

# GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOLS MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE



## An Overview of Middle School

The middle school is structured to provide a smooth transition from elementary school to high school. Courses are planned to stress mastery of basic skills in the core subject areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students also have the opportunity to study a variety of fine arts, vocational, and physical education courses and explore learning in fields that will be offered to them for in-depth study as electives during their high school years.

In our middle school, students and teachers are organized into instructional teams. A team of core academic teachers share the same students and are housed in the same part of the building. This teaming arrangement provides teachers the opportunity to support and assist each other as they plan instruction, monitor the academic progress of their students, and create consistent classroom rules and expectations for their group of students. The students benefit by being members of a smaller center for learning or a “school within a school” as well as members of an advisory group.

Teachers and students have the time to get to know each other well, and teachers can better meet the unique needs of each individual student on the team. Teams of teachers have a common period of planning time during each day. Parents benefit by knowing that they can phone during that time and reach many of the teachers with whom their student is scheduled, or they may have a joint conference with the teachers to address specific concerns about the student’s progress.

Teachers, counselors, and administrators will work closely with students and parents throughout the year to ensure a successful middle school experience for all.

## GRADE 6

### Required Courses

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education (*every other day*)
- General Music (*every other day*)
- Computers and Technology (*9 weeks*)
- Life Skills (*9 weeks*)
- World Cultures (*9 weeks*)
- Art (*9 weeks*)

### Elective Courses

- Band
- Orchestra
- Chorus
- Reading (*Title 1*)

### English

English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) is a communication system that is a continuous developmental learning process which occurs over time in supportive literate environments.

### Mathematics

The mathematics curriculum will include:

- Problem solving
- Reasoning
- Investigation of mathematical connections
- Number relationships
- Number systems and theory
- Computation and estimation
- Patterns and functions
- Exploration of algebraic concepts and processes
- Probability
- Study of geometry of one, two, and three dimensions
- Measurement

## **Science**

Science offers opportunities for students to explore and expand their knowledge in earth science, physical science, and life/health. In Earth Science they will study the earth's dynamics including earthquakes and volcanoes, weathering, oceanography, environment and ecology. In Physical Science they will explore and expand their knowledge of the concepts and processes of matter, motion, forces of nature and energy. Life/Health will encompass the understanding of living and non-living things, knowledge of plants and animals and their relationships to their environments, the human body and its systems, and health issues.

## **Social Studies**

Instruction offered will provide opportunities for each student:

- To better understand past cultures.
- To understand the factors that have influenced cultural development.
- To understand economics, government, education and how they have perpetuated cultural development.
- To gain understanding of how geography helps determine the development of a region.
- To develop an understanding of how the past has direct relationships to the present and its effect on the future.
- To understand society's development based upon values and an organized system for making decisions.
- To develop an understanding that social and political changes occur in societies.
- To develop an interest and understand current events, understand the importance of educational achievement, and understand the important of cooperation among people.

## **Physical Education**

Physical education offers a variety of individual and team sport activities promoting skill progression and proficiency. Skill development and physical fitness are the main objectives of this course. The class meets every other day during the year.

## **General Music**

Music instruction will be provided every other day for 36 weeks. Students perform at times during the school year.

## **Computers and Technology**

This hands-on course will offer instruction on the many uses of computers. This allied arts course will be offered for a nine-week period.

## **Life Skills**

The nine-week course will focus on developmentally appropriate experiences in several areas of Consumer Sciences including sewing, food preparation, and health-related issues and character.

## **World Cultures**

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade world cultures offering is a 9 week course that involves basic conversation, pronunciation, crafts, cuisine, geography, songs, holidays, customs, landmarks, contributions to the world, and specialties in French, German, Latin and Spanish.

**Art**

Students will have the opportunity to work with an art teacher on materials, techniques and processes related to visual arts during a nine-week period.

**Band and Orchestra**

Any sixth grade student may elect to take band and/or orchestra. They may meet before school, as well as during the school day.

**Special Needs Program**

A continuum of services is provided to meet the unique individual needs of students who have been identified with a disability.

## GRADE 7

### **Required Courses**

- English
- Geography
- Life Science
- Mathematics
- Pre-Algebra\* (*by special placement*)
- Physical Education
- Health (*Semester*)
- Literature (*Semester*)
- Technology Education (*9 weeks*)
- Keyboarding (*9 weeks*)
- Life Skills (*9 weeks*)
- World Languages (*9 weeks*)

### **Elective Courses**

- Band
- Orchestra
- Choir
- Reading (*Title 1*)
- Art

### **English**

English is an integration of literature, language arts and composition skills, spelling, speaking experiences, and study skills.

