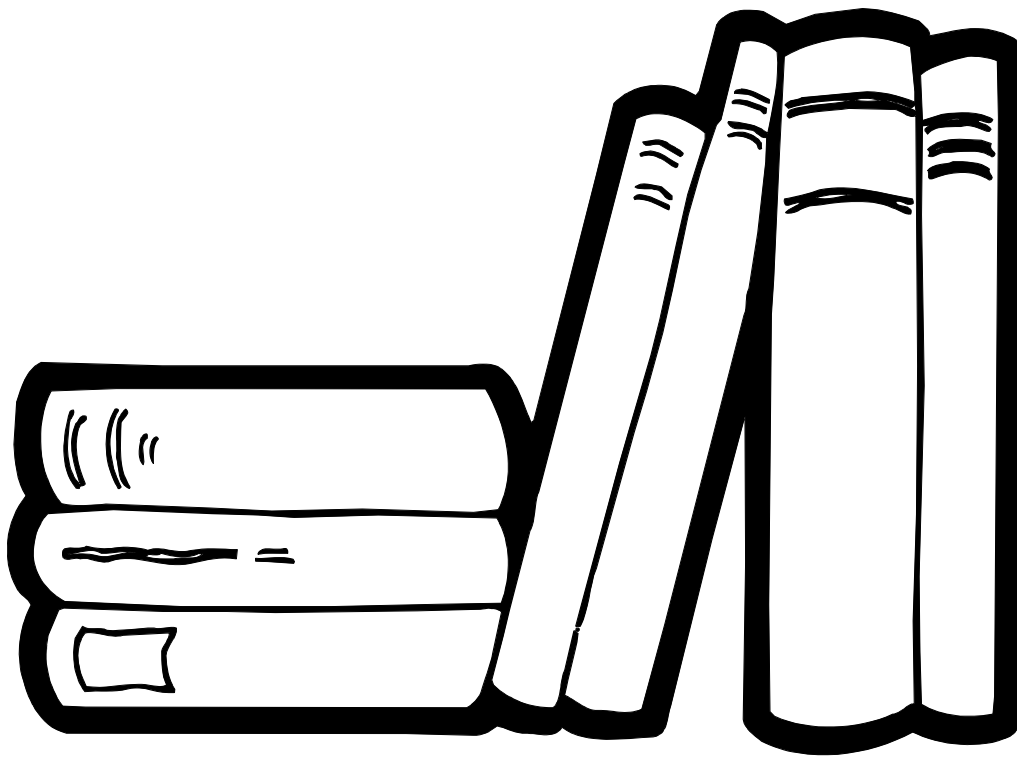


AMHERST REGIONAL  
MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Program of Studies**



**2009-2010**

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# Amherst Regional Middle School

February 2009

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians:

This Program of Studies describes our academic programs. To discover the variety of opportunities available to ARMS students, please read this document carefully. It will help you plan your program of studies at the Middle School.

*As this Program of Studies goes to press, we are still in the process of finalizing our schedule and offerings for the 2009-2010 academic year. This document reflects academic programs in place for the current school year (2008-2009). We will notify you immediately if it is necessary to make changes in this Program of Studies. Rest assured our vision (described below) and our commitment to provide a rich, rewarding, and challenging middle school experience for every student every day will not change.*

**Our Vision:** Amherst Regional Middle School (ARMS) is a learning community that challenges and supports every member's intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth. It is a safe, creative, and inclusive community that respects and values academic excellence, individual responsibility, and life-long learning. Amherst Regional Middle School is a place in which the uniqueness of each individual is recognized, embraced, and appreciated.

**Our School:** Students are organized into small learning communities called **Teams**. Teachers of core subjects are on each team, and work collaboratively to build a learning community in which each student feels a sense of belonging and connection. Each Team works closely with teachers in Special Education, English Language Learning (ELL), and elective courses to provide a curriculum that challenges and supports every child.

Every student begins their day in **Advisory**. Each Advisory includes a teacher and a small group of students who are on the same team. Through Advisory, students become acquainted with the school and its procedures, stay academically organized, set goals, construct plans to meet those goals, and learn more about themselves as learners and as members of our community. The Advisor comes to know each of his/her students and becomes each student's mentor and guide as they participate in the life of the school.

**The School Day:** Our school day begins at 7:45 a.m. and ends daily at 2:20 p.m.

**After School at ARMS:** Teachers provide additional after school academic support on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. In addition, beginning in October, students may choose to participate in a wide variety of clubs and tutoring opportunities on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. More information about club offerings is distributed each September.

We welcome you and look forward to meeting you! If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at 362-1850.

Diane Chamberlain  
Assistant Principal

Glenda Cresto  
Principal

Libby Hurley  
Assistant Principal

**AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS**

Education is a continuous process. Each child is unique and has an individual capacity for continuous growth and development. The schools must set high expectations for student achievement and must help each student achieve our educational goals to his or her fullest potential. The schools have the responsibility to prepare students to contribute positively to a pluralistic society. The goals of the school are:

**INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT**

- To develop in each student the academic skills of reading, writing, speaking, computation, and critical thinking.
- To provide the student with the skills, experience, and attitudes necessary for success in higher education and/or career placement.

