



*South Orangetown Middle School*

# ***Program of Studies***

**2009-2010**



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL	1
<b>MISSION STATEMENTS</b>	2
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>	2
<b>GRADING PROCEDURES</b>	3
<b>NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY</b>	4
<b>SUPPORT SERVICES</b>	
GUIDANCE	4
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION	4
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS	5
<b>COURSE SUMMARY</b>	6
<b>COURSE DESCRIPTIONS</b>	
ART	6
COMPUTER APPLICATIONS	8
ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS	8
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	9
HEALTH	10
HOME & CAREERS	10
MATHEMATICS	10
MUSIC	12
PROJECT BASED CLASS	12
ELA, MATH ENHANCEMENTS AND QUIET STUDY	13
PHYSICAL EDUCATION/ATHLETICS	13
SCIENCE	15
SOCIAL STUDIES	16
TECHNOLOGY	17
CHARACTER EDUCATION	18
<b>SPECIAL EDUCATION</b>	
SERVICES	18
Consortium of Occupational & Vocational Education (COVE)	19
Therapeutic Support Program (TSP)	20
<b>MINIMUM ATTENDANCE POLICY</b>	20
<b>CLUBS AND AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES</b>	21
<b>GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM</b>	22

# ***INTRODUCTION***

## ***MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL***

The *Program of Studies* is a valuable source of information and direction for students and parents. It contains information on the courses offered at South Orangetown Middle School and many of the services provided by our staff.

The *Program of Studies* is characterized by a richness and variety designed to allow each student to find areas in which he/she can excel and be successful. Our goal as educators is to make the Middle School experience as broad as possible so that students will be thoroughly prepared to continue their studies in high school. The home/school partnership is particularly important at this age and stage of a child's development. Although choices within our program of studies are limited, parents and students do need to consider some of the options available in the areas of Music, Science, Mathematics, Foreign Language, Art, and Technology.

We hope you find the material contained in this booklet helpful and informative.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Karen Tesik

Principal

## **MISSION STATEMENTS**

### ***DISTRICT MISSION***

In a rapidly changing world, the South Orangetown school community affirms its positive vision of the future by providing a safe and caring environment where the excitement of teaching and learning is shared by all, and where we encourage and nurture the uniqueness of each child. Through diverse and challenging programs, we promote academic standards, creative and critical thinking, self-respect, respect for others and acceptance for our responsibilities in a global society. We are committed to fostering a love of learning in our students. *TOGETHER WE CAN . . .*

### ***MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION***

The South Orangetown Middle School is committed to meeting the unique needs of the early adolescent child. We acknowledge the importance of assisting students in their transition from childhood to adulthood. We promote academic excellence and the personal and social development of each child, while affirming the importance of home, school, and community connections.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### ***Requirements***

All students are required to take: Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science at the level appropriate to their grade.

### ***Foreign Languages***

Students are able to select one of the following languages: French, Italian, and Spanish. Successful completion of Foreign Language coursework and passing of the New York State Foreign Language Proficiency Examination results in the awarding of high school credit.

### ***Accelerated Classes***

Accelerated classes that carry high school Regents credit are available in Art, Foreign Language, Earth Science and Mathematics.

### ***Special Help***

Collaborative teaching classes, Intensive Math & ELA classes for grades 6, 7, 8, Intensive Science and Social Studies for grade 8, ELA & Math Enhancement classes, special education learning centers, learning institutes, and ELL (English Language Learners) services are available for all those who qualify.

### ***Student Leadership Opportunities***

We encourage students to grow as leaders during their three years at SOMS. Some of the opportunities are:

- Student Government: no election, any student can join.
- National Junior Honor Society

- Peer Mediation
- Peer Tutors

### ***Standardized Testing***

Standardized testing gives teachers information about students’ strengths, needs, and program alignment to state standards. We encourage students to try to do their best on all assessments and we have support for students who find these assessments challenging.

The current testing program includes:

- New York State English/Language Arts Assessment Grades 6, 7 and 8\*: May 2010
- New York State Math Assessment grades 6, 7 and 8\*: May 2010
- New York State Science Assessment Grade 8 (for students enrolled in General Science only): April and May 2010
- New York State Social Studies Assessment Grade 8: June 2010

\*Students who score below the State Reference Point on either or both of these tests are required to participate in the Academic Improvement Services (AIS) program.

### ***Physical Education/Explore Classes***

All students participate in Physical Education classes three days in each six-day cycle. Our Exploratory program has been designed to provide opportunities to develop students’ interests and talents as well as to expose them to areas that, until middle school, may not have been part of the curriculum.

- Explore classes at the sixth grade level are: Art, Music, Health, Technology and Research
- Explore classes at the seventh grade level are: Art, Home & Careers, Technology, Music and Computer Applications
- Explore classes at the eighth grade level are: Music, Health, Computer Applications and Technology

## **GRADING PROCEDURES**

Our school uses number grades. A student’s grades are an indication of achievement and progress in various subjects. Report cards are mailed home four times during the school year, and interim reports are mailed at the fifth week mark between report cards. Pass – Fail grading may be used for certain courses.

Honor roll requirements are:

Exceptional Honors	Average of 95: no 65’s, failures or incompletes
High Honors	Average of 90: no 65’s, failures or incompletes
Honor Roll	Average of 85: no 65’s, failures or incompletes

“Incomplete” indicates that a student did not finish all the work required for a marking period grade. The student may work up to 10 school days (under the supervision of his/her teacher) beyond the close of the marking period to complete remaining assignments. By the 15<sup>th</sup> school day after the close of a marking period, the teacher will replace the “Incomplete” with a number grade. The guidance office will record it, notify the student’s parents and make an adjustment to the honor roll if necessary. The new grade will appear on the following report card. An honor roll is published after each of the first three marking periods.

