West Allegheny Middle School

Program of Studies
2026-2027

Table of Contents

District Mission Statement	3
Letter to Parents/Students	4
Middle School Administration and Staff	5
Course Overview	6
Course Requirements	7
Course Eligibility Criteria	9
Assessments	10
Academic Supports	11
Career and College Readiness	15
Sample Student Schedules	17
Bell Schedules	18
Drop/Add Procedures and Waiver Process	19
Program Eligibility	20
Academic Honors	21
Non-Academic Programming	22
Course Descriptions	26
English Language Arts	27
Mathematics	29
Social Studies	32
Science	34
Art	36
Computer Science	38
Family and Consumer Science	39
Health	39
Innovation and Design	41
Music	42
Physical Education	45
Pre-Engineering Fabrication and Manufacturing	46
USMC Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps	47
World Language and Cultures	48
Grading Guidelines and Policy	51
Promotion and Retention Guidelines	56
Homework Policy	57

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! 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. 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. 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** refers to the 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.

We take great pride in forming and enriching lasting relationships that capture the best attributes of our talented student body and staff. 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	Julian Underwood	Gary Hutsler
Principal	Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal

West Allegheny Middle School Administrators, Counselors, and Support Staff

Middle School Administration

Mrs. Patricia Nolan, Principal
724-695-5225
pnolan@westasd.org

Dr. Julian Underwood, Assistant Principal
724-695-5226
junderwood@westasd.org

Mr. Gary Hutsler, Assistant Principal
724-695-5230
ghutsler@westasd.org

Middle School Counselors

Mrs. Pearl Hellmann
Counselor, Sixth Grade
724-695-5233
phellmann@westasd.org

Ms. Raelyn Horne
Counselor, Seventh Grade
724-695-5235
rhorne@westasd.org@westad.org

Mrs. Melissa Rectenwald
Counselor, Eighth Grade and Home/School Visitor
724-695-5231
mrectenwald@westasd.org

Middle School Support Staff

Mrs. Renee Taddeo
Secretary to the Principal
724-695-5227
rtaddeo@westasd.org

Mrs. Leigh Ann Dunaway
Clerk
724-695-5229
ldunaway@westasd.org

Mrs. Rona Stewart
Student Services Clerk
724-695-5228
rstewart@westasd.org

Dean of Students

Mr. Jonathan Denk
Dean of Students/Media Specialist
724-695-2169
jodenk@westad.org

COURSE OVERVIEW

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

*Students must meet Course Eligibility Criteria for courses marked with an asterisk (*). See page 9 for details.

Art
- Exploratory Art 6
- Exploratory Art 7
- Exploratory 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
- Esports 7
- Esports 8

English Language Arts
- ELA 6
- ELA 7
- ELA 8

Family and Consumer Science
- Exploratory FCS 7
- Exploratory FCS 8

Health
- Health 6
- 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 grade
- *Algebra I – 8th grade
- *Geometry – 8th grade

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

Physical Education
- Physical Education 6
- Physical Education 7
- Physical Education 8
- Fitness and Weight Training 8
- Yoga and Mindfulness 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 7

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

U.S. Marine Junior Officer Reserve Training Corps (JROTC)
- Grade 8 Only

World Language and Cultures
- Exploratory Spanish 7
- Exploratory Spanish 8
- Exploratory German 8
- *German I (Grade 8 Only)
- *Spanish I (Grade 8 Only)
- Introduction to American Sign Language 7 or 8
- Advanced American Sign Language 8

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

	Grade 6
Math	Math 6
English Language Arts (ELA)	ELA 6
Science	Earth Science 6
Social Studies	World History I Career Exploration and Awareness
Related Arts 30 Day Rotation (all 6th grade students take these courses)	• Pre-Engineering and Manufacturing • Computer Applications for CCR • Innovation and Design • Art • World Drumming • Physical Education • Health
Electives	• Band • Chorus • STAR (based on academic need)
Other Academic Programming	Edmentum Suite (Study Island, Exact Path) Accelerated Reader Reading Horizons Elevate Get More Math