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- To stimulate students' intellectual curiosity, to promote their intellectual and aesthetic development, and to foster in them a desire for life-long learning.
- To enable each student to:
  - achieve physical and emotional well-being and a sense of personal worth;
  - identify and explore her or his own spiritual, moral, and ethical values;
  - to discover and to develop talents, and to express values and feelings creatively through various means.

**HUMANISTIC DEVELOPMENT**

- To develop in each student an understanding of the social, physical, aesthetic, and biological realms and their relationship in an interdependent and technological world.
- To develop in each student an understanding of diverse cultures and to create and sustain a multi-cultural environment in which each student is respected fully and each respects others.

**CIVIC DEVELOPMENT**

- To foster an understanding of the historical, political, and cultural framework of our society.

## *REGISTRATION FOR SEVENTH GRADE*

All sixth graders receive a copy of this Program of Studies and a Registration Form. A due date will be specified on the Registration Form. Please complete and submit the Registration Forms on time. We do not schedule classes for any student until the Registration Form, *signed by a parent or guardian*, is received.

We will be available to answer your questions and help you and your sixth grader complete your registration. We look forward to meeting you at the following events:

- Registration and Orientation for all parents/guardians: **Monday, March 23, 2009 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at the Amherst Regional Middle School.** You will receive registration forms at this time. (Please Note: Prior to this event informal informational sessions will be held in Pelham, Shutesbury, Leverett, at Amherst Regional Middle School, and at the Common School. These informational sessions are not intended to replace the Registration and Orientation scheduled on March 23).
- Special Education Transition Meetings jointly chaired by Elementary and Middle School Educational Team Leaders. These meetings are scheduled by your Elementary School, and are typically held on-site at the Elementary School.
- English Language Learner Parent Nights (dates to be announced).

During March, we invite all sixth graders to visit with us at the Middle School. At this time, our current Middle School students provide a tour of the building and answer questions.

Please Note: An additional orientation for all new students (7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> Grade) is scheduled in August just prior to the first day of school. This orientation will provide additional useful information and an opportunity for students and their families to meet the Middle School Leadership Team.

## *REGISTRATION FOR EIGHTH GRADE*

The Program of Studies and all Registration Forms are distributed in Advisory. Students consult with their Advisor, ARMS Teachers, and their family in choosing courses. Registration Forms are completed at home and returned to school *signed by a parent or guardian*. We do not schedule classes for any student until the Registration Form bearing the parent/guardian signature is received.

Eighth Grade students who are new to ARMS begin their registration process with our Registrar, Cathy Stangroom. Please make an appointment by calling 413.362.1703.

## *THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL*

Seventh Grade Students arrive at 7:45 a.m. for first day and additional orientation activities.

Eighth Grade Students begin their first day of school two hours later (approximately 9:45 a.m.)

# SEVENTH GRADE

In seventh grade, students focus on three questions: “Who Am I”, “Who Are They?”, and “Who Are We?” Students explore these questions in the seventh grade courses. Through this work, we hope that students will not only gain skills and concepts in each of the subject areas, but also have a deeper understanding of themselves and their world.

**Courses:** Required courses are English, Math, Science, Social Studies, PE and Health. In addition, all students may take Exploratory Courses in Computers and Production Technology. Electives include several World Languages and Music Performance. Please note the prerequisites before signing-up for Music Performance classes!

We also offer courses designed to support students in their academic studies through our Special Education Program, English Language Learner Program, and Academics Plus Program.

## DESCRIPTION OF SEVENTH GRADE COURSES

### ENGLISH 7

#### **OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING for English Language Arts:**

*Literature and language help us explore and express our understanding of ourselves, our environment, and others. We do this through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.*

The English Language Arts curriculum at Amherst Regional Middle School is based on Enduring Understandings. We explore these deeper understandings by probing essential questions through literature, writing, language and critical thinking. As our students come to their own unique understandings, they own what they are learning and it resonates with them. The seventh grade curricular units center around the questions: Who am I? Who are They? Who are We? All ARMS seventh graders will experience the literature circle units Understanding Differences and Character and Environment, and units: Identity (An Island Like You - Judith Ortiz Cofer), Poetry (A Suitcase of Seaweed -Janet Wong), and World Mythology (World Myths and Folktales, How the World Began: Creation in Myths and Legends). Additional units will fit into the year according to the teacher and team’s integration plans.

The English Language Arts, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking, are recursive. They are learned and relearned, improved and embellished throughout an individual’s school career. In our classrooms, language intersects with writing and literature, and numerous connections are made by integrating with the curricula of other departments; we know this is the way our students learn well. In our student-centered classrooms you will see writing process workshops, literature circles, cooperative learning, and project-based learning to help our students improve in the English Language Arts.