## **NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY**

The National Junior Honor Society recognizes and encourages academic achievement while celebrating other characteristics essential to citizenship in a democracy. Membership is both an honor and a commitment. The Honor Society member is one who exhibits scholarship, leadership (either overtly or silently), character and service, and demonstrates that he/she is willing to use those talents and skills to improve society.

This organization promotes the celebration of academic excellence. Students in grades 7 and 8 must demonstrate a consistent level of academic performance. Criteria includes: students need to have achieved a cumulative average of 92 for all four quarters of grade 6 and first two quarters of grade 7. In order to gain membership, students must also demonstrate qualities of leadership, service, character, and citizenship. Opportunities are provided through the Society to aid the members in developing these qualities. As leaders, members must exert a wholesome influence on the school community. As servers, they are committed to the idea of volunteering their time and talents to create a better tomorrow. By demonstrating such qualities as reliability, honesty, and sincerity, members hope to prove, by example, that they value character. Finally, through willingness to participate responsibly in the affairs of the school and community, our National Junior Honor Society members develop citizenship.

A faculty committee identifies each seventh grade student who meets the academic standard and assesses each student's accomplishments in other categories before membership is awarded. Students are inducted in May each year. Grade 7 students are expected to keep their grades at this level for their remaining years at the South Orangetown Middle School.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

### ***Guidance***

Our Guidance staff is concerned with the students' intellectual and social development. Our goal is to help students reach their highest potential, participate fully in the school community, and begin to plan for their future roles in society.

Guidance counselors will help students identify their abilities and interests and set goals for the future. They will work closely with students and parents, advising on academic requirements, explaining the various options offered and arriving at a schedule best suited to each student's needs.

On behalf of students, guidance counselors work closely with teachers, parents, administrators, school psychologists, coaches, advisors, or other members of the SOMS community.

### ***Response to Intervention (RTI)***

Students sometimes have difficulty achieving success in courses, finals, etc. at the middle school level. We have a program called Response to Intervention (RTI). The team of teachers, the student, the parent, and the guidance counselor will create a plan to address the needs of the student. Each plan will be customized based on the individual student's needs and will be coordinated by a RTI teacher. Parents will meet with counselors to review the plan. Our goal is to increase student success. There is a direct correlation between student success in middle school and their future success in high school; therefore,

the time for change is now. Additional information will be distributed to the family if any student who needs this type of help. Please contact your child's guidance counselor for additional information.

### ***School Psychologists***

The role of school psychologists is to help and to support all students (including gifted students, underachievers, and those with disabilities), and make the most of their school experiences. They identify problems related to students' emotional health and/or academic performance, as well as in the way the school meets students' needs. They help to solve problems through direct contact with parents, teachers, and students, and may recommend special programs or teaching methods. School psychologists support both school and families by helping to create classroom environments that are best suited to meet the needs of students.

### ***Consulting Services***

A school psychologist may talk with parents, teachers, and school personnel about how to best help students learn and develop, how to improve teaching methods or the learning environment of the classroom or at home, and ways to improve working relationships among teachers, parents, and administrators.

### ***Assessment***

The role of school psychologists may also be to assess students' academic performance and potential. They may observe the student in the classroom. They may interview the student. They may test the student to assess academic achievement, learning aptitudes, social skills, self-help skills, physical and motor development, personality and emotional development.

### ***Direct Intervention***

When appropriate, the school psychologist may work directly with a student and/or family to help solve problems. Counseling, behavior management, or other approaches may be used. They formulate Social/Emotional Improvement Plans for students when needed.

### ***Education and Training Programs***

School psychologists may also provide education programs to help parents, school personnel, and others to be more effective in their roles. Some examples have included programs for parents on self-esteem and parenting skills, and presenting to school personnel on ADD/ADHD and learning disabilities.

### ***Research***

The school psychologists may also conduct research to learn more about students, parents, teachers, and the learning process.

## **COURSE SUMMARY**

The courses for the sixth, seventh and eighth grades have been designed to stimulate students' curiosity about learning, and to help them to make the transition from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school.

The following chart presents the summary of courses by grade level.

### **GRADE 6**

#### *Core Subjects*

Language Arts (double period)  
Math  
Science  
Social Studies  
Foreign Language  
Physical Education

#### *Explore Cycle – 30 Days*

2 Art  
1 Music  
1 Technology  
1 Health  
1 Research

### **GRADE 7**

#### *Core Subjects*

Language Arts  
Math  
Science  
Social Studies  
Foreign Language  
Physical Education  
Health

#### *Explore Cycle – 30 Days*

1 Art  
1 Home & Careers  
2 Technology  
1 Music  
1 Computer Applications

### **GRADE 8**

#### *Core Subjects*

Language Arts  
Math  
Earth Science  
Social Studies  
Foreign Language  
Physical Education

#### *Explore Cycle – 35 Days*

1 Computer Applications  
1 Health  
1 Music  
1 Technology  
1 Art

In addition, students may take the following classes:

- ELA & Math Enhancement are offered to students having difficulty in classes. Students who fall below the state reference point on NYS standardized tests are required to participate in Enhancement programs.
- Band: includes Concert Band, Jazz Band, and Symphonic Band
- Chorus: includes 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus, and Chorale
- Orchestra: includes Concert Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra and Symphonic Orchestra
- Studio in Art (high school course for credit)
- Design and Drawing for Production (high school course for credit)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **ART**

#### **Grade 6**

The sixth grade art program follows the Art for Elementary School Syllabus Guide created by the New York State Department of Education. This syllabus is divided into three main areas: Understanding, Creating, and Valuing Art. Students are involved in a variety of activities and discussions focusing on these areas. Students have experiences in two-dimensional design as well as in creating objects that have volume and weight. Students are expected to create artwork and to respond to the artwork of their peers and of artists from their own and other cultures.