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 towards 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 I*	Math 8 Algebra I* 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	**Required Electives:** • Health • Physical Education (up to 2) **Must choose 1 of the following:** • Computer Applications for CCR • Innovation and Design • Pre-Engineering and Transportation Tech 7 **Additional electives:** • Art • Advanced Art • Exploratory Family/Consumer Science • Introduction to American Sign Language • Introduction to Piano • Exploratory Spanish • Band • Chorus • Alternative Energy • Esports **Electives based on academic need:** • STAR • STAR ELA/Math • Academic Support Reading Clinic: Reading Horizons/Elevate	**Required Electives:** • Physical Education (up to 2) - Physical Education - Fitness and Weight Training - Yoga and Mindfulness **Must choose 1 of the following:** • Computer Applications for CCR • Innovation and Design • Digital Layout, Design, and Fabrication **Additional electives:** • Art • Advanced Art • Exploratory Family/Consumer Science • Introduction to Piano • Garage Band • Introduction to American Sign Language • Advanced American Sign Language • Exploratory German • Exploratory Spanish • German I** • Spanish I** • Band • Chorus • Esports • JROTC **Electives based on academic need:** • STAR • STAR ELA/Math • Academic Support Reading Clinic: Reading Horizons/Elevate
Other Academic Requirements	Edmentum Suite (Study Island, Exact Path) Accelerated Reader Get More Math	Edmentum Suite (Study Island, Exact Path) Accelerated Reader Delta Math

COURSE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

West Allegheny Middle School supports student success by offering courses designed to challenge those students who are highly motivated and excel in Math and ELA. WAMS also offers STAR ELA and STAR Math courses designed to support those students who may be experiencing difficulty with the traditional curriculum.

The information provided in the table below is intended to guide the decision-making process as students are scheduled for specific courses. The eligibility criteria listed in partnership with teacher recommendation should be considered for each student on an individual basis.

Mathematics	
Course	**Criteria**
7th Grade Algebra I Must meet 3 out 4 criteria	• Math Grade- average grade of 85% or higher in 6th grade math • Study Island Scores- Advanced • Math PSSA- High Proficient >1085 or Advanced • PVAAS Projection Probability to **Advanced** on Algebra I Keystone > 70%
8th Grade Algebra I Must meet 3 out 4 criteria	• Math Grade- average of 80% or higher in 7th grade math • Study Island Scores- Proficient or Advanced • Math PSSA- Proficient or Advanced • PVAAS Projection Probability to **Proficient** on Algebra I Keystone > 70%
8th Grade Geometry Must meet 3 out 3 criteria	• Previous Math Course- Algebra I in 7th grade • Math Grade- average grade of 80% or higher in Algebra I • Algebra I Keystone- Proficient or Advanced
STAR Math	• Math Grade – average of 65% or lower • Math PSSA – Basic or Below Basic • Math Study Island Scores – Basic or Below Basic
English Language Arts	
Course	**Criteria**
8th Grade World Language/ELA Split Must meet 4 out 5 criteria	• GPA- 3.0 or higher • ELA Grade- average of 90% or higher • Study Island Scores- Advanced • ELA PSSA- High Proficient (>1085) or Advanced • PVAAS Projection Probability to **Advanced** on 8th Grade PSSA >70%
STAR ELA	• ELA Grade – average of 65% or lower • ELA PSSA – Basic or Below Basic • ELA Study Island Scores – Basic or Below Basic

ASSESSMENTS

Part of Career and College 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 need remediation.

PSSA – 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 8th 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	Up to 3 assessments per year	Required
Study Island Benchmarks are administered in ELA, mathematics, and science 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	4 assessments per year	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.		
Firefly Assessment	Up to 3 assessments per year	Required
Firefly is a fully online, computer-adaptive benchmark assessment designed to provide information to teachers on student learning and progress towards grade level expectations and standards throughout the school year. It will tell us where students need more support or where they are on target to meeting grade level expectations. These types of benchmark assessments, when given throughout the year, provide teachers with the important information to help adjust instruction to meet daily and long-term grade level goals. Through Firefly, students are exposed to the mechanics of online tools and assessments as well as preparing them for success in a world and workforce growing rapidly more online.		

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 a student completes 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.

Success Maker: Success Maker is a tier 2 intervention that addresses the mathematics needs of individual students. This is an adaptive learning intervention that is used to differentiate and personalize mathematics instruction. Students complete an initial placement program that identifies students' strengths and weakness. The program then assigns the students tutorials and practice problems that are intended to strengthen areas of weakness while continually assessing student progress and adapting to that progress.