It is our mission and goal to challenge all students in our classes. To meet that goal, we modify and extend our content and instruction for individual students as needed. Every core unit of 7<sup>th</sup> grade English has with it an accompanying Challenge project intended to further stretch students’ critical thinking and literacy skills and will be factored into their English grade.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES 7**

### **OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING for Social Studies:**

*Acting as a member of a global society requires understanding the diversity of world views. An individual's world view is shaped by his/her environment, family, community, culture and experiences. How does an individual develop his/her world view?*

The Social Studies curriculum at Amherst Regional Middle School is based on a number of enduring understandings. Enduring understandings are "big ideas" uncovered by essential questions which guide learning. They help students to see relationships and patterns in the content of the course. While we begin with a common question, "How does an individual develop his/her world view?", the inquiry process enables students to discover their own unique answers.

The seventh grade social studies curriculum includes six units. In the introductory unit, students will apply the five themes of geography to projects focused on the question "Who Am I?". The next four units answer the question, "Who Are They?" by exploring the enduring understandings that help define an individual's world view. The enduring understandings include how a person's environment, identity development, and diversity within and between cultures shapes her/his world view. These enduring understandings will be examined through a series of case studies drawn from various regions of the world. The final unit asks students to answer the question "Who Are We?" by applying the enduring understandings from the prior units in a culminating project about global connections. Each seventh grade Social Studies teacher will create his/her curriculum including case studies according to student needs and the interdisciplinary connections of the team.

## **SCIENCE 7**

### **OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING FOR Science:**

*The natural world is composed of interdependent systems. Understanding how natural systems work enables us to take care of them.*

The science curriculum at Amherst Regional Middle School is based on a number of Enduring Understandings. These understandings are "big ideas" supported by essential questions that guide both exploratory learning activities and direct instruction.

Science 7 is an introductory life science course designed to enable our students to become knowledgeable about the natural world by learning about basic life science concepts, and about the natural systems that function within the world. The goals for the 7th grade year are several. The first is to promote an appreciation for the nature of science and how scientists do their work. This allows students to build a perspective on how science connects to the world and how they interact with it. Second, we want students to build a solid base for later study in the life sciences, by learning about the characteristics of living things, cell theory, natural selection, and the human body. Third, they will begin to understand the complex interrelationships between systems in the natural world. Conceptual model building towards these goals is achieved through interactive laboratory activities, group discussion and projects designed to facilitate critical thinking and observation skills.

Note-taking, test-taking, lab procedural, and group and study skills are emphasized throughout the year. Students will use a variety of materials for curricular resources including Holt's Cells, Heredity and Classification, Glencoe's Ecology and Human Body Systems textbooks and teacher-generated materials.

In an effort to differentiate instruction and challenge our Science minds, each teacher may develop, in conjunction with the student, a project beyond that of the classroom to be completed independently which will challenge them in an area of interest or expertise.

## **MATH 7**

### **OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING FOR Mathematics:**

*Mathematics is a system for organizing the world quantitatively. We use mathematics to analyze, problem solve, and communicate about ourselves and our world.*

*The tools of mathematics allow us to:*

- *Understand and model relationships.*
- *Compare quantities to make informed decisions.*
- *Efficiently measure and compare one, two, and three dimensional shapes.*
- *Make sense of situations that involve numbers that are not whole and/or positive.*

For seventh grade math, students focus on concepts around similarity, ratio and proportion, three-dimensional geometry, rational numbers, patterns and relationships (with an introduction to linear relationships), and probability. With all units that are taught, the focus is on having students not only be able to acquire the skills needed to do the math, but also understand the concepts behind the topic. This will help students remember the math that they are learning and help them learn math in later years. In addition to this, students will see the real world applications of the math they are learning.

In seventh grade math, all students are given the opportunity to accelerate by working on extensions for the classwork and homework. The main focus of the accelerated material is to have students develop their abstract thinking through writing and using equations and expressions for all of the seventh grade math content. Successful completion of the extensions and the regular work prepares students to do the accelerated algebra material in eighth grade.

We use the IMPACT Course 2 book as our main curriculum resource. With this books and other materials, we focus on students being able to problem solve and communicate mathematically both orally and in written form.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The goals for our program are to teach students to become a physically-educated person. A physically-educated person becomes competent in a variety of movement and skills, understands strategies and concepts, participates regularly in physical activity, maintains a level of fitness, and exhibits responsible personal and social behavior.

The Middle School Physical Education Program introduces students to a variety of team, individual, and partner activities. We also work on group games that provide social and cognitive interaction in a physically active environment which is inclusive to many different skill levels. The program provides students with activities and games they can learn and play outside of school and encourage students to be more active in their daily lives.

The fitness segment of the curriculum includes a warm up and stretching. Fitness concepts are introduced to students to use as a basis for understanding exercise and activity in relation to being fit and healthy for a lifetime. Our emphasis is to help students understand and value the benefits of daily physical activity over a lifetime.