Visual Arts units include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Two-dimensional design problems studying concepts of color, scale, and proportion.
- Basic drawing skills enhancing an understanding of line, texture, shape, and form as elements of design.
- Three-dimensional problems through sculptural forms in ceramics.
- Valuing processes in art.

Every effort is made to coordinate art activities with those themes being explored in other sixth grade classes, particularly Social Studies.

### ***Grade 7***

The art program for seventh graders follows the New York State Syllabus. The syllabus is divided into three main concept areas: color and light, space and structure, and movement. The objectives for these concept areas are met by providing the students with a variety of appropriate two and three-dimensional experiences. With an art/historical context, the art program provides for creative self-expression while continuing to develop technical skills.

Visual Arts units include, but are not limited to the following:

- Two-dimensional design problems
- Representation of depth in two dimensions
- Use of one-point perspective
- Drawing skills, observation, and imagination
- Three-dimensional figure construction
- Sculptural forms

## **ACCELERATED PROGRAM**

### ***Studio in Art***

A great deal of independent work is expected from Studio in Art students. Appropriate preparation, classroom behavior, participation, and respect for each other will be considered in selecting students for this program. The high school minimum attendance policy applies to this course. Please see page 21.

- Studio in Art is a high school level foundation course. High school students wishing to enroll in one of the more advanced art courses must successfully complete one of three foundation courses: Studio in Art, Creative Crafts, or Studio in Media Arts. Students will receive one full credit toward high school graduation requirements if they successfully fulfill course requirements.
- This course is structured to meet the State art requirement for graduation and is a foundation course. The prospective art major can investigate his/her personal talents, abilities, and interests through a series of explorations in drawing, three-dimensional design, graphics, and the elements of art. The elements of art are fundamental and common to all forms of visual expression. They are line, form, texture, space, and color. Any student electing advanced art courses will be expected to have a good understanding of these elements.

## **COMPUTER APPLICATIONS**

Sixth and eighth grade students will take a computer applications course in one of our computer labs as part of their explore cycle. Students will utilize a PC with a windows platform in order to facilitate learning in their subject areas. They will expand their techniques of word processing, create databases and spreadsheets, and master the use of PowerPoint. In addition, students who have on file an "Internet Authorization Form" will be given the opportunity to use the Internet for guided searches that will assist them in conducting research for their other classes.

## **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS**

The development of effective communication is stressed throughout the middle school years. Our aim is to help students to become active and effective readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. To this end, our English/Language Arts curriculum is aligned with New York State ELA standards. The skills associated with each standard will be developed through a literature-based curriculum with emphasis on the writing process and reading skills. Technology and the arts are also integrated as vehicles for creative expression. The nature of the New York State Grade 8 ELA Assessment has reinforced our belief in the use of rubrics at all levels. This year the assessment will be given at each grade level. This assessment focuses on critical thinking, comprehension, listening, writing and editing. In addition every student is expected to read at least 25 books per year. Please use our Summer Reading list throughout the year to help students make wise independent reading choices.

### ***Grade 6***

Students experience learning through an interdisciplinary program. The students explore literature, express themselves by writing in various genres, and deliver and observe oral presentations. Through individual and cooperative learning activities, they further develop their communication skills. Research skills are also introduced and rubrics are utilized to focus on assessment goals. Some of the literature explored includes: Tuck Everlasting, The Cay, The Sword of Egypt, a Jerry Spinelli unit, Number the Stars, and Secret of Nimh.

### ***Grade 7***

Students are encouraged to respond to literature through personal, creative, and expository writing. There is an emphasis on critical reading and interpretation of texts such as novels, short stories, poems, plays, and non-fiction. A goal of this course is to help students become more independent thinkers, readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. Some of the literature explored includes: a freedom unit, a memoir unit, The Outsiders, The Pigman, short stories, non-fiction and The Giver.

### ***Grade 8***

The eighth grade English curriculum is a literature-based program. Through varied literary experiences, children learn the purpose and importance of communication, both written and oral. Written communication includes writing for self-expression, description, narration, and persuasion. Oral communication is developed through class discussions, group presentations, and formal and informal speeches. In our program the skills necessary for good reading, writing, speaking, and listening are integrated in the curriculum and across content areas, especially through Social Studies, to provide students with a more comprehensive approach to learning. Some of the literature explored includes: The Pearl, Call of the Wild, and Midsummer Nights Dream. Students will also develop a Research project during this course. The project will be supported through the Explore Research class.