ELEVATE: 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 accurately and fluently decode, 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), French 1 (Grade 8 -- WAVA), 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. World Language in 8th grade will take the place of one half of their English Language Arts block. Students in 7th grade Algebra will continue in the advanced math sequence (Geometry) unless concerns are raised by the parent and/or teacher. Eligibility requirements for these courses are listed on page 9 of this Program of Studies.

Students are recommended for Algebra I and ELA/World Language based on multiple criteria including class performance, Study Island Benchmarks, PVAAS Projections, and PSSA results. If a parent disagrees with the recommended course placement, they may request a review of the data to reconsider placement in Algebra I or ELA/World Language. While this waiver request does not guarantee placement in the advanced course, administration will carefully review each case individually. Should a change in course placement occur, the student's progress will be reviewed midway through the first quarter to ensure the course is appropriate. If the student is not making sufficient progress, adjustments to their placement shall be made in collaboration with the teacher and administration.

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.

Get More Math (GMM): Get More Math is an interactive online platform designed to enhance math skills for students. Through adaptive learning, GMM tailors exercises to individual student needs, offering targeted practice in various math concepts. The program identifies areas requiring improvement and creates custom assignments to reinforce these areas of growth. Students receive immediate feedback and support, enabling them to progress at their own pace while mastering essential mathematical skills.

Delta Math: Delta Math is an interactive online platform designed to strengthen students' math skills through engaging and customizable practice. It provides a wide range of topics, including arithmetic, fractions, decimals, pre-algebra, and geometry, aligned with middle school math standards. Students receive instant feedback and step-by-step explanations to help them understand and correct mistakes. Teachers use Delta Math to assign personalized problem sets, monitor progress, and support mastery of key concepts. This tool enhances learning by promoting problem-solving, critical thinking, and independent study habits in a user-friendly, adaptive environment.

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	**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	**ELEVATE** - up to 160+ additional minutes (4 periods) per 6-day cycle with a certified teacher. **STAR ELA/Math** – up to 160+ additional minutes (4 periods) per 6-day cycle w/ teacher or special education teacher as schedule allows
7th – 8th Grade Literacy/Math	80+ Minute Literacy Block 80+ Minute Math Block	**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	**ELEVATE** - up to 160+ additional minutes (4 periods) per 6-day cycle with a certified teacher. **STAR ELA/Math** – up to 160+ additional minutes (4 periods) per 6-day cycle w/ teacher or special education teacher as schedule allows
8th Grade Advanced ELA/ Math	40+ Minute Literacy Period 80+ Minute Math Block	**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	