In Grade 7, our Physical Education Course includes a Health Component, which empowers students to examine the impact of health-related decisions on personal well-being. The curriculum consists of a number of units dealing with physical, emotional, and social health-related issues. Emphasis in this program is placed on evolving self-image and the steps students can take to enhance self-esteem and make healthy decisions. The instructional format includes lectures, reading, audio-visual presentations, problem-solving activities, journal entries and guest speakers. Students are encouraged to examine their

own health habits and values in order to determine those that serve them well and those that require modification. This program will support and compliment both the seventh grade science curriculum and the “Who Am I?” theme. Our Health Component does include a human sexuality portion. Occasionally, parents request their child be excused from this portion of the Health Component. *Please contact the Grade 7 Assistant Principal if you wish to excuse your child from the human sexuality portion of the Health Component.*

## EIGHTH GRADE

In eighth grade, students build on the essential questions from seventh grade to explore “Change”.

**Courses:** Required courses are English, Math, Science, Social Studies, PE, and WR<sup>2</sup>. In addition, all students may take Exploratory Courses in Art and Drama. Electives include several World Languages and Music Performance. Please note the prerequisites before signing-up for both World Language and Music Performance classes!

We also offer courses designed to support students in their academic studies through our Special Education Program, English Language Learner Program, and Academics Plus Program.

### DESCRIPTION OF EIGHTH GRADE COURSES

#### ENGLISH 8

#### **OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING for English Language Arts:**

*Language and literature are essential tools for managing, creating and responding to change with knowledge, insight, intent, and an understanding of essential characteristics that endure throughout these changes.*

The English Language Arts curriculum at Amherst Regional Middle School is based on Enduring Understandings. We explore these deeper understandings by probing essential questions through literature, writing, language, and critical thinking. As our students come to their own unique understandings, they own what they are learning and it resonates with them. The eighth grade curricular units center on the idea of *change*. All ARMS eighth graders will experience the literature circle units Transformations and Speaking Out (including the poetry of Langston Hughes), and the units Coming of Age Narratives (America Street), Humanity (Of Mice and Men – John Steinbeck), and Drama (Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* or the dramatic adaptation of *To Kill a Mockingbird*). Additional units will fit into the year according to the teacher and team’s integration plans.

The English Language Arts, reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking, are recursive. They are learned and relearned, improved and embellished throughout an individual’s school career. In our classrooms, language intersects with writing and literature, and numerous connections are made by integrating with the curricula of other departments. We know this is the way our students learn well. In our student-centered classrooms, you will see writing process workshops, literature circles, cooperative learning, and project-based learning to help our students improve in the English Language Arts.

It is our mission and goal to challenge all students in our classes. To meet that goal, we modify and extend our content and instruction for individual students as needed. Every core unit of 8<sup>th</sup> grade English has with it an accompanying Challenge project intended to further stretch students’ critical thinking and literacy skills and will be factored into their English grade.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES 8**

### **OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING FOR SOCIAL STUDIES:**

*The promise of America is one of opportunity. America's story must be told from diverse perspectives to understand how access to opportunities changes over time. Because the struggle for opportunity continues today, we have a responsibility to shape American society to make the promise a reality. Is America a land of opportunity?*

The Social Studies curriculum at Amherst Regional Middle School is based on a number of enduring understandings. Enduring understandings are "big ideas" uncovered by essential questions which guide learning. They help students to see relationships and patterns in the content of the course. While we begin with a common question, "Is America a land of opportunity?", the inquiry process enables students to discover their own unique answers.

The eighth grade social studies curriculum includes six units. The units we study will span from the founding of the country into late 19th century. In the introductory unit, students will apply the historical method of inquiry, based on the collection and evaluation of evidence, to prepare them to uncover the stories of America's past. The next five units examine changes in America: political change, technological change, cultural interaction and change, conflict, compromise and change, and social change. These changes frame the opportunities afforded to various groups in American society. At times, changes brought opportunity to some and obstacles to others. Units may be taught according to the needs of the students and teacher. Each eighth grade Social Studies teacher will create his/her curriculum chronologically or thematically according to student needs and the interdisciplinary connections of the team.

## **SCIENCE 8**

### **OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING for Science:**

*The natural world is composed of matter and energy. Understanding how matter and energy change and stay the same in the natural world allows us to interact with the world responsibly.*

The science curriculum at Amherst Regional Middle School is based on a number of Enduring Understandings. These enduring understandings are "big ideas" supported by essential questions that guide inquiry-based learning and direct instruction.

Science 8 is an introductory physical science and engineering course designed to help students develop an understanding of how matter and energy change and stay the same in the natural world. Primary goals are to: promote enthusiasm for science; help students develop the ability to make informed decisions based on evidence; and help students acquire the ability to interact with the world responsibly. Fundamental physical, chemical, and engineering concepts are developed through hands-on labs and project-based activities. The units of study include: Properties of Matter and Chemical Interactions; Experimental Design; Motion, Forces and Energy; and Technology/Engineering Design. Students will use a textbook, Prentice Hall's Chemical Building Blocks, and a variety of teacher-generated materials.

