulative Middle School GPA)

NON-ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

ADVISOR PROGRAM

Administrators, teachers and counselors meet with their advisor group one afternoon each week. During this time students participate in a variety of activities, readings and/or discussions centered on a theme. Students are given opportunities to discuss and demonstrate their understanding of such concepts as bullying, respect, diversity, responsibility and trustworthiness.

BIG BROTHER / BIG SISTER PROGRAM

A program which helps school climate and 6th graders make a smooth transition to middle school is the Big Brother/Big Sister Program. This program began the summer of 1998, training eighth graders to be big brothers and sisters to the new sixth graders. Each trained eighth grader is given 2 or 3 sixth graders to nurture and support throughout the year. The students meet a few times during the year and discuss the behaviors expected at the dances and social events, encourage the use of agendas, and discuss grades, where to go for help, and any general questions the sixth graders may have. The eighth graders are encouraged to keep an eye out for the sixth graders in the hallways, at social events, and on the buses.



G.O.L.D. PROGRAM (GIRLS OVERNIGHT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT)

The GOLD Program is a dynamic opportunity offered in the spring to all 8th grade girls. The program runs on a Friday night from 4:00 pm to 11:00 pm. Female staff members, along with high school senior girls, lead the 8th graders through a series of workshops and presentations covering a variety of topics designed to promote positive choices. Past workshop sessions have included healthy relationships, body image and the media, internet safety, nutrition, and presentations given by students in the Duquesne School of Pharmacy. A career exploration component provides an opportunity for the girls to hear presentations and interact with women in career fields such as engineering, medical, and business/finance.

ANTI-BULLYING/INDIAN PRIDE PROGRAM - PBIS

The Indian Pride Program is our School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) Program. This program teaches, reinforces, and recognizes the positive behaviors we expect from all of our students and provides interventions and supports for students who are struggling to meet these expectations. Our students are expected to behave in a manner that is safe, responsible, and respectful in all areas of our building and on the bus. Students are taught the expectations, which includes following the West Allegheny School District Bullying Policy. When students are observed following these expectations, they are awarded with Indian Pride tickets that are placed on display on our Indian Pride board. When the board is full, students have an opportunity to win prizes. Our Indian Pride Program currently focuses on promoting positive behavior in the hallways, cafeteria, classroom, and at assemblies and on the bus. The Indian Pride committee is also responsible for hosting pep assemblies to recognize students participating in extracurricular activities and athletics. Our Indian Pride Program theme is “Pride in myself, Pride in my school”.

iLEAD

iLead is an after-school leadership program run by staff and volunteers from Crossroads Church as well as student leaders. This program provides students in all grade levels an opportunity to develop leadership skills, receive academic support, and foster new friendships in a fun and engaging setting. Students are provided a free snack at each session and earn a special recognition certificate at the completion of each iLead term.



ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES

Students become eligible for WPIAL sanctioned sports beginning in 7th grade. They are:

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Basketball (Girls)	Basketball (Boys)	Baseball (8 th grade)
Cheerleading (This continues into winter)	Wrestling	Softball
Cross Country (Boys & Girls)	Ice Hockey (Club)	Swimming
Football		Track and Field
Soccer (Boys & Girls)		Volleyball (Girls)

Activities open to all middle school students include: Art Club, Girls on the Run, Best Buddies, Indian Pride (Student PBIS) Team, National Academic League, Student Government, Jazz Band, Percussion, Brass, Flute/Clarinet Ensembles, Talent Show, Geography Bee, Spelling Bee, History Bee, Science Bee, iLead, and Show Choir (7th and 8th grade only).



A Tradition of Excellence . . . A Vision for Tomorrow

WAMS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELA 6

YEAR

In ELA 6, students explore texts surrounding the topics of perseverance, responses to fear, and reactions to natural disasters. Students demonstrate their understanding of these topics by writing grade-appropriate text-dependent analyses (TDAs) which examine how text elements are connected. In addition to required reading, students are held accountable for their independent reading through the use of the Accelerated Reader (AR) program and the completion of reading logs. They also learn how to use the writing process by writing narratives along with informational and argumentative pieces. Students are exposed to new vocabulary within the context of the literature and non-fiction texts they read while also receiving independent vocabulary instruction that focuses on the learning of roots, prefixes, suffixes, context clues, and dictionary skills. Grammar instruction is focused on establishing foundational skills that are then studied within the texts read in class. The work in this course will also develop deeper levels of thinking around the three fundamental Pre-AP English skills (close reading, grammar, and composition. To acquire this knowledge, students participate in both small and whole group discussions.

Primary Text: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Collections Anthology (A new Anthology is being considered for adoption for the 2022-2023 school year)

Pre-Requisite: Passing grade in ELA 5

*Please refer to Page 51 for the ELA Weighted Gradebook Descriptors

ELA Enrichment 6

YEAR

In ELA Enrichment 6, students explore texts surrounding the topics of perseverance, responses to fear, and reactions to natural disasters. Students demonstrate their understanding of these topics by writing grade-appropriate text-dependent analyses (TDAs) which examine how text elements are connected. In addition to in-class reading, students are held accountable for their independent reading through the use of the Accelerated Reader (AR) program and the completion of reading logs. They also learn how to use the writing process by writing narratives along with informational and argumentative pieces. Students are exposed to new vocabulary within the context of the literature and non-fiction texts they read while also receiving independent vocabulary instruction that focuses on the learning of roots, prefixes, suffixes, context clues, and dictionary skills. Grammar instruction is focused on establishing foundational skills that are then studied within the texts read in class. The work in this course will also develop deeper levels of thinking around the three fundamental Pre-AP English skills (close reading,



grammar, and composition). To acquire this knowledge, students participate in both small and whole group discussions.

In addition, there is a strong emphasis on building reading fluency, morphology, and comprehension. Attention is given to creating responsible, accountable, and organized learners. This course is co-taught by a 6th grade ELA teacher and a Reading Specialist. The students enrolled in this class may also receive support from the Reading Specialist two additional periods in each 6-day rotation. Benchmarks, including fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary checks, are determined within the small group environment with the Reading Specialist. The criteria for entrance into this class consists of Acadience results, elementary classroom teacher input, and PSSA scores. Decisions for entry into the class are done in conjunction with the elementary Literacy Specialists. Also, it is to be noted that the students in this course cannot have any identified reading goals stated in an IEP.