CAREER AND COLLEGE READINESS

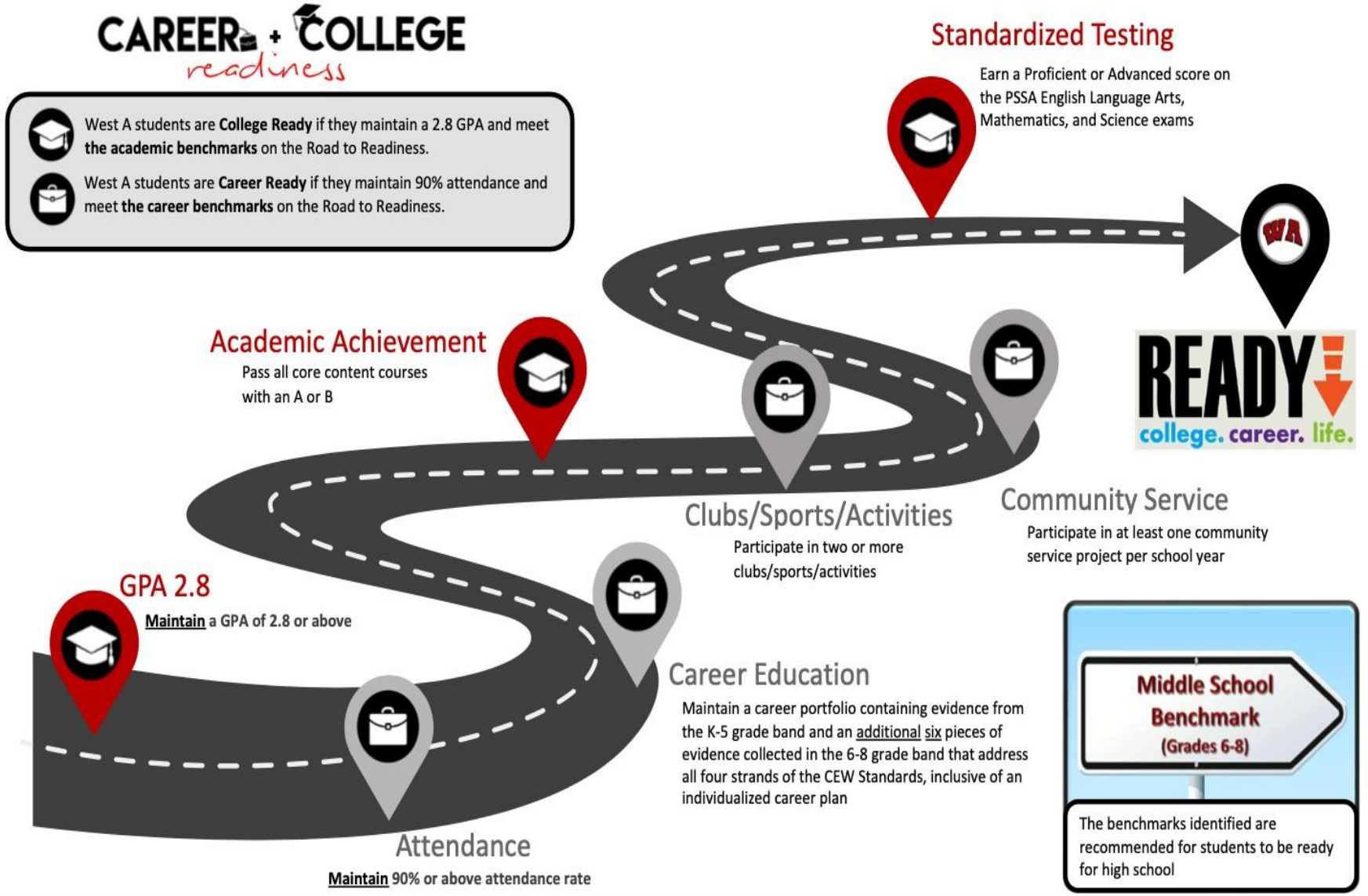
As a measure of Future Ready PA reporting, Pennsylvania schools are accountable for ensuring every student meets Career Education and Work (CEW) Academic Standards as established in PA Code Chapter 4. In alignment with our goal of ensuring career and college readiness for every student, West Allegheny continues to provide our students with experiences in Career Awareness and Exploration (13.1), Employability Skills (13.2), Growth and Advancement (13.3), and Personal Interests and Career Planning (13.4). Throughout a student's years at West Allegheny, they 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 Education and Work Standards Portfolio for each student.

By the end of 8th grade, students must:

- Have a minimum of six (6) pieces of evidence
- 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 with all artifacts recorded in SchooLinks. A summary chart of the activities that students complete by grade level that are maintained in a student's electronic CEW Portfolio is below.

6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
• Find Your Path and Would You Rather Survey (13.4) • Secret Millionaires Club (13.1) • Top 3 Careers (13.1 & 13.4)	• Self Discovery Learning Unit (13.1, 13.3, & 13.4) • Learning Style Assessment (13.1, 13.2, & 13.3) • Top Skills Learning Unit (13.1, 13.3, & 13.4) • Self-Management Learning Unit (13.1, 13.2, & 13.3) • Parkway West CTC field trip (13.1)	• Labor Law Persuasive Text (13.1) • 8th Grade Career Project (13.2) • Letter of Interest (13.3) • Favorite Majors or Training Programs (13.4) • Course Plan (13.1)