In an effort to differentiate instruction and challenge our Science minds, each teacher may develop, in conjunction with the student, a project beyond that of the classroom. The project is to be completed independently and will challenge them in an area of interest or expertise.

## **MATH 8**

### **OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING for Mathematics:**

*Mathematics is a system for organizing the world quantitatively. We use mathematics to describe and predict change in order to make informed decisions in our world.*

*The tools of mathematics allow us to:*

- *Organize data and make decisions using linear, quadratic, inverse, and exponential relationships.*
- *Make a complex situation easier to understand through simplifying expressions and solving equations.*
- *Measure angles and use their properties when navigating and building.*

For eighth grade math, students focus on conceptual algebra. This means that a lot of work is done exploring the context (real life applications), graph, and table of specific relationships and then working with the equations. The focus is on linear relationships, but students also explore quadratic, exponential, and inverse relationships. In addition to this, students do abstract work with solving equations and simplifying expressions. Students also do two geometry units: one on angles, and another that introduces the Pythagorean Theorem. Successful completion of this curriculum prepares students to take IMP 1, Algebra I, or Algebra I Honors in ninth grade.

Accelerated math in the eighth grade does the same units as the regular math. As with seventh grade, the accelerated math in eighth grade focuses on the more abstract concepts within those units. Examples of this are solving simultaneous equations symbolically and working with multiple forms of quadratic equations. Successful completion of this curriculum prepares students to take either IMP 2 or Geometry Honors at the high school.

We use the IMPACT Course 3 book as our main curriculum resource for both courses and also use the Foerster Algebra I book in the accelerated course. With these books and other materials, we focus on students being able to problem solve and communicate mathematically both orally and in written form.

## **READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING (WR<sup>2</sup>)**

**OVERARCHING ENDURING UNDERSTANDING:** *Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it.*

This course addresses the issues of doing research and the associated tasks of reading and writing in the information age. Working with a wide range of materials ranging from traditional and digital text to visual or non-print formats, students will analyze and evaluate information. They will also use the Internet along with a variety of computer applications to find and manage information. Students will learn to demonstrate this knowledge, to present their findings clearly in written and oral form and to answer questions about their work.

This course will explicitly teach reading, writing, and research strategies in the content areas. Where possible, content from students' other academic classes will be the material used to teach these specific strategies. Additionally, students will develop their research around essential questions, learning that taking time to probe into the essence of a problem can make the research and solving of that problem much deeper and more meaningful.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The goals for our program are to teach students to become a physically-educated person. A physically-educated person becomes competent in a variety of movement and skills, understands strategies and

concepts, participates regularly in physical activity, maintains a level of fitness, and exhibits responsible personal and social behavior.

The Middle School Physical Education Program introduces students to a variety of team, individual, and partner activities. We also work on group games that provide social and cognitive interaction in a physically active environment which is inclusive to many different skill levels. The program provides students with activities and games they can learn and play outside of school and encourage students to be more active in their daily lives.

The fitness segment of the curriculum includes a warm up and stretching. Fitness concepts are introduced to students to use as a basis for understanding exercise and activity in relation to being fit and healthy for a lifetime. Our emphasis is to help students understand and value the benefits of daily physical activity over a lifetime.

**Exploratory Courses, Music Performance Courses, World Language Courses, and Academics Plus Courses offered during the current school year are listed in this Program of Studies. All of these courses may not be offered every school year.**

**Students should not register for any World Language Course that is not listed on the Registration Form.**

## **EXPLORATORY COURSES**

*Offered in Grade 7*

### **COMPUTER APPLICATIONS**

Students will learn to use the Microsoft Office suite of computer applications and the web authoring tool FrontPage to complete academic tasks. Students in this course create PowerPoint slide shows, Excel spreadsheets, and Access data base as tools to do academic projects. Using Microsoft FrontPage, students construct portfolio web sites. In these portfolios, students place examples of work from all their subjects to create an archive of their learning at the middle school. (Offered in Grade 7)

### **TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION (PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY)**

The students will be introduced to the basic tools used in drafting, with which they will complete 2 basic types of mechanical drawings, isometric and orthographic projection (whose accurate identification and interpretation is required on the eighth-grade Science and Technology MCAS). They then transition to Computer Assisted Design (CAD) using ProEngineer, a program widely used in industry, as well as, at the Amherst Regional High School. Students also become proficient in Bridge Builder, a program designed by the Department Head of the West Point Computer Assisted Design Department as an entry level avenue for familiarizing learners with more advanced features of design software. The Engineering Design Process is the third portion of the class. This is the heart of Technology Education, or what is increasingly coming to be known as Pre-engineering. Through project-based instruction, students recreate the steps of the Engineering Design Process (a parallel to the Scientific Inquiry Method) by designing, testing, and redesigning balsa wood bridges. Ultimately, students should be able to explain how the forces of tension, compression, torsion, and shear affect the performance of their constructions. Work is done in teams of three to four in order to replicate an authentic design context in which negotiation, compromise and collaboration play key roles. (Offered in Grade 7)