### **Geography**

World geography encompasses a variety of skills in the geographic world. The first unit includes tools used by geographers, maps, map symbols, latitude, longitude, graphs, charts and projections. Unit two consists of the terms and physical features of planet earth (land forms, continents, oceans, etc.). The third unit analyzes the relationship of the environment and people by examining the concepts of population distribution, growth patterns, land use, urbanization, and linkages. The fourth unit encompasses a study of the United States, Canada, Middle America, South America, Africa-south of the Sahara, and the South Pacific using the concepts developed in the previous units.

### **Life Science**

Life science is a course of simplified biology, the study of living things. The units studied are foundations of life science, simple organisms, plants, animals, the human body, heredity, ecology, conservation, and change in the environment.

## **Mathematics**

Exploring Mathematics promotes active learning with an emphasis on problem solving. Concepts from both algebra and geometry are introduced and reinforced. Topics include operations with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions applied in the following general areas of study: ratio, percents, graphing, statistics, probability, perimeter, area, and volume.

## **Pre-Algebra**

The Pre-Algebra course is an enriched course designed to prepare students for advanced programs in algebra and geometry. It concentrates on the use of variables in equations and problem solving, all operations with positive and negative numbers, practical use of percents, and the coordinate graphing system. It gives students a good base for geometry, teaching terminology and properties along with perimeter, area, and volume. It also introduces statistics and probability. Upon completion of this course, students should be well prepared for an Algebra I course. Most students are selected for enrollment based on test scores, math achievement in elementary school, and teacher recommendations.

## **Physical Education**

Physical education offers a variety of individual and team sport activities promoting skill progression and proficiency. Skill development and physical fitness are the main objectives of this course. Students participate in several drill and game-type situations designed to increase the cardiovascular and muscular systems of the body. Students also participate in the President's Council on Physical Fitness Test Program which includes the mile run, pull ups, sit ups, sit and reach, and shuttle run. The class meets every other day during the year. On alternate days students are scheduled in an elective course.

## **Health**

The Skills for Adolescence program is integrated into the regular health curriculum. This is a special program designed for early adolescence to help young people learn how to deal with the complex challenges of our society by teaching specific coping skills. Communication skills, peer relations, family relationships, decision-making skills, and goal setting are some of the topics studied in this class which meets for one semester.

## **Literature**

Literature is a semester course designed to provide an overview of all genre of literature. Students read short stories, novels, plays, poems, myths and folk tales, and nonfiction works. Writing is a component in all the units.

## **Technology Education**

Seventh grade Technology Education is a nine-week course that introduces students to activities that encourage problem solving and decision making. Students are provided hands-on activities that utilize sketching, technical drawing, and computer drafting. Basic woodworking skills are taught so that students understand how products are fabricated.

### **Keyboarding**

The purpose of this nine-week course is to teach students basic keyboarding skills. The content includes instruction designed to develop alphabetic, numeric, and symbolic keyboarding skills and techniques. Students also key basic applications such as letters, memorandums, outlines, reports, and tabulations.

### **Life Skills**

Seventh grade life skills will give students initial exposure to several of the areas in Family and Consumer Sciences. During the nine-week course, the units of study include careers, child care, consumerism and money management, laundry, manners, and food and nutrition.

### **World Languages**

The 9 week world language course for 7<sup>th</sup> grade exposes students to French, German, Latin, and Spanish by using oral, listening, reading, and writing skills. The students learn conversations, telling time, verbs, adjectives, colors, clothing, and culture and it prepares them for a more in-depth study of the languages.

### **Band**

Seventh grade band is an elective course that meets from 7:55-8:40 every Tuesday and Thursday morning. Students are expected to attend a specific number of individual lessons each quarter.

### **Orchestra**

Orchestra is an elective course offered for combined seventh and eighth grade students every other day at 7:55 a.m. Through group and individual work, each student gains ensemble experience and a knowledge of string technique. Students in orchestra are exposed to a large variety of music through which they are taught good musicianship and an appreciation for music. The school orchestra performs several times during the year. Students attend an all-city rehearsal with a guest clinician, and also participate in a positively critiqued all-city solo and small ensemble festival. Individual lessons are required.

### **Vocal Music**

Chorus is an elective course that meets every other day during the school year. The chorus performs several times during the year. Many students choose to do extra work on solos and as members of an ensemble. They also may be involved in the annual spring musical. Individual lessons are required.

### **Art**

Art is an elective course that meets every other day during the year. The students explore concepts and techniques in visual arts. They create art using a variety of media, tools, and styles.

### **Special Needs Program**

A continuum of services is provided to meet the unique individual needs of students who have been identified with a disability.



## GRADE 8

### Required Courses

- English
- U.S. History to 1877
- Mathematics
- Algebra I\* (*by special placement*)
- Earth Science
- Physical Education
- Exploring Technology (*Semester*)
- Life Skills (*Semester*)
- Foreign Language (*12 weeks*)
- North Dakota Studies (*12 weeks*)
- Art (*12 weeks*)

### Elective Courses

- Band
- Orchestra
- Jazz Band
- Vocal Music
- Reading (*Title 1*)
- Computer Applications

### English

English is an integration of literature, language arts and composition skills, spelling, and speech units. There is a focus on study skills, library research, and finding and developing ideas.