Primary Text: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Collections Anthology (A new Anthology is being considered for adoption for the 2022-2023 school year)

Pre-Requisite: Passing grade in ELA 5

*Please refer to Page 51 for the ELA Weighted Gradebook Descriptors

ELA 7

YEAR

In ELA 7, students study a variety of genres including historical fiction, science fiction, poetry, and mythology. These genres are explored through the close reading of short texts and through a variety of approaches to reading novels, including the whole novel approach, guided reading, and literature circles. Students also analyze nontraditional texts through various mediums. In addition to required reading, students are held accountable for their independent reading through the use of the Accelerated Reader (AR) program. Writing instruction focuses on advancing students' depth of analysis through text-dependent analysis (TDA) writing. Students also learn how to address counterclaims in their argumentative writing while continuing their study of informational and narrative writing. Within this instruction, students are exposed to grade-appropriate academic vocabulary while also learning about key grammatical concepts. The work in this course will also develop deeper levels of thinking around the three fundamental Pre-AP English skills (close reading, grammar, and composition).

Primary Text: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Collections Anthology (A new Anthology is being considered for adoption for the 2022-2023 school year)

Pre-Requisite: Passing grade in ELA 6

*Please refer to Page 51 for the ELA Weighted Gradebook Descriptors



ELA 8

YEAR

In ELA 8, students further develop their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. They read a variety of book-length works to demonstrate application of comprehension and analysis strategies they have learned in previous courses. These book-length works require students to analyze an adventure novel, a memoir written in verse, and a full-length argumentative text. Along with these longer works, students also continue to hone their close reading skills through a variety of shorter narrative, informational, and argumentative texts. These texts push students towards deeper understandings of genres, including but not limited to horror and realistic fiction. Students will then use these texts as models for how to write their own narrative, informational, and argumentative pieces. They also use these texts to demonstrate their ability to thoroughly analyze through the writing of several text-dependent analyses (TDAs). To prepare for high school, students develop a foundational understanding of how to use the MLA format and develop their presentation skills through a variety of research projects. In addition to required reading, students are held accountable for their independent reading through the use of the Accelerated Reader (AR) program. Vocabulary instruction is infused with the reading and writing instruction detailed above. Grammar instruction includes a review of previous topics while introducing the concepts of active and passive voice, verb moods, and verbals. The work in this course will also develop deeper levels of thinking around the three fundamental Pre-AP English skills (close reading, grammar, and composition).

Primary Text: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Collections Anthology (A new Anthology is being considered for adoption for the 2022-2023 school year)

Pre-Requisite: Passing grade in ELA 7

*Please refer to Page 51 for the ELA Weighted Gradebook Descriptors



MATHEMATICS

Math 6

YEAR

In Math 6, important mathematical ideas are identified. Each idea is studied in depth within a unit and then used throughout the remaining units. These mathematical ideas are embedded in the context of interesting problems. As students explore a series of connected problems, they develop understanding of the embedded ideas and with the aid of the teacher, abstract powerful mathematical ideas, and problem-solving strategies. Connected Mathematics Project (CMP) students in Math 6 are developing mathematical habits of mind: solving problems, reflecting on solution methods, examining why the methods work, comparing methods, generalizing methods, and relating methods to those used in previous situations. Students will focus on the following content areas: Number Theory, Ratios, Measurement, Arithmetic Operations, Algebra, and Statistics.

Primary Text – Pearson Connected Mathematics – 3rd Edition ***Please note** – We will be reviewing the math curriculum and potentially adopting a new program for the 2022-2023 school year.

Calculator Requirement: Students will need a TI-34 calculator for this class.

Math 7

YEAR

7th math grade is a problem-centered course that through the use of the Connected Mathematics Project (CMP) requires higher-level thinking and promotes the skillful use of mathematics. Students will focus on the following content areas: Geometry, Number Sense, Similarity, Proportional Reasoning, Linear Relationships, Probability, Measurement, and Statistics. With the aid of the teacher, students abstract powerful mathematical ideas, skills, and problem-solving strategies.

Primary Text – Pearson Connected Mathematics – 3rd Edition ***Please note** – We will be reviewing the math curriculum and potentially adopting a new program for the 2022-2023 school year.

Calculator Requirement: Students will need a TI-34 calculator for this class.



Math 8

YEAR

Math 8 uses a problem-centered curriculum, the Connected Mathematics Project (CMP), to develop students' mathematical ideas, skills, problem-solving strategies, and ways of thinking. The mathematical topics covered in Math 8 include, but are not limited to the following: understanding differences between rational and irrational numbers; approximating irrational numbers; working with radicals and integer exponents; exploring connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations; analyzing and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; defining, evaluating, and comparing functions; using functions to model relationships between quantities; understanding congruence and similarity; understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem; solving real-world mathematical problems involving volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres; and investigating patterns of association in bivariate data.

Primary Text – Pearson Connected Mathematics – 3rd Edition ***Please note** – We will be reviewing the math curriculum and potentially adopting a new program for the 2022-2023 school year.

Calculator Requirement: Students are required to have a TI-84 calculator for this course.

***Algebra I - 7**

YEAR

This High School level course is designed for the highly motivated student who will study Algebra I during their 7th grade year. Throughout the course, students will develop mathematical reasoning and the ability to persevere through challenging problems. Algebra I prepares students for success in higher mathematics courses with an emphasis on sharpening students' analytical and higher order thinking skills. The text for the course is *Big Ideas Math Algebra 1*, which focuses on direct instruction and student inquiry. This coherent curriculum aligns to the Common Core State Standards and Standards for Mathematical Practice. Topics included in the course are relationships between quantities and reasoning with equations, linear and exponential relationships, descriptive statistics, equations and expressions, and quadratic functions and modeling. Students may receive a weighted grade on the 4.5 scale for this course.

Primary Text – Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Big Ideas

Calculator Requirement: Students are required to have a TI-84 Plus calculator for this course.

Students recommended for Algebra I – 7 must have an average grade of 90% or higher in their 6th grade math course, Advanced score on Study Island Benchmark, and Advanced score on 6th grade Math PSSA.

***Algebra I - 8**

YEAR



This High School level course is designed for the highly motivated student who will study Algebra I during their 8th grade year. Throughout the course, students will develop mathematical reasoning and the ability to persevere through challenging problems. Algebra I prepares students for success in higher mathematics courses with an emphasis on sharpening students' analytical and higher order thinking skills. The text for the course is *Big Ideas Math Algebra 1*, which focuses on direct instruction and student inquiry. This coherent curriculum aligns to the Common Core State Standards and Standards for Mathematical Practice. Topics included in the course are relationships between quantities and reasoning with equations, linear and exponential relationships, descriptive statistics, equations and expressions, and quadratic functions and modeling. Students may receive a weighted grade on the 4.5 scale for this course.

Primary Text – Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Big Ideas

Calculator Requirement: Students are required to have a TI-84 Plus calculator for this course.

Students recommended for Algebra I – 8 must have an average of 80% or higher in Math 7, Proficient or Advanced scores on Final Study Island Benchmarks, and/or Proficient or Advanced score on 7th grade Math PSSA.