## *Offered in Grade 8*

### **ART**

The art curriculum caters to students' lifelong engagement in the arts. The program will expand students' knowledge of visual concepts and visual literacy, and build on the individual learner's knowledge, skill and experience by exploring new methods in media and technique. Students will work in a wide variety of media and practice, including drawing, painting, 3-D and 2-D design. The interdisciplinary curriculum strives to foster a more sophisticated level of art production through art history and art criticism. Students will engage in self reflection and expression through art. (Offered in Grade 8)

### **DRAMA**

Drama class is designed to give students an opportunity to study and practice the art of creating for the stage. Students will work on a variety of projects including improvisation, script writing, character study and a final performance piece. Students will read a variety of scripts and work on adapting text for the stage. Each student will be required to play a character in a scene or one act play. This play will be performed for an audience. (Offered in Grade 8)

## **MUSIC PERFORMANCE COURSES**

The musical ensembles in the Amherst Regional Schools are unique among course offerings in the schools, since their culminating activities involve performances in which all students participate together. Each person in the ensemble not only participates in but also contributes to the final result. Performances are the central activities of these ensembles. Each September every student enrolled in a performing ensemble receives a schedule of performances and after-school rehearsals of the ensemble. This schedule is meant to be shared with parents as soon as it is distributed.

### **CHORUS 7 AND 8**

Chorus is open without audition to any student seriously interested in singing in a choral ensemble. Chorus classes rehearse three days a week and present three evening concerts in addition to other scheduled performances each year. Chorus sings music in classical, jazz, blues, folk, popular, and show music styles. Students learn proper voice production, music reading, and singing in parts.

Students in Chorus will experience the full historical range of the choral repertoire. This will include both secular and sacred music. The choosing of music is based on National and State Standards as well as the historical place of the piece in Choral repertoire. When singing a "sacred" piece, time is taken to outline the musical value of the piece which will include elements pertinent to vocal pedagogy and touch briefly on what the pieces liturgical usage might have been.

### **BAND 7**

The seventh grade band is open to students who play woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments with occasional exceptions (such as piano) with permission of the instructor. Students will work hard to develop the technical and musical skills which their music requires, and individual practice time is expected. Importance is placed on using the individuals' ability within the context of the large ensemble. *To enroll, students must read music, have spent at least two years in an elementary music program OR receive special permission from the instructor.*

### **BAND 8**

The eighth grade band is a more advanced performing ensemble which reinforces the previous year's objectives. Students will continue to work and refine the technical skills and theory skills which are required by the more difficult music they perform.

## ORCHESTRA 7 AND 8

The orchestra is open to seventh and eighth grade students who play the violin, viola, cello or double bass. This ensemble performs three evening concerts each year. It develops technical skills and musicianship through the learning of selections representing a variety of musical styles. Sight-reading and music literacy is emphasized throughout the year.

## CONCERTS

The Band, Chorus and Orchestras present concerts in the elementary schools and evening concerts at the Middle School. All members may also audition to participate in the annual Massachusetts Music Educator's Western District Junior High Festival.

Please note: If family plans for trips or other obligations conflict with a performance schedule, the student should consult with the director of the ensemble. If a concert is missed, the student must present a note to the director immediately upon return to school. Lack of participation in a performance will result in a significant reduction of the student's grade for the marking period in which the absence occurs. Excused absences also deprive the student of a culminating activity that cannot be replicated. In the event of an excused absence from a performance, the student will be asked to perform a portion of the concert repertoire for the director. Having completed this, the student will receive partial credit for the performance missed. Neglecting to notify the director will result in the student receiving no credit for the performance part of the grade (35%). Students who sign up for performing music are expected to continue in the course for a full year.

## WORLD LANGUAGES

The world language department offers students the opportunity to begin or continue the study of several languages. These are courses taught in the Middle School and are designed particularly for this age group. Students who wish to begin a foreign language will be placed in the novice level course. Extensive experience in a foreign language, such as living abroad, will be considered by the foreign language teachers in placing students at a higher instructional level. After a testing and observation period at the beginning of the school year, adjustments may be made in the placement of students.

Depending on their elective choices, students may have the opportunity to begin either one or two languages at the Middle School. Students will have even more opportunities to add an additional language at the High School. Many students choose the language in Middle School that they will study all the way through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade!

### NOVICE PROGRAM

The Novice curriculum is designed for the student wishing to begin the study of a foreign language. **It is not designed for native speakers of the target language.** Native speakers of one of the languages we teach at the Middle School should sign up for a different language. In high school, you will have the opportunity to place into an appropriate level course in your heritage language.