### U.S. History to 1877

American history includes the study of colonial origins, the Revolutionary Era, the Constitution, the Young Republic, and the Civil War.

### Mathematics

The eighth grade math course is designed to be a transition from arithmetic to algebra and geometry. The content consists of approximately equivalent portions of an extensive review of arithmetic, the introduction and study of algebra, and the introduction and study of concepts of geometry. Topics studied during the course specifically include the following: a review of our number system, order of operations, fractions, decimals, percent ratio, proportion, simplifying expressions, evaluating expressions, and solving equations and inequalities. In addition geometry concepts include the study of basic terminology, perimeter, area, volume, coordinate graphing, transformations, and measurement in both the English and metric systems. Pattern recognition, problem-solving strategies, construction of bar, circle, and line graphs, and introductions to basic probability and statistics are additional topics introduced in this course.

### **Algebra I**

Algebra I stresses the properties of the set of real numbers, variables, simplifying polynomial expressions by addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, expanding powers and extracting roots, solving both equations and inequalities, and applying these tools to the solution of a variety of problems. Satisfactory completion of this course earns the student one Carnegie credit toward graduation. Prerequisite: Students must have completed seventh grade Pre-Algebra to be enrolled in eighth grade Algebra I.

### **Earth Science**

This curriculum consists of the following units of study: foundations of earth science, the earth's atmosphere, waters, surface, weather, earthquakes, volcanoes, measurements, interior, and the earth in space.

### **Physical Education**

This course is an extension of the seventh grade course. Students participate in two and three week units designed to increase skill development and proficiency. Components of physical fitness and a lifestyle of physical fitness are stressed. Students again participate in the President's Council on Physical Fitness Test Program. The class meets every other day during the year. On alternate days students are scheduled in an elective course.

### **Exploring Technology**

Exploring Technology is a semester course that implements modular instruction as students explore a variety of modern techniques. The emphasis is toward hands-on activities that put students in contact with new technologies. The course includes modules on lasers, video production, pneumatics, engineering, computer numerical control, computer-aided drafting, animation, desktop publishing, electronics, manufacturing, aerodynamics, and robotics. As students rotate through the modules, they learn about new careers and experience cooperative learning.

### **Life Skills**

Life skills is a semester course that includes units on personal development/child care, foods/nutrition, career planning, and sewing/clothing. Decision making skills are stressed in all units.

### **Foreign Language**

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade course for foreign language, which enhances the study of French, German, Latin and Spanish through thematic units and conversation in the target of language, is 12 weeks long and builds on the skills acquired in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade course.

### **North Dakota Studies**

North Dakota studies is a twelve week exploratory course that presents the history, geographic setting, economics, government, and major regions of our state. Emphasis is placed on basic place location and hands-on activities that enhance a student's understanding and appreciation of the state's rich background and future potential.

## **Art**

In visual art education, the students study and produce works of art based on critical, aesthetic, and historical understanding. The curriculum includes drawing, painting, design and sculpture. Art is a twelve-week exploratory course.

## **Band**

Eighth grade band is an elective course that meets from 7:55-8:40 every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. This experience advances the musical education of band members. Students generally will have been in band during previous years. Individual lessons are required.

## **Orchestra**

Orchestra is offered for combined seventh and eighth grade students every other day at 7:55 a.m. Through group and individual work, each student gains ensemble experience and a knowledge of string technique. Students in orchestra are exposed to a large variety of music through which they are taught good musicianship and an appreciation for music. The school orchestra performs several times during the year. Students attend an all-city rehearsal with a guest clinician and also participate in a positively critiqued all-city solo and small ensemble festival. Individual lessons are required.

## **Jazz Band**

Jazz band is an elective course available to eighth grade band members by audition only. The class meets every other day. Seventh grade band members are also eligible to audition for jazz band if their musical skills are proven and there are openings or specific instrumental needs.

## **Vocal Music**

Vocal Music is an elective course that meets every other day during the school year. The chorus performs several times during the year. Many students choose to do extra work on solos and as members of an ensemble. They may also be involved in the annual spring musical. Individual lessons are required.

## **Computer Applications**

The purpose of this elective course is to gain practical experience using application software and to acquaint students with career opportunities in the field of computers. The student will use various software applications to perform computer activities, identify uses of the computer, and become familiar with occupations dealing with computer hardware and software\*. Opportunities will be provided to students to improve their decision-making skills, enhance their problem solving methods, and to gain confidence in their operation of computers.

## **Special Needs Program**

A continuum of services is provided to meet the unique individual needs of students who have been identified with a disability.