***Geometry**

YEAR

This high school level Geometry course uses inductive and deductive approaches to cover the topics of plane and solid geometry. Students will develop skills necessary to make and verify conjectures through reasoning and/or proof. Topics include congruence with proof and constructions, similarity, similarity with trigonometry, extending to three dimensions, connecting algebra and geometry through coordinates, circles with and without coordinates, and applications of probability. This course will use real world/practical problems as well as reinforce skills and concepts developed in Algebra I. Students may receive a weighted grade on the 4.5 scale for this course.

Primary Text – Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Big Ideas

Calculator Requirement: Students are required to have a TI-84 Plus calculator for this course.



SOCIAL STUDIES

WORLD HISTORY I – 6

YEAR

Students are introduced to the beginnings of the human story; including early hominid and hunter/gatherer communities of the Neolithic Age, Egypt and the Near East, India, China, Greece, and Rome (circa 500 C.E.). As they explore and draw comparisons between early civilizations, students discover the secrets of these ancient cultures that continue to influence the modern world. In doing so, they learn to think like historians and geographers, to practice scholarly habits of mind, and to develop and use inquiry skills.

Students will also be introduced to college/career readiness vocabulary as they begin their exploration of career opportunities. Students will complete an online interest survey to match their interests to potential careers through a program called Virtual Job Shadow.

Primary Text – TCI History Alive

WORLD HISTORY II - 7

YEAR

Students continue their comparative exploration of civilizations from Europe, Africa, and the Middle East to Asia and the Americas from the end of the Roman Empire (circa 500 C.E.) through the Enlightenment (circa 1700 C.E.). In doing so, they further develop their historical thinking, spatial thinking, and inquiry skills, and continue their development of scholarly habits of mind.

Students in 7th grade are exposed to a variety of career clusters through Virtual Job Shadow. Through this program, students are able to watch interviews from individuals in various career fields as well as research information about a career's education requirements, job specifications, salary, benefits, and projected outlook. Students can also take inventories to match their interests and abilities to jobs that suit their personalities and aptitudes. In conjunction with career exploration in our Virtual Job Shadow program, students also attend a 2-day seminar with professionals from the Airport Area Chamber of Commerce's CHOICES program. This program promotes the ideals of self-discipline, healthy work habits, and the importance of doing your best to ensure numerous opportunities for the future.

Primary Text – TCI History Alive



US HISTORY I - 8

YEAR

Students focus their historical investigations on North America and the foundation and rise of a new nation (from colonization through the end of the 19th century). Students hone their historical habits of mind, engage in historical inquiry, and interrogate primary sources as they examine indigenous peoples, colonization and settlement, revolution and “Freedom Documents,” Westward expansion, the scourge of slavery and a nation divided, civil war, and the rise of industry.

Career awareness and exploration is continued as 8th grade students craft personalized education and career plans, in collaboration with local businesses, school counselors, and teachers to help guide decisions about future course-taking and potential careers. Students will continue to build a career portfolio through Virtual Job Shadow and will participate in a career fair. Students will complete a culminating career project that will be presented in front of a panel of teachers and local business leaders.

Primary Text – National Geographic American Stories



SCIENCE

EARTH SCIENCE 6

YEAR

Earth science is the study of Earth's structure, properties, processes, and place within the wider spectrum of outer space. In 6th grade Earth Science class, students will focus on the four main branches of Earth science (meteorology, oceanography, astronomy, & geology). The course will begin by outlining the branches of Earth science, and discussing possible Earth science careers. Before starting meteorology, students will explore the continents, oceans, latitude & longitude, and other global and local aspects of geography which are essential to our exploration of meteorology and oceanography. Weather, water movement throughout the water cycle, heating and cooling of Earth's atmosphere, and the flow of energy from the sun throughout the earth system, including Earth's oceans, are all explored in meteorology and oceanography. In astronomy we will focus on Earth's moon, moon phases, seasons, and the other planets in our solar system. The final branch of study will be geology. Students will focus on minerals, mineral identification, and mining practices. Rocks and the rock cycle are also an important aspect of geology that will be explored. The course wraps up with earthquakes and volcanoes. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to explain common global knowledge, as well as big ideas from the branches of meteorology, oceanography, astronomy, and geology.

Primary Text – Carolina Biological STC

PHYSICAL SCIENCE 7

YEAR

In this course, students develop a basic understanding of physical science by investigating the properties of matter, force, motion, work and energy while using the inquiry process and scientific method to enhance learning. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to describe the relationships among the parts of a system, the ways that they work together, and the flow of matter or energy through the system; Design, implement, record, explain, and justify safe and effective laboratory procedures to determine the relationship between two variables, controlling for other factors that might also affect the relationship; Use appropriate technologies to make precise quantitative measurements and observations and to organize and analyze data; Describe the transformations of that energy as it moves through the system.

Primary Text – Carolina Biological STC



LIFE SCIENCE 8

YEAR

In this course, students learn about the living organisms that inhabit our world. The course moves from the basic biological makeup of organisms to the characteristics and behaviors of the most complex organisms and the ecosystems in which they live. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to describe the relationships among the parts of a system and the ways that they work together; Design, implement, record, explain, and justify safe and effective laboratory procedures to determine the relationship between two variables, controlling for other factors that might also affect the relationship; Use appropriate technologies to make precise quantitative measurements and observations and to organize and analyze data. Students successful in this class move to Honors Biology or Biology in ninth grade.

Primary Text – Carolina Biological STC

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

45 DAYS

The Alternative Energy course looks at generating energy that does not rely on fossil fuels and nuclear power. In this course, students will explore both nonrenewable (i.e., coal, natural gas, petroleum, propane, and uranium) and renewable (i.e., biomass, geothermal, hydropower, solar, and wind) energy sources. Students will develop an understanding of the concepts and challenges of these sources and the roles they play in our everyday life. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to list and identify the economic and environmental advantages and disadvantages of major energy sources. This course is offered as an elective for students in 7th grade.

Primary Text -National Energy Education Development Project



ART

EXPLORATORY ART 6

30 DAYS

Students enrolled in Visual Arts in sixth grade complete a variety of projects, which serve to review the art elements and principles of design. Emphasis is placed upon creativity, production skills, problem solving and artist reflection. Art history is a focus throughout the course.

EXPLORATORY ART 7

45 DAYS

Students enrolled in Visual Arts in seventh grade complete a variety of projects that emphasize attention to details and time management, especially in relation to realistic drawing. Art history and writing assignments are included throughout the course. Creativity, production skills, problem solving, and artist reflection continue to be a primary focus.