## **FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

### ***Grade 6***

The sixth grade Foreign Language program is an introductory course in French, Italian, or Spanish stressing listening and speaking skills. Students meet every other day. During this first year of foreign language study, students are introduced to the sound system of the target language, using the aural/oral method. A basic vocabulary, consisting of greetings, titles, every day conversational phrases (e.g., “How are you? My name is . . . , -- and yours?”), numbers, colors, days and months, is acquired at this level. Vocabulary dealing with topics of student interest (e.g., sports, pastimes, school, and friends) is introduced in conversational form. Reading and writing are used to reinforce comprehension and speaking skills. An important component of this program is the cultural understanding of the countries where the target language is spoken. At this level, geography family customs, holidays and festivals, major products, important historical and present-day figures are introduced, and often form the basis of hands-on projects enjoyed by the students. An examination of our own multicultural heritage stems from these cultural studies.

### ***Grade 7***

The seventh grade Foreign Language program is a natural progression from our sixth grade introductory course. The skills and vocabulary learned in the sixth grade are reviewed. During the year, classes meet every day. The skills of listening and speaking are still emphasized, however reading and writing skills now take on greater importance. Topics through which vocabulary and language structure are introduced include the following: personal identification, school, sports and pastimes, time, travel, giving and receiving directions, weather, currency, and using the telephone. Cultural topics include education, geography, transportation, currency, sports and other leisure activities, including telephone customs. Foreign language structures for mastery at this level encompass subject pronouns, articles, adjectives, present tense of regular verbs, major irregular verbs, and immediate future tense.

### ***Grade 8***

The eighth grade Foreign Language program serves as the culmination to the two and-a-half year course that is equivalent to Level I of study on a high school level. Skills acquired in sixth and seventh grades are reviewed and reinforced. The goal is for students to end the eighth year achieving proficiency as evidenced in the communicative functions required by the New York State Syllabus and assessed on the Foreign Language Regents Proficiency Exam. The four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are incorporated into all lessons. Topics through which vocabulary and language structure are introduced include the following: home and family, neighborhood, professions, foods and meals, movies, theater and other media, clothing and fashion, shopping, socializing, travel (a continuation of this topic from seventh grade), and holidays. Foreign Language structures for mastery at this level encompass object pronouns, irregular verbs, past tense, and interrogative constructions. Cultural topics which are interwoven throughout the course materials include: continued geographical studies, cultural attractions in major cities, teenage lifestyles, shopping, metric system, family celebrations, and food/meals.

At the conclusion of their eighth grade studies, students take the New York Foreign Language Proficiency Examination. Upon passing this examination and the entire Level I course (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades), students earn one high school credit.

The district-wide Foreign Language program continues at the high school level with Levels II and III usually taken in freshman and sophomore years, respectively. The Level III course culminates with the New York State Comprehensive Regents Examination. We encourage all our Foreign Language students

to continue their study at least through completion of this Regents level. Many students avail themselves of the advanced level courses that are offered beyond Level III.

## **HEALTH**

Health is more than just managing to stay out of the doctor's office. Health is a matter of balance -- taking careful steps to guide body, mind, and relationships through life. The goal of our Health program is to instill the importance of making careful choices, and to provide accurate, up-to-date information that will allow students to live informed and productive lives.

### ***Grade 6***

This course will be one thirty-day cycle. The focus will be on: Family Life and Human Sexuality\*, understanding Puberty, Child sexual abuse and Nutrition.

### ***Grade 7***

In this course, the students gain the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain personal health, to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment, and to manage their personal and community resources. The units of study include Mental Health, Anatomy/Disease/Nutrition, Family Living and Human Sexuality\* including AIDS/STD's\*, Reproduction, Substance Abuse Prevention, and Safety/First Aid. A variety of teaching techniques such as discussions, group work, projects and guest speakers, are used to actively engage all students.

### ***Grade 8***

As part of the explore cycle, eighth grade Health deals primarily with using the decision-making process in all areas of teen health. Lively discussion sessions are student-driven and are aimed at encouraging students to take control of the choices they make and to accept responsibility for the consequences. Topics such as mental wellness, depression, teen suicide and self-injury are discussed. Risky behavior, AIDS/STD's\*, Alcohol and Drug Abuse are also topics explored.

\* Prior to the start of the school year, parents and guardians are given the option to excuse their children from the mandated AIDS Education/Human Sexuality Curriculum. **This form (included in the summer packet) must be returned by the first day of school if you want your child to be excluded.**

## **HOME & CAREERS**

Home and career skills are infused in several of our curricula including technology education. However, a six week Home & Careers course is taught in the seventh grade to assist all students in developing strategies to manage their individual, family, career, and community roles and responsibilities. Instructional activities incorporate concepts of science, mathematics, social science, and language arts.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The Middle School Mathematics program builds on the solid foundation established in our elementary schools. The program begins by reinforcing students' computational skills, measurement abilities, and data analysis. Opportunities for growth in problem solving, reasoning, and communication are also provided in open-ended problem situations and long-term projects. The program ensures that students

have opportunities to apply critical thinking skills as they learn to choose appropriate problem-solving strategies. Problems are designed to help students explore, plan, solve, and examine real world situations. Through reinforcement of skills and expansion of mathematical processes, the Middle School Mathematics Program prepares students for high school.

### ***REGULAR SEQUENCE***

- Students begin the sixth grade in **Mathematics 6**. This program will build on a growing number sense, pattern recognition, computational skills, problem-solving ability, communication skills, and reasoning ability.
- In seventh grade students take **Mathematics 7**, in which they complete the study of Middle School Mathematics and begin the study of Pre Algebra. In this course students are introduced to integrated mathematics concepts.
- Students complete this sequence in 8<sup>th</sup> grade with **Pre Algebra**. This program is designed to prepare the students for 9<sup>th</sup> grade Integrated Algebra. It will cover the prerequisite skills needed for the Integrated Algebra Regents exam.