CAREER + COLLEGE readiness
West A students are College Ready if they maintain a 2.8 GPA and meet the academic benchmarks on the Road to Readiness.
West A students are Career Ready if they maintain 90% attendance and meet the career benchmarks on the Road to Readiness.
Standardized Testing
Earn a Proficient or Advanced score on the PSSA English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science exams
READY
college. career. life.
Academic Achievement
Pass all core content courses with an A or B
Clubs/Sports/Activities
Participate in two or more clubs/sports/activities
Community Service
Participate in at least one community service project per school year
GPA 2.8
Maintain a GPA of 2.8 or above
Career Education
Maintain a career portfolio containing evidence from the K-5 grade band and an additional six pieces of evidence collected in the 6-8 grade band that address all four strands of the CEW Standards, inclusive of an individualized career plan
Middle School Benchmark (Grades 6-8)
The benchmarks identified are recommended for students to be ready for high school
Attendance
Maintain 90% or above attendance rate

SAMPLE STUDENT SCHEDULES

Grade 6

Period	Class
1	Academics
2	ELA Block, Math Block, Sci or SS
3	Related Arts/Band/Chorus
4	Related Arts /Band/Chorus
5	Academics
6	ELA Block, Math Block, Sci or SS
7	Lunch
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	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	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	Lunch
6	Academics
7	ELA or Math Block, 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 – 8:22	47	Attendance and Announcements
Period 2	8:25 – 9:08	43	
Period 3	9:11 – 9:54	43	
Period 4	9:57 – 10:40	43	
Period 5	10:43 – 11:26	43	Lunch Grade 8
Period 6	11:29 – 12:12	43	Lunch Grade 7
Period 7	12:15 – 12:58	43	Lunch Grade 6
Period 8	1:01 – 1:44	43	
Period 9	1:47– 2:35	48	PM Announcements
Post-preparation Time	2:35 – 3:15	40	Faculty Only

Advisory/Activity Bell

Pre-preparation Time	7:25 – 7:35	10 minutes	Faculty Only
Early Bell	7:33		
Homeroom	7:35 – 7:40	5	Attendance
Advisory/Activity	7:43 – 8:08	25	
Period 1	8:11– 8:51	40	Announcements
Period 2	8:54 – 9:34	40	
Period 3	9:37 – 10:17	40	
Period 4	10:20 – 11:00	40	
Period 5	11:03 – 11:43	40	Lunch Grade 8
Period 6	11:46 – 12:26	40	Lunch Grade 7
Period 7	12:29 – 1:09	40	Lunch Grade 6
Period 8	1: 12 – 1:52	40	
Period 9	1:55 – 2:35	40	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 – 10:06	31	Attendance and Announcements
Period 2	10:09 – 10:40	31	
Period 4	10:43 – 11:14	31	
Period 5	11:17 – 11:48	31	Lunch Grade 8
Period 6	11:51 – 12:21	30	Lunch Grade 7
Period 7	12:24 – 12:54	30	Lunch Grade 6
Period 3	12:57 – 1:27	30	
Period 8	1:30 – 2:01	31	
Period 9	2:04 – 2:35	31	
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 – 8:00	25	Attendance and Announcements
Period 2	8:02 – 8:22	20	
Period 3	8:24 – 8:44	20	
Period 4	8:46 – 9:06	20	
Period 8	9:08 – 9:28	20	
Period 9	9:30 – 9:49	20	
Period 5	9:51 – 10:21	30	Lunch Grade 8
Period 6	10:23 – 10:53	30	Lunch Grade 7
Period 7	10:55 – 11:25	30	Lunch Grade 6
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, waivered 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 waiver request 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 ADVANCED MATH AND ELA/WORLD LANGUAGE PLACEMENT:

Students are recommended for Algebra I and ELA/World Language based on multiple criteria including class performance, Study Island Benchmarks, PVAAS Projections, and PSSA results. If a parent disagrees with the recommended course placement, they may request a review of the data to reconsider placement in Algebra I or ELA/World Language. While this waiver request does not guarantee placement in the advanced course, administration will carefully review each case individually. Should a change in course placement occur, the student's progress will be reviewed midway through the first quarter to ensure the course is appropriate. If the student is not making sufficient progress, adjustments to their placement shall be made in collaboration with the teacher and administration.

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 guidelines:

- 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 or higher 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.

Quarterly Awards

As a way to recognize our students who perform academically at a high level, West Allegheny Middle School presents quarterly "Honors" awards based on the criteria below. Additionally, students meeting high academic and attendance expectations will receive awards at the end of each quarter.