ADVANCED ART 7

45 DAYS

A student enrolled in the Advanced Visual Arts program in seventh grade will have the opportunity to fine tune their skills through academic study and active participation. Emphasis is placed upon developing concepts, written artist statements, aesthetic perception and response, appreciation of historical and cultural contexts, as well as, an increased level of production skills, creativity, original thinking and problem-solving strategies. There is also the opportunity to explore additional digital art programs, including Illustrator and InDesign. Exhibition continues to be stressed, both throughout the building and at the annual art show. Students wishing to enroll in the Advanced Visual Arts program are required to take the Visual Arts program for seventh grade and receive a final grade of a B or higher.

EXPLORATORY ART 8

45 DAYS

Students enrolled in Visual Arts in eighth grade continue to fine tune their drawings skills and explore new concepts through a variety of projects. Emphasis is placed upon developing concepts, written artist statements, aesthetic perception and response, appreciation of historical and cultural contexts, as well as, an increased level of production skills, creativity, original thinking, and problem-solving strategies. Art history and writing assignments are included throughout the course.



ADVANCED ART 8

45 DAYS

A student enrolled in the Advanced Visual Arts program in eighth grade will have the opportunity to further develop a comprehensive art background through academic study and active participation. Emphasis is placed upon developing concepts, informed criticism techniques, written artist statements, aesthetic perception and response, appreciation of historical and cultural contexts, as well as, a higher level of production skills, creativity, original thinking and problem-solving strategies. There is also the opportunity to collaborate / interact with the students and staff in the program at the high school level. Exhibition continues to be stressed, both throughout the building and at the annual art show. Students wishing to enroll in the Advanced Visual Arts program are required to take the Visual Arts program for eighth grade and receive a final grade of a B or higher.



COMPUTER SCIENCE

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS 6 30 DAYS

This course will focus on correct keyboarding technique with an emphasis on memorizing the keys without looking. Through the incorporation of an online web-based program, you will further your word processing skills preparing you for future educational and career readiness. Digital literacy along with Internet safety, anti-cyberbullying and making safe online decisions will also be addressed within this course.

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS 7 45 DAYS

This course will focus on using modern authoring tools, i.e, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel in an online environment. Students will be introduced to skills that will allow them to communicate effectively in a 21st century world. Communication uses multi-media and goes beyond traditional written communication. Students will be exposed to different resources that encompass written, verbal, and visual tools to effectively convey meaning in a variety of ways. In addition, students will work through a digital literacy program that encourages safe choices in an online environment.

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS 8 45 DAYS

This is an introductory course that empowers students to engage with computer science as a medium for creativity, communication, problem solving, and fun! This course will allow students to develop their critical thinking skills by coding and programming in an online environment. Students will also be introduced to various STEM careers, information about entrepreneurship, and financial literacy to gain knowledge and allow students to be prepared regarding their financial future.

Computer Applications 7 is not a pre-requisite for this course.



FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE

EXPLORATORY FCS 8

45 DAYS

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) prepares students to begin their journey toward becoming independent, productive young adults through the introduction of important life skills. Throughout the term we will cover beginner food preparation techniques, nutrition, basic hand-sewing skills, consumerism, and child development (babysitting). Students will develop many soft skills for employability (such as communication, creativity, leadership, critical thinking, time and resource management) through their collaboration with classmates on a variety of projects and in the food labs.



HEALTH

EXPLORATORY HEALTH 6

30 DAYS

This co-educational course stresses physical, mental and social/ emotional wellness. Topics include nutrition according to the MyPlate eating guide, human body systems (skeletal, muscular, circulatory, and reproductive), puberty and personal hygiene.

EXPLORATORY HEALTH 7

45 DAYS

This co-educational course stresses physical, mental, and social/emotional wellness. Topics include non-communicable diseases (heart disease, cancer, diabetes, etc.), abstinence education (sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV/AIDS education), mental health awareness (suicide awareness and prevention), and avoidance of harmful substances (drugs and alcohol).



INNOVATION AND DESIGN

INNOVATION & DESIGN 6

30 DAYS

In this course, students are introduced to the basics of block-based coding to program VEX IQ robots. Students will collaborate to brainstorm and problem solve with hands on challenges both physically and virtually. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math skills will be coupled with creativity and innovation to round out the STEM approach to problem solving. Examples of real-world robots and how robotics is being implemented will be shown and discussed. Learning and being introduced to these 21st century skills will allow students to be more well-rounded for their future endeavors.

INNOVATION & DESIGN 7

45 DAYS

This course will focus on programming the five sensors of the VEX IQ robots. Coding sensors will build on prior knowledge of coding movement both physically and virtually robots. Real world examples of where sensors are being utilized and scientifically how they function will be discussed. Skills embedded within robotics include breaking down problems, computational thinking skills, and making sense of systems. These will all help in learning how to be precise in programming the robots to accomplish goals. Students will work collaboratively to complete challenges.

INNOVATION & DESIGN 8

45 DAYS

Students will continue to build upon the robotic skill sets learned in previous years to complete and create more advanced programming challenges. Skill building on problem solving, computational thinking, mathematics, and the importance of communication and collaboration. Students will use innovation to brainstorm and problem solve with hands on projects. Virtual and physical robots encompass the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math skills will be coupled with creativity to round out the STEAM approach to learning.



MUSIC

CHORUS 6 **2 days per 6-day rotation for the Year**

This class provides students who are interested in singing with the opportunity to perform a variety of music in a large group choral setting. Emphasis is placed on learning proper vocal technique, breathing and posture, vocal health care and sight singing.

Requirements: Participation in two formal evening chorus concerts is mandatory.

BAND 6 **2 days per 6-day rotation for the year + 1 lesson per rotation**

Each member of the band class has the opportunity to develop a musical background through the academic study and performance of instrumental music. Additional opportunities exist for learning and performance through Jazz Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, Small Ensembles, honors bands, PMEA festivals and other enrichment options.

Pre-Requisite: Must have band instrument experience. Other students wishing to start playing a band instrument in middle school in any grade are welcome. Students should contact an instrumental teacher to schedule an instrument tryout. Students who then choose to play a band instrument will have individual lessons until they are ready to be scheduled into small group lessons and full band classes.

Requirements: Participation in two formal evening band concerts is mandatory.

Students enrolled in Band may miss some Exploratory Arts classes for their band lesson.

WORLD MUSIC 6 **30 DAYS**

Students will learn about music from other cultures by actively engaging in world drumming, singing, and dancing. This course will focus on the music of West Africa and the islands of the Caribbean, exploring their instruments, customs, and traditions. Students will perform in ensembles and small groups performing on various drums, rattles, bells, and other small percussion instruments.



CHORUS 7

3 days OR 6 days for the Year

This class continues the learning begun in 6th grade with further emphasis on vocal techniques, vocalization and introduction of basic choral music reading in treble and bass clef. Students learn a variety of music in two and three parts.

Requirements: Participation in two formal evening chorus concerts is mandatory.