### ***ALTERNATE SEQUENCE***

- Students begin the sixth grade in **Middle School Mathematics**. Their program will build on a growing number sense, pattern recognition, computational skills, problem-solving ability, communication skills, and reasoning ability. (Students are recommended based on fifth grade math performance and standardized test scores.)
- In seventh grade students are placed in **Pre Algebra**, which focuses on integrated mathematics concepts.
- Students complete this sequence in eighth grade by taking **Regents Integrated Algebra**. The course culminates in a Regents Exam in June. The high school minimum attendance policy applies to this course. Please see page 21.

### ***HONORS SEQUENCE***

- By the end of sixth grade, after the study of **Middle School Mathematics**, those students who demonstrate exceptional mastery of pattern recognition, computational skills, problem solving, communication skills, and reasoning ability are considered for *honors* placement in grade 7. The *honors sequence* is designed to have students study in greater depth, with emphases placed on concept development, abstract thinking, and challenging problem solving. Students are recommended based on performance in Middle School Mathematics and standardized test scores.
- For those students who qualify take **Pre Algebra Honors** in grade 7, as long as they complete this course with above average to superior grades, they will continue to be recommended for honors placement in grade 8.
- Students complete this sequence in eighth grade with **Integrated Algebra Honors**. The students will follow the Integrated Algebra curriculum but the level of problem solving, word problems, graphing and mastery of the curriculum is increased to challenge them. This course culminates in June of 8<sup>th</sup> grade with a Regents exam. The high school minimum attendance policy applies to this course. Please see page 21.

## **MUSIC**

The program includes performance, contemporary music, music video, music theory and the history of music.

### ***Music Classes***

Music Explore classes are part of the explore cycle. The goal of music class is for students to gain an understanding and appreciation of music. Through the use of the electronic keyboard and the computer programs Music Ace and Garage Band, students learn to read music notation and have the opportunity to compose at their skill level. Students are exposed to a wide range of music styles and periods. We are incorporating many aspects of the elementary program in our grade 6 class.

### ***Performing Music Groups***

The Music Department offers a variety of ensembles to meet the needs of all students, beginners through advanced. All students are given an opportunity to perform in a variety of concert settings. Students can participate in both an instrumental group and chorus.

### ***Band***

The Music Department offers beginning, intermediate, and advanced concert bands. Students in each group receive a regularly scheduled group lesson as well as ensemble rehearsals. Solo and small ensemble experiences are also offered.

### ***Orchestra***

The Music Department offers beginning, intermediate, and advanced concert orchestras. A Chamber Orchestra is also offered. Students in each group receive a regularly scheduled group lesson as well as ensemble rehearsals. Solo and small ensemble experiences are also offered.

### ***Chorus***

The Music Department offers a sixth grade Chorus, and a seventh and eighth grade Chorus. A seventh and eighth grade Chorale is also offered. Students in each group receive a regularly scheduled group lesson as well as ensemble rehearsals.

## **Project Based Class**

During period eight, students have the opportunity to work with the teacher of the gifted and other students who share common interests in academics. Students who were identified for gifted services at the elementary level are invited to participate. Other students who are interested are welcome to join. Students, teachers or parents can nominate/request that a student be included. Classes concentrate on the following areas of interest: problem solving, creative writing, word study, history and/or research. Many of these students participate in contests and are encouraged to enter work for publication.

## **ELA and Math Enhancement**

Students who have not met the State standard in ELA and/or Math on these yearly assessments are required to participate in an extra support class either Period 8 or during their Explore class. The student's Guidance counselor contacts parents. Additionally, Math Learning Institutes are held in the Spring and Summer to further support and prepare students for the State Math Assessment.

## **Quiet Study (Period 8)**

When students are not involved in activities like Academic Center, ELA/Math Enhancements, Band, Chorus, Orchestra, Speech or Project Based class they will be in a structured study hall called Quiet Study. Students should use this time productively to work on homework/projects as needed. Student organizers are given to each student in September. Please check them regularly. You should be able to see student's assignments, projects and test grades in the organizer. Teachers will be using this as a communication device to keep you abreast on your child's progress. Please be sure that your child is using this book correctly and consistently.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION/ATHLETICS**

### ***Physical Education***

Physical Education provides a series of learning experiences that focus on increasing knowledge and affecting attitudes and behavior related to physical activities. A major goal is to help students incorporate physical activity into their lifestyle to develop and improve health-related physical fitness.

Students at the South Orangetown Middle School are required to participate in Physical Education during grades six, seven, and eight. Classes are scheduled so that students attend Physical Education classes on alternating days. The curriculum has a wide variety of activities that include; team and individual sports, fitness and wellness activities, aquatics, dance, and outdoor living skills. All of the activities are designed to meet New York State learning standards. Proper attire is required.

### ***Modified Sports***

Students in grades seven and eight are eligible to participate in modified interscholastic sports.

These co-curricular activities are offered after school. Practices are held for approximately 1½ hours a day, 5 days a week with games scheduled against neighboring school districts. At this level, the focus is to learn skills and game rules, fundamentals of team play and to develop the values of commitment, hard work, and self-discipline.

Late buses are not provided for students after practice. Parents must provide transportation. Bus transportation is only provided to away games.