The Novice level is subdivided into Level I and Level II, each corresponding to a year of study. In the Novice Level, students will master essential skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In addition, students will use these skills to explore cultural topics essential to understanding the context of the target language, and in a broader sense, the elements common to world cultures.

Upon completion of the curriculum, students will demonstrate oral proficiency in such areas as greeting and leave-takings, expressing likes and dislikes, following directions, comparing and contrasting, expressing needs, and narrating in the present tense. Proficiency will also be demonstrated in

reading/writing sentences and paragraphs on a variety of topics such as geography, weather, holidays, family, friends, home, school, leisure activities, etc.

Students should expect intensive conversational practice and regular homework. Classes are conducted primarily in the foreign language. Because of the interactive nature of language learning in class, civility and cooperation, as well as willingness to use the target language, are essential ground rules for this level.

## **WORLD LANGUAGE COURSES**

### **CHINESE NOVICE I**

This is a beginning Chinese course. Its design is based on the proficiency principles and emphasis is on oral communication. Students will acquire the ability to communicate about themselves and others, to express basic ideas and needs, and to interact with others. The students will learn how to communicate in daily-life situations and how to understand the cultural aspects of China. The teaching method for this course will emphasize interactive and task-oriented activities. Upon completion of Chinese Novice I, students should acquire a survival level of competency. Homework assignments will include listening, oral and written work. A portfolio assessment will be used and both oral and written evaluations will be included. The course offers daily opportunity to work in pairs or small groups with an emphasis on oral expression.

### **FRENCH NOVICE I**

This introductory course is for students who wish to begin their study of French. Emphasis will be on oral communication through creative manipulation of memorized vocabulary expressions. Homework assignments will be both oral (memorization of vocabulary and dialogues) and written (grammar and vocabulary-based exercises). Student assessment will include oral and written evaluations. The course offers daily opportunity to work in pairs or small groups with an emphasis on oral expression.

### **SPANISH NOVICE I**

This introductory Spanish course is for students who wish to begin the study of Spanish. There is emphasis on conversation as well as creative writing assignments and reading. Students can expect daily homework assignments which will include memorization of vocabulary and/or written exercises. Students will undergo both oral proficiency and written proficiency evaluations in which accuracy in spelling and pronunciation will be stressed. The course offers daily opportunity to work in pairs or small groups with an emphasis on oral expression.

### **GERMAN NOVICE I**

This course is for students who wish to begin the study of German. Introduction to the German language emphasizes oral communication skills, presented in the context of German culture. Oral participation, which leads to oral proficiency, is the main focus of this course, but basic reading and writing skills are also addressed. Homework is to be expected daily and includes memorization of vocabulary and/or written exercises. Students will be evaluated regularly on both oral and written proficiency. Students must achieve mastery of Novice I material in order to move on to Novice II.

### **LATIN NOVICE I**

This is the course for students who wish to begin the study of Latin. Students will learn to read simple Latin and translate it into correct English. Students will build a basic Latin vocabulary and use it to help improve their English vocabulary through a study of derivatives. As students learn Latin grammar, they will increase their understanding of English grammar through a comparative study of the two languages. Students will be introduced to the culture of the Roman world including such topics as clothing, names, travel, slavery, mythology and country life. Frequent quizzes are used to evaluate students' understanding

of linguistic material. The course requires the completion of daily written homework. Assignments may include translation, grammatical exercises, or dictionary work with English derivatives.

### **RUSSIAN NOVICE I**

If you're curious about learning some Russian, this course is for you. This introduction to listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing skills includes the use of the Cyrillic alphabet. Communication activities center on greetings, identification of everyday objects, and description of daily activities. Language lab exercises and class projects expand upon the basic material. Grammar study focuses not only on Russian, but on its differences and similarities with English. Students are introduced to the history and culture of the Russian people. Daily homework is to be expected.

*Students in the eighth grade will have the opportunity to continue the language they first studied in the seventh grade. Students may also have the option of beginning French or Spanish at the Novice I level.*

### **CHINESE NOVICE II**

#### **PREREQUISITE:** CHINESE NOVICE I

This course is offered to students who have successfully completed Chinese Novice I. Emphasis will continue to be placed on oral communication regarding different topics of daily-life situations. Students will learn more complicated sentence patterns and structures, and more Chinese character writings, which will give them more in-depth ability to express their knowledge and opinions in Chinese. Students will be expected to communicate orally on more topics of daily-life situations. Homework assignments will include both oral and written work. A portfolio assessment will be used and both oral and written evaluations will be included. The course offers daily opportunity to work in pairs or small groups with an emphasis on oral expression.

### **FRENCH NOVICE II**

#### **PRE-REQUISITE:** FRENCH NOVICE I

This course is offered to students who have successfully completed French Novice I. Emphasis will continue to be placed on developing oral proficiency through creative manipulation of material. Daily homework assignments will be both oral and written. Students will be expected to write multi-paragraph compositions. The course offers daily opportunity to work in pairs or small groups with an emphasis on oral expression.