BAND 7

3 days for the Year

Each member of the band class has the opportunity to develop a musical background through the academic study and performance of instrumental music. Additional opportunities exist for learning and performance through Jazz Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, Small Ensembles, honors bands, PMEA festivals and other enrichment options.

Pre-Requisite: Must have band instrument experience. Other students wishing to start playing a band instrument in middle school in any grade are welcome. Students should contact an instrumental teacher to schedule an instrument tryout. Students who then choose to play a band instrument have individual lessons until they are ready to be scheduled into small group lessons and full band classes.

Requirements: Participation in two formal evening band concerts is mandatory.

INTRODUCTION TO PIANO 7

45 DAYS

Introduction to Piano 7 and Introduction to Piano 8 will teach essential concepts and skills needed to play piano successfully at any level. Students will work at their own pace in a sequenced online method, Piano Marvel on school iPads which integrate with digital pianos in class. There will be opportunities for students to perform in class recitals to demonstrate skills and songs learned.

GARAGE BAND 7

45 DAYS

Garage Band is open to any student interested in creating music with an iPad/computer. Students will learn the basics of live loops, creating and editing tracks, recording, and arranging on the GarageBand app on school iPads. The class is project based and students will collaborate and share their creations with each other. Music reading is not necessary but helpful.



CHORUS 8

3 days OR 6 days for the Year

This class continues the learning from 7th grade with emphasis on vocal techniques, extended vocalization and continuation of the choral music reading and sight singing. Students perform a variety of music in three and four voice parts.

Requirements: Participation in two formal evening chorus concerts is mandatory.

BAND 8

3 days for the Year

Each member of the band class has the opportunity to develop a musical background through the academic study and performance of instrumental music. Additional opportunities exist for learning and performance through Jazz Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, Small Ensembles, honors band, PMEA festivals and other enrichment options.

Pre-Requisite: Must have band instrument experience. Other students wishing to start playing a band instrument in middle school in any grade are welcome. Students should contact an instrumental teacher to schedule an instrument tryout. Students who then choose to play a band instrument have individual lessons until they are ready to be scheduled into small group lessons and full band classes.

Requirements: Participation in two formal evening band concerts is mandatory.

INTRODUCTION TO PIANO 8

45 DAYS

Introduction to Piano 8 will teach essential concepts and skills needed to play piano successfully at an entry level, including music reading, music theory, and piano-specific technique. No prior experience is required, just an interest in learning. Students will have the opportunity to practice a variety of exercises and songs in a music room equipped with piano keyboards.

GARAGE BAND 8

45 DAYS

Garage Band is open to students interested in creating their own music on an iPad/computer. Students will learn to use loops, drum tracks and how to create and record music in a variety of styles. The ability to read music is not required, but helpful.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 6 2 days per 6-day rotation for the Year

This course teaches a basic understanding of the importance of physical fitness, lifetime activities and sport. An emphasis is placed on student effort in fitness and game days.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 7 45 DAYS

This course teaches a basic understanding of the importance of physical fitness, lifetime activities and sport. An emphasis is placed on student effort in fitness and game days.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 8 45 DAYS

This course teaches a basic understanding of the importance of physical fitness, lifetime activities and sport. An emphasis is placed on student effort in fitness and game days.

INTRODUCTION TO FITNESS AND WEIGHT TRAINING 8 45 DAYS

This is an introductory course designed to help each student improve muscular strength, gain knowledge and understanding of weight training theory and practice and develop a personalized weight training program. Students enrolled in this course will understand basic anatomy and application of exercise physiology, gain fundamental knowledge of physiological principles: strength training benefits, strength training effects, strength training principles and develop an individualized program based upon student's goals: Emphasizing either muscle strength, muscle endurance, muscle size, muscle flexibility or a combination of the above.



PRE-ENGINEERING FABRICATION AND MANUFACTURING

PRE-ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING 6

30 DAYS

Pre-Engineering and Manufacturing is an exploratory course. Sixth grade Pre-Engineering and Manufacturing students will examine various inputs required for manufacturing and participate in various aspects of the production process in a traditional fabrication lab. Sixth grade students will also be instructed and tested on the safe and proper use of various technology to fabricate a project.

PRE-ENGINEERING AND TRANSPORTATION TECH 7

45 DAYS

Seventh grade Pre-Engineering and Transportation Tech. is an exploratory course. Seventh grade Pre-Engineering and Transportation Tech students will develop a basic understanding of Pre-Engineering and transportation technology, while successfully fabricating, using, and assessing a transportation system. Students will also develop problem solving skills while collaborating to solve a design problem and use rapid prototyping technology to develop a solution.

DIGITAL LAYOUT AND DESIGN, FABRICATION, AND MANUFACTURING 8

45 DAYS

Eighth grade Digital Layout & Design, Manufacturing, and Fabrication is an exploratory course. Eighth grade Digital Layout & Design, Manufacturing, and Fabrication students will examine various inputs required for manufacturing and participate in various aspects of the production process in a traditional and digital fabrication lab. Eighth grade students will also be introduced to digital layout and design. Students will use Adobe programs to digitally design a part that will be laser engraved. Proper and safe use of technology to fabricate a project will be emphasized.



U.S. MARINE JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS

JROTC – Grade 8 only

45 DAYS

WA's JROTC program prides itself on creating an atmosphere of student success by developing leadership, character, self-discipline, and patriotic citizenship while encouraging cadets to be physically, mentally, and morally fit. Furthermore, JROTC emphasizes many positive concepts such as substance abuse prevention, first aid, and organizational skills, to name a few. Eighth-grade students in JROTC will not be required to wear the uniform, but they would learn about the uniform, saluting and related protocol. As well, students would be introduced to the U.S. Marine Corps JROTC Official Course of Study on days Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Physical training would be taught on days Wednesday and Friday where there would be a gradual progression related to expectations.

The eighth-grade students engaging in JROTC as part of their related arts/elective courses during quarters one, two, three, or four will be escorted to the high school by instructors Chief Warrant Officer-5 DuBois or Master Sergeant Short, the West Allegheny JROTC personnel, promptly at the end of eighth period. While at the high school, the eighth-grade students would participate in JROTC alongside the high school students for ninth period. The eighth-grade students would be dismissed directly from the high school.



WORLD LANGUAGE & CULTURES

EXPLORATORY SPANISH 7

45 DAYS

This exploratory Spanish class will focus on culture and beginning level Spanish expressions through listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. Concepts such as the alphabet, calendar, cognates, introductions and greetings, numbers, colors, foods, sports, hobbies, animals, and a basic understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures will be taught.