**Health examinations by a school-appointed physician are required prior to participation on interscholastic athletic teams. Students need to listen for announcements regarding modified sports.**

Listed below are the sports programs that are typically offered during the school year. Updated information on the athletic program is contained in a separate publication, which may be requested from the Office of the Director of Athletics at Tappan Zee High School (680-1640).

If a student does not see the school physician they are required to:

- a. Be pre-screened by our school nurse
- b. The pre-screening information then goes to the student's physician
- c. The physician's report then has to be reviewed by the school physician
- d. The report is then sent back to the school

This process is lengthy and time-consuming so please consider having your child examined by the school physician or they may be a delay in your child's ability to practice or play on a modified team.

**GRADE 7 & 8 MODIFIED SPORTS  
INTERSCHOLASTIC COMPETITION**

<i>Fall Sports</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Cross Country	X	X
Football	X	
Soccer	X	X
Swimming		X
Tennis		X
Volleyball		X
<i>Winter Sports</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Basketball	X	X
Ice Hockey	X	
Swimming	X	
Wrestling	X	
<i>Spring Sports</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Baseball	X	
Lacrosse	X	X
Softball		X
Track	X	X
Tennis	X	

**Club Sports**

All students in grades six have the opportunity to participate in after school club sports.

Club sports are held for approximately 1½ hours a day, 2 days a week after school. The goal is to provide recreational opportunities for a large number of students. Skills, rules, and competitive games among club members will be highlighted. Late buses are not provided after club sports. Parents must provide transportation. Club Sports offered in prior years include the following:

**CLUB SPORTS  
RULES, SKILLS, FUNDAMENTALS &  
INTRAMURAL COMPETITION**

<i>Fall Sport</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Co-Ed</i>
Basketball	X	X	
Lacrosse	X	X	

<i>Winter</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Co-Ed</i>
Basketball		X	
Track			X

<i>Spring</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Co-Ed</i>
Football	X		
Golf	X		
Soccer	X	X	
Swimming			X
Volleyball		X	

## ***SCIENCE***

### ***Grade 6***

Sixth grade science represents a general science overview. The areas of study include both physical and life science, though mostly concentrated on the physical. The approach is a combination of text, multimedia, and inquiry. Some of the units are inter-disciplinary, where ideas are shown to be related and are reinforced in the disciplines of Language Arts, Social Studies, and Math.

The four modules are:

1. Consumer Chemistry
2. Energy Systems
3. Systems in Space
4. Bio-diversity

### ***Grade 7***

The Life Science course uses a holistic approach in applying the perceptions and skills of a scientist for obtaining, interpreting, learning, and presenting information. Reading for meaning, developing personal research hypotheses, using the language of science effectively, applying known facts to problem-solving techniques, designing controlled experiments, manipulating equipment, building models, writing, and drawing conclusions are part of this research process.

Individual and group-work using rubrics as guidelines are required to understand the interrelationships between the living and the non-living world. Acquiring knowledge, exploring lab and local community populations as well as observing global populations through technology provide a broad view of the components of the student's environment.

The four modules are:

1. Systems in Motion
2. Issues in Genetics
3. Classification I & II: Plants, Bacteria, and Fungi
4. Adaptations and Behaviors of Animals

## ***Grade 8***

All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will have a Science lecture class every day and a Science lab every other day. Teachers stress writing and graphing skills, study/research strategies, and laboratory experiences. The creation and support of independent learners is a major instructional goal.

### ***General Science***

This course provides an introduction to Earth Science and Living Environment as well as other topics that are part of our eighth grade Science program. Students in this class will take the New York State Assessment in April and May. There is a performance component (LAB) and a written test. The majority of these students will take Living Environment Regents for Grade 9. A small number of students with special needs are recommended to Active Physics for Grade 9; no regents with this class.

Topics covered are:

1. Chemistry
2. Rocks and Minerals
3. Plate Tectonics
4. Weathering, Erosion, and Deposition
5. Weather and Climate

### ***Regents Earth Science***

This is the high school level course. Students are recommended based on their performance in seventh grade science and mathematics. The high school minimum attendance policy applies. Please see page 21.

Topics covered are:

1. Chemistry
2. Rocks and Minerals
3. Measuring the Earth
4. Plate Tectonics
5. Weather, Erosion, and Deposition
6. Weather and Climate
7. Earth History
8. Earth in Space

Students will take the Earth Science Regents exam in June of eighth grade. These students are recommended to Living Environment Regents in grade 9.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### ***Grade 6***

The sixth grade program examines human development from the Prehistoric Period through the Middle Ages. A comparative study of the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, Greece, Rome, and Medieval Europe helps students understand the influence of ancient people on our modern culture. Many of the units are interdisciplinary and cross-curricular in nature and are supported with numerous 'hands-on' activities and field trips.

In order to gain maximum benefit from the study of ancient civilizations, certain skills are focused upon within each unit. Identifying main ideas in a paragraph, outlining, note taking, map reading, cause and effect relations, and fact/opinion differentiation are some of the skills that are introduced during the sixth grade to promote students' reading and thinking skills.

### ***Grade 7***

The seventh grade program presents a chronological approach to the history of the United States through the Civil War. Topics of study include colonization, the American Revolution, the Constitution, and the early presidents. Historical concepts are also applied to the current American experience. Individual research, group discussions, role-playing, and cooperative learning are some of the experiences provided. Skills such as map reading, interpreting documents, the use and analysis of charts and graphs, and fact/opinion differentiation are reinforced in this course.