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

NON-ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

ACADEMIC COMPETITIONS

Students are encouraged to participate in the various academic competitions offered throughout the school year. Academic competitions compliment the curriculum and provide the students with an opportunity to acquire higher levels of knowledge. These competitions also help the students develop lifelong skills such as teamwork, collaboration, and critical thinking. WAMS offers the following academic competitions: Geography Bee, Spelling Bee, History Bee, Science Bee, and National Academic League.

ADVISORY/ACTIVITY PERIOD

WAMS Advisory Program ensures that all of our students have at least one adult advocate and promotes positive meaningful relationships and a sense of connectedness. Administrators, teachers and counselors meet with their advisor group bi-weekly. 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.

An activity period will run bi-weekly opposite of Advisory. This activity period will provide our students with an opportunity during the school day to explore different club like activities that they may be interested in. Activities are created based off student interest and may change from year to year. Activities may include: chess club, book club, art club, dance, and Military Connected Club.

ANTI-BULLYING/ WAMS PRIDE PROGRAM - PBIS

The WAMS 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 WAMS Pride tickets that are placed on display on our WAMS Pride board. When the board is full, students have an opportunity to win prizes. Our WAMS Pride Program currently focuses on promoting positive behavior in the hallways, cafeteria, classroom, and at assemblies and on the bus. The WAMS Pride committee is also responsible for hosting pep assemblies to recognize students participating in extracurricular activities and athletics. Our WAMS Pride Program theme is “Pride in myself, Pride in my school”.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Student Council is a group of student leaders in grades 6-8 who meet monthly with an adult advisor to collaborate and discuss school concerns and brainstorm possible solutions. These student leaders act as a voice for their classmates often serving as a liaison between the student body and school leaders. The goal of the Student Council is to create a positive school environment in which all students feel welcomed and valued.

UNIFIED ROBOTICS

Unified Robotics is an inclusive and innovative program designed to introduce robotics and STEM education to students with diverse abilities, including those with intellectual or developmental disabilities. This program emphasizes teamwork, creativity, and problem solving, fostering an environment where all students can contribute and learn.

WAMS PRIDE TEAM (STUDENT PBIS)

The WAMS Pride Student Team is a student leadership group that promotes our school-wide positive behavior program, as well as school spirit. Students on this team are nominated by teachers based on criteria such as good attendance, strong effort in the classroom, and exemplary behavior, particularly in our school's three main expectations of safety, responsibility, and respect. Students on this team act as ambassadors and leaders who participate in carrying out our WAMS Pride program, including prize assembly, reward board maintenance, spirit days, and other special projects throughout the year.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Athletics (Grades 7-8)		
Fall	**Winter**	**Spring**
Basketball (Girls)	Basketball (Boys)	Baseball (8th grade)
Cheerleading	Cheerleading	Softball
Cross Country (Boys & Girls)	Wrestling	Swimming
Football		Track and Field
Soccer (Boys & Girls)		Volleyball (Girls)
Club Sports		
Esports - Rocket League	Ice Hockey	
Clubs and Activities		
Art Club	Chess Club	iLEAD
Jazz Band	Percussion Ensemble	Show Choir

ART CLUB

Students in grades 6-8 are welcome to try out for Art Club as space is limited. Meetings are typically held once a week and provide students with the opportunity to complete a variety of projects while exploring new techniques and reinforcing skills learned in art class. Students also have the opportunity to work alongside high school students in creating decorations and providing assistance with set up for the secondary level art show.

CHESS CLUB

Chess Club is a team of students in grades 6 through 8 that enjoy playing a friendly game of chess against new opponents, while building upon on their skills. Chess Club meets after school on a weekly basis until 3:45. Students must be proficient at playing chess to join, as no instruction will be provided. Students must have transportation home.

ESPORTS

In addition to the e-Sports elective class, students will have the opportunity to participate in the competitive e-Sports club. Students will have the opportunity to play and compete against other middle school students locally and statewide in tournaments using some of the most popular video games.

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.

MUSIC ENSEMBLES

Jazz Band, Percussion Ensemble, Brass Ensemble, Flute/Clarinet Ensemble, and Show Choir are offered to 7th and 8th graders after a selection process.