EXPLORATORY SPANISH 8

45 DAYS

This exploratory course in Spanish focuses on beginning level Spanish expressions and understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures. Concepts such as the alphabet, calendar, cognates, classroom objects, commands, numbers, colors, foods, greetings, animals, and freetime activities will be taught. Spanish culture will be explored through food, games, music, and holiday celebrations. Participation in the exploratory language program provides students with the opportunity to make informed choices regarding which language they will learn in high school.

EXPLORATORY GERMAN 8

45 DAYS

This exploratory course in German introduces students to words and phrases increasing their awareness of German culture, customs and thought patterns. Technology, games, music and group activities move the class through the exploratory curriculum with a flair for fun. The content includes: greetings and courtesy expressions, classroom objects and expressions, numbers, free-time activities and geography. Participation in the exploratory language program provides students with the opportunity to make informed choices regarding which language they will learn in high school.

***SPANISH I - 8**

YEAR

This is the first course of the high school Spanish curriculum. In this course, students are actively involved in learning to express themselves in meaningful conversations about their likes and dislikes, school life, leisure activities, families, physical and personality traits, and their homes. Students develop insight into the diversity of the Spanish language and culture. The primary focus of this course is on listening and speaking skills, but students are introduced to reading and writing activities to obtain information, express feelings and exchange opinions about various



topics. Students participate in a variety of creative activities including role-plays, puppets, rhyming, singing, games, class presentations and projects. Students have access to online textbooks as well as interactive online Spanish practice activities. This course is recommended for students who may choose to take 5 years of Spanish (For example, a student would take Spanish II in 9th grade and AP Spanish in 12th grade). Students may receive a weighted grade on the 4.5 scale for this course.

***GERMAN I - 8**

YEAR

This is the first course of the high school German curriculum. Students learn basic German language, grammar and culture. Students will participate in a variety of both traditional and non-traditional learning activities including partner-work and role-playing. This course is recommended for students who may choose to take 5 years of German (For example, a student would take German II in 9th grade and AP German in 12th grade). Students may receive a weighted grade on the 4.5 scale for this course.

*Pre-requisites for Spanish and German include: A final grade of 83% or higher in 7th grade ELA, a final overall QPA or 3.0 or higher in 7th grade, High Proficient/Advanced (1085) on 7th grade ELA PSSA, 90% or higher ELA Study Island Benchmark Exam score. Students are not permitted to waive into World Language if these requirements are not met.

Students in Level 1 Spanish or German will have one period of ELA, rather than two periods of ELA. World Language instruction will take place of one half of their English Language Arts block.

Please note – while these are high school level courses, students will not receive high school credit toward graduation upon successful completion of the course.

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE 8

45 DAYS

Students will be introduced to the basic skills in production and comprehension of American Sign Language (ASL). This includes fingerspelling (the alphabet), numbers, common vocabulary, and conversational phrases. In addition, students will learn about deaf culture. This encompasses communication, social protocol, & recreational activities. By the end of the course, students will be able to communicate and interpret basic signs, as well as gain insight into deaf culture.

West Allegheny School District Grading Guidelines



Developing meaningful, fair grading practices is a universal goal for teachers and administrators. The establishment of guidelines serves as a foundation for enhancing sound decision making regarding grading procedures among teachers. Guided by professional literature and student/ parent/ teacher/ administrative collaboration, this policy, along with supporting guidelines, is intended to identify the guiding principles of the West Allegheny School District grading and reporting system in order to promote district-wide, consistent implementation.

Philosophy:

The West Allegheny School District defines student grading as summaries of school achievement assigned for a particular subject matter throughout grading periods. The District believes that the primary goal of grading and reporting is communication. Effective grading and reporting systems promote interaction and involvement among all stakeholders (i.e., students, parents, teachers, and administrators) in the educational process. Grading is an integral part of the instructional process when it considers multiple sources of student data. It can provide vital information that can be used to enhance teaching and learning and to evaluate the effectiveness of the District's instructional programs. Grading promotes the attainment of defined, content-specific learning goals and identifies where additional work is needed when it is directly aligned to the District curricula.

The District recognizes the multiple purposes and functions of student grades. Grades serve a variety of **administrative purposes** when determining suitability for promotion to the next level, credits for graduation, class rank, and student entrance into college. Grades also provide valuable **feedback to students and parents** about relative levels of achievement and expectations for future learning and college and career choices. They are additionally essential in the **instructional planning process** so that teachers can identify student strengths and weaknesses in order to meet specific instructional needs.

Reporting systems are utilized for **guidance purposes** in helping counselors to provide student direction regarding individual course and career recommendations. They are also useful in providing **student motivation** to continue their successful efforts in attaining good grades or to try harder to pursue success in school. Finally, grades serve as **employment criteria** in that prospective employers may want to use grades as a basis for selecting a new employee who has proven to be achievement oriented.

Grading is a complicated activity that requires considerable planning and skill. Continual reflection on the guiding premises of grading is essential when designing and implementing sound reporting systems that enhance student growth and achievement. The West Allegheny School District is committed to maintaining the integrity of its grading system by adhering to the fundamental principles that it has established.

When viewing your child's progress through Skyward, the quarterly grades will be weighted in math, science, social studies and English in the same manner. Advanced courses, including Algebra I, Geometry, Spanish, and German, are weighted. A student earning an A in these courses will receive 4.5 quality points, B's earn 3.5 quality points, C's earn 2.5 quality points, and D's earn 1 quality point. These calculations will be done automatically for you through the Skyward program.

Grading Scale and Procedures



Percentages	Grade	Regular Courses	Weighted Courses*
90 – 100	A	4.0	4.5
80 – 89	B	3.0	3.5
70 – 79	C	2.0	2.5
60 – 69	D	1.0	1.0
0 - 59	F	0	0

*The weighted courses include Algebra, Geometry, Spanish I and German I.

Lowest Percentage for F Grades:

If a student earns less than 50% on any graded assignment that he or she attempted to complete, the grade entered into the grade book should be rounded up to 50%. The rationale for this practice is guided by the fact that other letter grades — A, B, C and D — are broken down in increments of 10 from 60 to 100, but there is a 59-point spread between 59% and 0, a gap that can often make it mathematically impossible for some failing students to ever catch up. The adjustment to 50% is intended to encourage student performance, increase motivation and to give students the opportunity to experience success.

Determination of Final Grades:

The four (4) nine-week grades shall be averaged into the student's final grade. Each quarter is weighted equally. Constancy in grading procedures is key to success with all students' success across all grade levels (6th – 12th grade). It also promotes CONSISTENCY for teachers, students and parents at each grade level. The final grade for a student will be determined using one of two methods, quality points or percentages. Examples are provided below.

When using quality points to determine a final grade, the following scale will be used:

A = 3.51 – 4.0

B = 2.51 – 3.49

C = 1.51 – 2.49

D = .51 – 1.49

F = 0 - .49

*(When quality points are averaged to 0.5, 1.5, 2.5 or 3.5, total points will be used as a tiebreaker.)