### ***Grade 8***

The eighth grade program provides an introduction to modern American history and is designed to increase students' knowledge of our cultural heritage and to give them insight into the development of ideas and institutions characteristic of our American nation. The eighth grade program provides a variety of learning experiences including: individual and group research, literature, dramatic presentation, field trips, artwork, class discussions, cooperative learning, and the use of technology. The program is a continuation of the study of American history begun in the seventh grade. The course covers American civilization from Civil War reconstruction to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Document based questions are emphasized during the eighth grade to improve the students' ability to read, analyze, and evaluate.

Many skills are focused on throughout the year. They include identifying the main idea in a paragraph, outlining, note taking, map reading, graph reading, cause and effect relationships, and fact/opinion differentiation.

Students will become more aware of their responsibilities as citizens in a participatory democracy. There is a New York State Grade 8 Social Studies exam in June.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Technology is one of the explore classes. Students experience various aspects of the technology curriculum at grade levels 6, 7, and 8. They include a range of topics and activities in practical and theoretical applications of science and math. These activities include problem solving and testing outcomes. Design, mechanical drawing, construction of models, construction of functional objects, and work with various materials are included. Work is 'hands-on', three dimensional, and cooperative work with others is required.

Specific units may include the following:

- Solar energy projects – based on analysis of greenhouse effect.
- Structural design – bridge design concepts using wooden structured members.
- Introduction to simple machines – Lego/Dacta materials are used to construct mechanical devices.
- Drafting – use of hand mechanical drawing tools and computer-assisted drafting are both experienced.
- Materials Processing – use of various materials, such as wood and metal. Students design and build solutions to teacher and student-generated problems.

Although Technology provides students with activities, which are somewhat different than other classes, basic concepts of science and math are effectively incorporated. Technology class contributes to the broad range of learning experiences appropriate to middle level learners.

## **ACCELERATED PROGRAM**

### ***Design and Drawing for Production (DDP)***

All seventh grade students will take a two part standardized test when they are in their technology explore cycle. Part one is Spatial Relations and Part two is Mechanical Reasoning. Students will be selected based on how well they perform on this test and by their work completed in the sixth and seventh grade technology classes. There will be two sections of Design and Drawing for Production (DDP) offered in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. DDP is an engineering prep program that can lead to the engineering prep (Project Lead the Way) curriculum at TZHS.

## **CHARACTER EDUCATION**

New York State Education Department mandated as part of the Project SAVE legislation that all school districts provide instruction in civility, citizenship, and character education.

At the middle school we promote the well being of all our students by focusing on the themes of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Discussions about these themes take place in the classroom as part of the curriculum.

Our guidance counselors visit classrooms and meet with small groups of students to reinforce the concept of respecting each other. When conflicts arise between students, the guidance counselors often implement peer mediation strategies to help students resolve their issues.

School wide assemblies are held throughout the year that address certain topics about character education. Administrators meet with students at each grade level to review the Code of Conduct and to discuss their expectations about student behavior. Internet safety, the appropriate use of cell phones, emailing and text messaging, and being respectful of the individual differences of all students are examples of other topics presented at assemblies.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

### ***Co-Teach Classes***

The Middle School offers co-teaching collaborative classes. A co-teach class is a mainstream class being taught by two certified teachers, one in special education, and the other in the content area. There are typically five to eight special education students assigned to each co-teach class.

There are co-teach classes in math, science, social studies, and language arts. The courses follow the scope and sequence of the grade level curriculum and are linked to the State standards. Both teachers attend to the instructional needs of all students in the class and collaborate in determining assessments and grades. The special educator provides strategies that promote alternative methods of instruction. He/she may offer modifications to the curriculum; provide alternative assessments and re-design projects. Often students are provided study guides, textbook outlines, and/or skill building strategies to promote mastery of the content.

### ***Academic Center***

The Academic Center provides tutorial support to children with special educational needs. Services are typically provided in a group of fifteen students. Students are grouped according to instructional need. The Committee on Special Education (CSE) through the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) sets goals for each child. The focus of the program is to support a child's success in content area subjects in grades 6, 7, and 8. Children receive anywhere from three to six periods of support in each six-day cycle. Academic Center teachers can be called upon to perform diagnostic testing for students suspected of having a handicapping condition or for triennial assessments. In addition, Academic Center teachers may work in clusters or teams to meet the needs of the students in the mainstream curriculum at a particular grade level.

### ***Intensive Classes***

Special Education students who are not meeting success in the co-teach classes (grades 65 and under and have significant skill discrepancies) are considered for these classes. These are self contained special education classes with a ratio of 15:1.

### ***Related Services***

Related services are provided where deemed appropriate by the Committee on Special Education. These may include counseling, occupational therapy, speech and language services, and/or physical therapy.

Speech/Language support is offered when a child has a serious language-based disability. The curriculum of the mainstream is supported by the speech therapist, especially in the areas of vocabulary and study skills (to assist comprehension). Students with severe articulation difficulties, fluency, or stuttering issues are also provided speech. Goals are set by the CSE and monitored quarterly.

Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy is a medical service requiring a prescription. Services are awarded typically to children with physical disabilities involving fine and gross motor coordination. Goals are set on the IEP and monitored by the CSE quarterly.

### ***Transitional Support Services***

This is a short-term service offered to children transitioning out of special education. It is specified on a child's IEP and is provided by a regular or special educator to aid in the provision of a service or class to a student transferring to a regular class or to settings, which are less restrictive than what the child previously experienced.