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 via the Anthology and supplemental novels. 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 fundamentals of reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language. To acquire this knowledge, students participate in both small and whole group discussions.

Primary Text: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Literature Anthology

Pre-Requisite: Passing grade in ELA 5

*Please refer to Page 53 for the ELA Weighted Gradebook Descriptors

ELA - 7 YEAR

In ELA 7, students study a variety of genres including historical fiction, science fiction, folklore, and poetry. 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 and guided reading. Students also analyze nontraditional texts, such as informational readings, 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. Study Island is utilized to help students master content specific Common Core Standards. 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 fundamentals of reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language.

Primary Text: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Literature Anthology

Pre-Requisite: Passing grade in ELA 6

*Please refer to Page 53 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 literature, informational text, argumentative text, and poetry via the Anthology and supplemental novels to demonstrate application of comprehension and analysis strategies they have learned in previous courses. These works require students to continue to hone their close reading skills while they push students toward deeper understanding 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 analysis essays (TDA's). 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 and verb moods. 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 Into Literature Anthology

Pre-Requisite: Passing grade in ELA 7

*Please refer to Page 53 for the ELA Weighted Gradebook Descriptors

MATHEMATICS

Math - 6 YEAR

Math 6 is comprised of 4 areas of focus: Numbers and Operations, Algebraic Concepts, Geometry, and Measurement, Data and Probability. Math 6 further develops the understanding of fractions, decimals and whole numbers and introduces the concept of negative numbers. Proportional reasoning in the form of ratios, percent, and proportions is a major focus of the number sense strand. Students extend their ability to think algebraically through problem solving. Students will show competency in reading, writing, and simplifying expressions and solving equations. This algebraic thinking is applied when students solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume. Geometry concepts require mastery of the Numbers and Operations standards as well as algebraic thinking. Lastly, students explore data and statistics concepts through problem solving and data collection. In addition to academic standards, students strengthen Standards for Mathematics Practice. A focus on the eight mathematical practices develops and strengthens the behaviors strong mathematics students poses and encourages mathematical reasoning.

Math 6 facilitates the learning of the PA core standards through real world problems, problem solving, collaboration, and communication of solution paths. Students use manipulatives, draw representations, complete inquiry-based tasks, and write expressions and equations to communicate their understanding of core mathematics concepts.

Primary Text – enVision Mathematics Pennsylvania 2021 Grade 6

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 enVision Mathematics 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 – enVision Mathematics Pennsylvania 2021 Grade 7

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

Math - 8 YEAR

Math 8 uses a problem-centered curriculum, enVision Mathematics, 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 – enVision Mathematics Pennsylvania 2021 Grade 8

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 those students who are highly motivated and excel in math 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 receive a weighted grade on the 4.5 scale for this course.

Primary Text – Reveal Algebra 1

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

Refer to Page 9 for Advanced Coursework Eligibility Criteria.

*Algebra I - 8 YEAR

This High School level course is designed for those students who are highly motivated and excel in math 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 receive a weighted grade on the 4.5 scale for this course.

Primary Text – Reveal Algebra 1

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

Refer to Page 9 for Advanced Coursework Eligibility Criteria.

*Geometry - 8 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 receive a weighted grade on the 4.5 scale for this course.

Primary Text – Reveal Geometry

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

Refer to Page 9 for Advanced Coursework Eligibility Criteria.

SOCIAL STUDIES

World History I - 6 YEAR

Students are introduced to the beginnings of the human story, including the creation and location of some of the world's first civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Near East, India, China, Greece, and Rome (circa 500 C.E.). As students explore and draw comparisons between early civilizations, they will discover the secrets of these ancient cultures that continue to influence the modern world. In doing so, students 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 skills as they begin their middle school exploration of career opportunities through the World of Work/ RIASEC program as well as the SchooLinks platform . In addition to their career inquiry, students will complete an online interest inventory to match their personality traits and interests with potential careers.

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 SchooLinks. 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.

Primary Text – TCI History Alive

US History - 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 SchooLinks and will participate in virtual college/university visits. Students will complete a culminating career project that may be presented in front of a panel of classmates and teachers.