EXAMPLES of QUALITY POINTS



The FINAL grade for a student will be an average based on a letter grade point system. Grades – not percentages – are what determine a final grade for a student.

Example 1:			Example 2:			Example 3:		
1 ST Q	A	4	1 ST Q	B	3	1 ST Q	A	4
2 ND Q	C	2	2 ND Q	B	3	2 ND Q	B	3
3 RD Q	B	3	3 RD Q	C	2	3 RD Q	A	4
4 TH Q	A	4	4 TH Q	B	3	4 TH Q	B	3
FINAL		13/4= 3.25 B	FINAL		11/4= 2.75 B	FINAL		14/4= 3.5 **

** (This example is between a B and C. Teachers must use total points for the year to decide the grade. This method should be used if calculations are at .50, 1.50, 2.50 and 3.50.)

EXAMPLES of PERCENTAGES

When determining the average, teachers should round according to the rules of mathematics unless at 59.5%, 69.5%, 79.5% or 89.5%. Then total points are to be used as a tiebreaker.

1 ST Q	93%	A
2 ND Q	84%	B
3 RD Q	92%	A
4 TH Q	86%	B
FINAL	355/4	88.75% B

1 ST Q	83%	B
2 ND Q	76%	C
3 RD Q	77%	C
4 TH Q	82%	B
FINAL	318/4	79.5% **

** Examine total points to determine final grade

Students with three (3) F's will fail automatically unless the following condition is met: The teacher, upon reviewing the student's total year performance believes that the student in question has met the MINIMUM criteria for passing and the principal, upon reviewing each individual case, authorizes the passing grade.



West Allegheny School District Grading Policy

GRADING POLICY

GRADING SYSTEM

5510

5510 The formal issuance of grades through symbols on a regular basis is authorized by the Board in order to promote a process of continuous evaluation of student performance, to inform the student, his/her parent/guardian, and counselor of the student's progress, and to provide a basis for bringing about improvement in student performance.

5510.1 The Administration shall develop and implement a clearly stated grading system to inform students and parent/guardian of the progress being made by the student in his/her educational program.

District Grading Practices and Guidelines:

District Grading Scale:

90-100%= A

80-89%= B

70-79%= C

60-69%= D

59% and below= F

Lowest Percentage for F Grades:

If a student earns less than 50% on any graded assignment that he or she attempted to complete, the grade entered into the grade book should be rounded up to 50%. The rationale for this practice is guided by the fact that other letter grades — A, B, C and D — are broken down in increments of 10 from 60 to 100, but there is a 59-point spread between D and F, a gap that can often make it mathematically impossible for some failing students to ever catch up. The statistical tweak of saying that F is now 50 instead of zero is intended to encourage student performance, increase motivation and to give kids the opportunity to experience success.

Re-teaching/Remediation/Re-assessment:

Student grades should reflect mastery of district curriculum objectives which have been related to essential knowledge and skills. Students who receive a failing grade on daily work shall have an opportunity to receive remediation and be reassessed for mastery. Remediation is defined as teacher initiated instructional intervention. ***In order for a student to be eligible for any reassessment which could result in a possible change of the recorded grade, the following events must occur:***



1. Student completes daily assignment(s).
2. Student receives a grade of below 65%.
3. Following an unsuccessful assessment, remediation activities must begin immediately. These activities should relate to the objectives that were just assessed. These activities might include, but are not limited to, the student:
 - Attending tutorials
 - Completing additional homework assignments or those not previously completed, or
 - Other appropriate work as prescribed by the teacher.
4. At a scheduled time reasonable for the student and convenient to the teacher (determined by the teacher; usually within 5 days), the student will be reassessed for mastery of content in one of the following ways:
 - Redo assignment.
 - Take a suitable alternate test (or complete a different project).
 - Complete an alternate activity or any other suitable assessment determined by the teacher.
 - The reassessment should cover the same basic content at the same level of difficulty as the original assessment.
5. The average of the assessments will be recorded in the teacher's grade book. The original failing grade and the substituted grade should be shown in the notes of the teacher's grade book.

Modifications to Graded Assignments/Assessments:

Please be aware that there may be instances where differentiation to the curriculum is necessary as outlined in a student's IEP, 504 Plan and/or based on a student's ELL status.



WAMS ELA Weighted Gradebook Descriptors

Category & Percentage	Description
Accelerated Reader (AR): 10%	This category includes an average of each student's percentage to goal for the three AR criteria – points earned, comprehension scores for quizzes taken, and the book level for each book read.
Study Island: 15%	This category includes scores for all Study Island assignments for the quarter. Grades will be based on each student's best score on an assignment. There will be a one-point deduction for late assignments.
Assignments: 25%	This category includes both in-class work and homework assignments. Examples of work included in this category are warm-ups, exit tickets, vocabulary activities, grammar activities, reader-writer notebooks, quickwrites, text-dependent questions, participation in group and class discussions, etc.
Assessments: 50%	This category includes all assessments such as tests, quizzes, projects, speeches, essays, etc. This includes the culminating task and cold read assessment at the end of each unit of study.



PROMOTION AND RETENTION GUIDELINES

Grade level retention should be thought of as the intervention of last resort. An informed decision-making process considering the individual circumstances of each student must be established. It is important to try a wide range of interventions and services before retention is considered. Adaptations should accommodate the learning style, developmental level, and cognitive ability of each learner. It is equally important to accurately record the level of success achieved with each intervention program and strategy utilized. Making the correct retention decision is the first step toward helping at-risk students. Specific criteria for middle school retention recommendations are listed below.

CRITERIA FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL RETENTION GUIDELINES

A student will be required to attend summer school and earn a passing grade or be retained if he/she fails English Language Arts, Mathematics, or Science and Social Studies.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- It is the responsibility of the teacher to identify students struggling and implement early interventions before retention is considered. Tutoring programs before or after school, flexible grouping, and/or a well-developed action plan must be in place.
- The teacher’s position regarding retention will be communicated to the parent or guardian in a regularly scheduled conference. If a conference is not possible, communication will be by phone or certified mail.
- The District is committed to working in partnership with parents and guardians on retention recommendations and requests.
- Summer school sessions are available through the West Allegheny Virtual Academy. Parents may choose to have required course work completed at their expense in an approved, non-district sponsored program. Prior to enrolling in a non-district sponsored program for credit/course recovery, please seek approval of courses from the WAMS Guidance Office.
- Retention of students in the West Allegheny School District will be determined by the professional staff.
- Students who have already failed one year will be re-evaluated by the school principal in terms of maturation, his/her reading and math scores, his/her potential abilities and other pertinent factors that may result in a social promotion.