### ***Additional Teacher Services***

The Middle School offers services to hard-of-hearing or visually impaired students with a medical diagnosis. Books on tape, large print books, or amplification systems are typical forms of assistance, which provide the child the opportunity to succeed. Some youngsters receive tutorial support by specially trained teachers in either area of specialty. Course curriculum is adapted accordingly.

## ***Consortium of Occupational and Vocational Education Program***

Unique to Rockland County is the BOCES Consortium program for classified children. Rockland County districts have designed a sequence of programs to serve these developmentally disabled children. Housed at the South Orangetown Middle School is the C.O.V.E. I intermediate self-contained program. The

program provides handicapped students with the opportunity to interact within the school community in as least restrictive an environment as possible. The focus of the program is to enable each student to maximize his/her potential and gain functional independence in the community in preparation for adult life.

The C.O.V.E. program is composed of one self-contained class, staffed by a certified special education teacher and teaching assistants. The program serves up to twelve students in each class, ages 11–16. Instruction within the classroom includes both individual and group work. Children entering the program should have the ability to work independently for 10–15 minutes at a time. Academic instruction focuses on life skills through the disciplines of reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies, written expression, and language skills. The pre-vocational component provides the foundation for learning about the world of work.

### ***Therapeutic Support Program (TSP)***

The TSP program is offered for students who have intellectual talents in the above average range and who are in need of special emotional support throughout their day. Students experience a small, nurturing environment with special education teachers and teaching assistants.

Students are placed in the TSP class for core academic subjects and mainstreamed as appropriate. Careful attention is given to mainstreaming children in foreign language class and the explore cycle (i.e., Art, Music, P.E., Technology). The students also participate in an advisory program with the psychologist. Mainstreamed classes are selected to enhance student success. The TSP academic program follows a multidisciplinary curriculum. Children will have access to technology as an instructional tool, and services (counseling, PT, OT, speech) as indicated on their IEPs.

TSP students are part of the South Orangetown Middle School community, and as such, commit to supporting the student handbook guidelines for student responsibility and behavior. Students in TSP are welcome to participate in all sports, clubs, and activities that are offered.

## ***TAPPAN ZEE HIGH SCHOOL MINIMUM ATTENDANCE POLICY***

**Eighth grade students enrolled in classes bearing high school credit will be subject to this policy.**

In order to receive credit for a course at Tappan Zee High School, or a high school level course at SOMS, (Earth Science, Integrated Algebra, Design and Drawing for Production and Studio in Art) students must register an overall grade point average (including a final exam or assessment) of 65 or higher. In addition, students may not miss more than 15% of the total number of class meetings (periods) for any class as outlined below:

<b>Course</b>	<b>Absences</b>
1 Credit Course	27
½ Credit Course	14
Lab Course (3-Day lab cycle)	41
Lab Course (2-Day lab cycle)	36

All absences, regardless of reason, are counted for the purpose of determining eligibility for course credit. For example, illness, field trips, special rehearsals, club meetings, music lessons, and class cuts all count toward the 15% maximum absences allowed. Additionally, consequences will be assigned as outlined in the student handbook for class cuts.

### ***Extended Illness***

During the first week of an extended illness a parent or guardian **must** contact the school. In this event, a doctor's note must be submitted to the school detailing the nature of the illness as well as the potential length of absence. Students who anticipate an absence of two or more consecutive weeks will be provided a home tutor for all appropriate courses. Days spent with a home tutor will not be counted as absences.

### ***Appeals***

If a student is absent for more than 15% of the class meeting due to an extenuating circumstance or if there is a disagreement in the number of absences, he/she can make an application to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will be comprised of several teachers from different departments. This committee will make a recommendation to the Principal for a final decision.

### ***Notification of Class Absences***

Students and their parents or guardians will be informed of class absences at various intervals, as noted below:

Absent 6% of the time	Parent contact
Absent 9% of the time	Parent contact/conference
Absent 12% of the time	Letter home/conference

When a student is dropped from a course for failure to meet the attendance policy guidelines, he/she will receive a drop/fail on his/her transcript and notification will be made via certified mail.

Adopted: November 1, 1999

Revised: June 2002

## ***CLUBS AND AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES***

There are many reasons why students should become involved in after-school clubs and activities. There is evidence that participation has short and long-range benefits to students. Clubs help build self-esteem, foster new friendships, and may ignite an interest that will grow in the future. Students learn to manage their time better and can begin to prioritize their interests. In addition, colleges are interested in students who participate in extra-curricular activities in high school and longitudinal studies also indicate that students who did participate do better in college.

We offer many after-school clubs and activities in which to become involved. There are clubs in sports, writing, art, drama, and technology, just to name a few. A brochure, which outlines the clubs, their purposes and meeting times, is circulated in October. Clubs meet after school on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 2:30–3:30 p.m. A late bus leaves school at 3:40 p.m. (this bus is *not* available for participants in club sports, as they end at 4 p.m.) If your son or daughter is interested in joining a club, all he/she needs to do is arrive at the designated room on the day the club meets.

## ***GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM***

The middle school offers project based enrichment classes eight period for students participating in the Gifted and Talented Program. Students attend one day out of the six day cycle. Classes are composed of students in grades six through eighth who share a common interest in the areas of problem solving, creative writing, word study, history and/or research. Many of these students participate in contests and are encouraged to enter work for publication.

In addition, the students are grouped in small clusters in ELA, Social Studies, Science and Mathematics classes. The classroom teachers working with the Gifted/Talented teacher and other consultants develop curriculum related activities and projects designed to challenge the abilities of these students.