Primary Text – National Geographic American Stories

SCIENCE

Earth Science - 6 YEAR

In 6th grade Earth Science class, students will focus on the four main branches of Earth science (meteorology, oceanography, astronomy, & geology) through instruction aligned with the Pennsylvania STEELS Standards. 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 – Experience Science by Savvas

Physical Science - 7 YEAR

In this course, students develop a foundational understanding of physical science by investigating the properties of matter, force, motion, work and energy through instruction aligned with the Pennsylvania STEELS Standards 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 – Experience Science by Savvas

Life Science - 8 YEAR

In this course, students learn about the living organisms that inhabit our world through instruction aligned with the Pennsylvania STEELS Standards. 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 – Experience Science by Savvas

Alternative Energy - 7 45 DAYS

Alternative energy looks are 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). 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 a part of the 7th grade specials rotation.

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 Photoshop 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 Career and College 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 Career and College 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 Career and College 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.

Esports – 7-8 45 DAYS

This course will introduce the students to the growing world of esports. Lessons will focus on career pathways in STEM and e-gaming, computer literacy, online safety and digital citizenship, team building skills, and how games are designed and built. Students will also have the opportunity to compete with and against other gamers.

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, and healthy behaviors for life (decision making, health problems and prevention strategies, avoiding and managing conflict).

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 6 may miss some Related Arts classes for their band lesson.

World Drumming - 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 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 - 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.

Band/Chorus are scheduled for the ENTIRE academic year. Schedule changes in the middle of the year are not permitted.

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.

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.

Yoga and Mindfulness - 8 45 DAYS

This course is designed to help students understand and experience the benefits of yoga and mindfulness techniques and practices. An emphasis will be placed on basic yoga postures for strength and stability, stress-reduction techniques, breathing techniques for improved focus and attention.

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

West Allegheny'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 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 free time 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 themselves, school life, family, leisure activities, travel, and shopping. Students develop insight into the diversity of the Spanish language and culture. Students will be prepared to obtain information and exchange opinions about various topics through engagement in a variety of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. Students participate in a variety of creative activities including role-plays, puppets, rhyming, singing, games, presentations, and projects. Students have access to 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). 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).

*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 receive a weighted grade on the 4.5 scale for this course.

* Refer to Page 9 for Advanced Coursework Eligibility Criteria

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 - 7-8 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.

Advanced American Sign Language - 8 45 DAYS

Students will continue to learn about the production and comprehension of American Sign Language (ASL). This includes common vocabulary, conversational phrases, and an independent study assignment where the students will be asked to interpret and sign a song in ASL. 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, sign and interpret a song, as well as gain insight into deaf culture.

West Allegheny School District Grading Guidelines and Procedures

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:

At the elementary and middle school levels, the grading guidelines indicate that if a student earns less than 50% on any graded assignment that they **attempted to complete with legitimate effort**, the grade entered into the grade book is rounded up to 50%. The rationale for this practice is that grades lower than 50% can skew averages making it difficult for some students to demonstrate progress in a traditional model where an 'F' grade represents the majority of the grading scale (0-59%). When students experience low percentages and no chance of grade recovery, it often leads to behavioral and attendance concerns resulting in disengagement and significant learning loss. The adjustment to recording 50% is intended to encourage continuous effort, increase motivation, and to give students the opportunity to experience academic success. Any student who refuses to complete work or opts out of assignments may receive a zero grade.

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 (6^{th} – 12^{th} grade). It also promotes CONSISTENCY for teachers, students and parents at each grade level.

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-testing:

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 re-test 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 re-test 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.

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 Middle School Homework Expectations

Purpose of Homework:

Homework is an integral part of learning and should reflect student needs, capabilities, and/or interests.

Homework provides opportunities for students to prepare for, practice, apply, integrate, enrich, and extend school learning; to reinforce work-study skills; to effectively use school/community resources; and to develop self-discipline. Teachers assess homework according to district guidelines. Students are responsible for completing assignments according to the teacher's established criteria. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing the work area, time, and conditions necessary for the student to successfully complete homework assignments.

The administration recommends that homework not be used as a grade to determine proficiency of the completed assignment, but rather as a grade to assess whether the student has completed or not completed the assignment. Additionally, the administration recommends that homework be used as an effective, positive, reinforcement technique.

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

West Allegheny Middle School

207 West Allegheny Road

Imperial, PA 15126

724-695-8979 | www.westasd.org