West Allegheny School District Homework Policy

5520 The purpose of this policy is to promote a district-wide, consistent approach in utilizing homework in the instructional process. Guided by professional literature, teacher’s input, and a teacher/administrative review committee, this policy, along with supporting guidelines, is intended to focus on the responsibilities of the teachers, students, and parents in the meaningful, appropriate use of homework at various levels and for various disciplines throughout the system.

Philosophy:

5220.1 The West Allegheny School District strongly believes that homework is an integral part of the educational program and should reflect student needs, capabilities and/or interests. Homework reinforces the school curriculum, complements program objectives, and relates to Pennsylvania Standards. It is essential since it provides opportunities for students: to prepare for, review, practice, apply, retain, integrate, enrich, and extend skills and concepts related to school learning; to reinforce independent work study skills; to effectively use school and community resources; and to develop self-discipline. There is a direct correlation between academic success and completion of assignments.

The District defines homework as assignments to be completed at home. These assignments are an extension of the classroom learning environment, serve as independent practice, and can include (but are not limited to) computation and problem solving, projects, essays, researching, writing notes, studying, reports, journal responses, lab reports, and the reading of narrative and informational text. Although homework is not graded for accuracy, points can be assigned for the completion of the assignment. The exception to the non-grading of homework occurs when long term projects are completed at home or prior teacher notice for the grading of the assignment is provided. Homework not completed as a result of an excused absence may be made up in a reasonable amount of time. Homework should never be used as a punishment for student misconduct.

Teachers, students, and parents have a responsibility for promoting the effective use of homework assignments. The teacher is responsible for assigning homework according to the District guidelines; the student is responsible for completing assignments according to the teacher’s established criteria; and the parent is responsible for providing the work area, time, and conditions necessary for the student to successfully complete the homework assignments.



Purposes of Homework:

5220.2

Homework prepares students for classroom instruction and acts as a stimulus for new learning. It enhances classroom instruction through the practice, application, and reinforcement of learning in order to extend knowledge and skills. It also assists students in understanding and reviewing classwork, improves the understanding of key curricular skills and concepts, and assesses if these skills and concepts have been mastered.

Completion of assignments helps students to develop good study skills, work habits, and research skills by promoting personal responsibility, time management, and independent thinking. It develops critical thinking skills, enables higher level of thinking, and fosters creativity. Homework also provides opportunities for parents to become an integral part of their child's daily learning and promotes communication between the school and home.

Homework Time Guidelines:

5220.3

Homework time guidelines for various grade levels include the following ranges:

- Grades K-2- should not exceed 10-20 minutes per day
- Grades 3-4- should not exceed 45 minutes per day
- Grades 5-6- should not exceed 70 minutes per day
- Grades 7-9- should not exceed 1.5 hours per day
- Grades 10-12- should not exceed 2 hours per day

Factors Related to Homework Time Guidelines:

- Test preparation counts as homework time with regard to total time assigned.
- Students have additional commitments which require their time and attention away from the school setting.
- Student time spent on homework should be focused and on task.
- A student's program of study, skill level, and/or study habits should be reviewed should a student consistently spend 50% more time than the recommended number of minutes on homework.



- Honors and Advanced Placement courses are considered college level courses and may require more homework completion time than provided in guidelines, however, every effort should be made to adhere to District time guidelines.
- Discretion should be used when routine assignments are made for completion over extended holidays and weekends, especially weekends when school functions are planned.
- The West Allegheny School District follows the *Pennsylvania Language Arts Standards* recommendation that K-12 students read 25 books per year. On occasion, students may need to contribute additional homework time to meet the state recommendation.
- For students with special educational needs, assignments should be based on student needs and the identified IEP goals and could be adjusted in order to address specific student learning styles.
- Every reasonable effort should be made to provide students with the skills necessary to complete assignments independently.
- Completing homework may increase academic understanding for some children and be detrimental to others due to external factors such as support offered in home environment.

Management of Homework Demands:

5220.4

The consistent implementation of the homework policy and related guidelines is achieved through the collaborative efforts of the involved stakeholders and addresses the following responsibilities.

- **District Responsibilities:**

- Provide for a periodic, systematic review of the District philosophy and guidelines.
- Provide relevant research and review of literature on homework issues and trends.
- Provide support for the practices and procedures adopted by the District.

- **Principal Responsibilities:**

- Annually review the homework policy and guidelines with teachers, parents, and students through meetings and professional staff, parent, and student handbooks.
- Regularly review homework practices and procedures by teachers for consistent implementation across the grade levels.

- **Teacher Responsibilities:**

- Assign homework consistent with District policy and guidelines.
- Inform students of short and long term goals of assignments.



- Notify parents when homework assignments have a negative effect on student grades.
 - Establish well-defined consequences in alignment with the classroom assertive discipline plan for not completing assignments and share plan with the building administrator, parents, and students.
 - Provide students with adequate directions including the purposes and procedures for each assignment.
 - Provide procedures for students to complete missed assignments.
 - Provide feedback related to student completion of assignments.
 - Inform and/or involve the librarian and/or technology coordinator regarding assignments that require research and collection of data.
 - Routinely collaborate with teaching teams/departments through meetings, calendars, homework hotline, and written and electronic correspondence in order to coordinate overall student homework load and test administration.
 - NOTE: No more than 2 tests/quizzes/projects should be assigned on the same day in order to control the workload of students with different teachers for different subjects.
- **Student Responsibilities:**
 - Become familiar with the District homework philosophy, guidelines, and expectations.
 - Manage time to complete assignments.
 - Complete missed assignments as required by the teacher.
 - Ask for further explanation if original directions are not completely understood or if help in the completion of the assignment is required.
 - Utilize agenda books when provided.
 - **Parent Responsibilities:**
 - Become familiar with the District homework philosophy, guidelines, and expectations.
 - Provide feedback to the school regarding problems related to homework progress, difficulty, and time spent.
 - Provide an appropriate work environment and the time necessary for completion of assignments.
 - Encourage and support children to fulfill their homework responsibilities.



Communication of Homework Policy and Guidelines:

5220.5

The West Allegheny School District Homework Policy and Guidelines are communicated to students, parents, and teachers through:

- District website
- Student, Parent, Staff Handbooks
- Classroom Assertive Discipline Plans (which cannot supersede District Homework Policy)
- Teacher and parent meetings
- Homework hotline
- Open House
- Newsletters
- Orientations

Additional Support to Assist Students in Successful Completion of Homework:

5220.6

Successful completion of homework assignments is enhanced through the offering of the homework resources listed below. Teachers are advised to encourage the use of these additional resources if offered in their respective buildings to maximize student success.

- Use of homework assignment sheets and student agendas
- Posting of homework on website
- Peer support through peer tutoring



A Tradition of Excellence . . . A Vision for Tomorrow



West Allegheny Middle School

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