### **SPANISH NOVICE II**

#### **PRE-REQUISITE:** SPANISH NOVICE I

This Novice level course is offered to students who have successfully completed Spanish Novice I. The course emphasizes oral communication and grammar. Since students taking this course have had at least one year of Spanish they are expected to do independent projects on Spain and its culture, to write short essays and to comprehend reading selections. Students will be expected to write multi-paragraph compositions. The course offers daily opportunity to work in pairs or small groups with an emphasis on oral expression.

### **GERMAN NOVICE II**

#### **PRE-REQUISITE:** GERMAN NOVICE I

This course is a continuation of Novice I. It increases oral communication skills and expands basic reading and writing skills in the context of contemporary German culture. The language lab will be used frequently to reinforce listening and speaking skills. Daily homework is required. Students who successfully complete this course will go on to German Intermediate I.

## **LATIN NOVICE II**

### **PRE-REQUISITE:** LATIN NOVICE I

This course is a continuation of Latin for students who have completed Novice I Latin. Students will learn to read more complex and longer selections of Latin and to translate into correct English. Students will continue to increase Latin and English vocabulary. Students will begin a study of Roman legend and history, examining the stories the Romans told about their heroes, and the myths they loved. Students will present brief written, oral, and visual reports on topics in vocabulary derivation, mythology, and history. Homework requirements are similar to those for Latin Novice I. Quizzes will continue to be used to assess students' mastery of linguistic concepts.

## **RUSSIAN NOVICE II**

### **PREREQUISITE:** RUSSIAN NOVICE I

Russian language and culture studies continue with this course, focusing on the language of housing, family, shopping and dining. We'll work with more complex language structures as we strive to improve our communication skills in speaking, comprehension, reading, and writing in Russian. Compare your life style with that of the contemporary Russian. The basic material will be supplemented by student and teacher designed projects that help give insight into the language and culture. Lab work helps to expand listening and speaking skills. Daily homework is to be expected.

## **ACADEMICS PLUS CLASSES**

### **MATH PLUS CLASS**

The Math Plus course provides a second helping of mathematics for those students enrolled in their regular grade-level math classes. The Math Plus class provides a smaller group setting where students can access the core concepts of the middle school math curriculum. Along with previewing and reviewing these concepts, the class allows students to diagnose and improve upon weaknesses they may have with the basic skills required to succeed in middle school math. Activities and games are also introduced that are designed to lower math anxiety. This class is particularly useful for students in gaining a score of Proficient on the math portion of the MCAS exam.

### **READING AND WRITING WORKSHOP**

The Reading and Writing Workshop is a Plus class that provides a second helping of English for those students who need to build their skills in reading and writing. Students will learn how to use a process approach to writing as they work on independent writing assignments as well as on MCAS writing prompts. They will also learn how to use reading strategies to improve their comprehension of assigned and independently chosen short fiction and non-fiction texts. This class is particularly useful in gaining a score of Proficient on the English-Language Arts portion of the MCAS.

# **English Language Education Program (ELE)**

## **IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS ACQUIRING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

The Amherst-Pelham Regional Middle School provides a range of instructional programs for students who are English language learners (ELLs). Identification and placement of students is made by the English Language Education [ELE] staff through the use of both state and district wide language assessments. These assessments are administered upon enrollment, annually, and upon exiting from the program. They are administered in order to determine each student's English language proficiency. Students who are not yet proficient in English are provided with ELE instruction and native language support in science and math, but not limited to.

### **DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS ACQUIRING ENGLISH**

#### **THE ELE PROGRAM AND ELL LEVELS**

There are four levels of ELL: Beginner (Level 1), Early Intermediate (Level 2-A), Intermediate (Level 2-B), and Transitional (Level 3). Students who are not yet proficient in English are assigned to one of these four ELL levels. Students progress from one level to the next as they acquire more proficiency in English. Progress is determined through the use of various assessments including student's performance in class, annual proficiency assessments (SLEP) and standardized assessments required by Massachusetts Department of Education (MEPA R/W and MELA-O). Students receive ELE instruction until they are proficient in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English, at which time they are transitioned/exited out of the ELE program. Students in ELE classes also have the opportunity to work inclusively in the Language Arts and Social Studies classrooms with the collaboration of ELE teachers and subject matter teachers, besides participating in other core academic and grade level required courses. ELL teachers monitor the academic progress of exited ELLs for two years, as it is mandated by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

#### **THE LAU PROGRAM**

The Amherst-Pelham Regional Middle School LAU program provides bilingual tutorial support for students who are not yet proficient in English. Bilingual tutors are assigned to work in mainstream classrooms (particularly in math and science). Students continue to receive bilingual tutorial support until they are able to learn solely in English, at which time, they are transitioned from this portion of the program.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY TUTORIAL SERVICES FOR STUDENTS ACQUIRING ELL**

When available, students from the University of Massachusetts and other organizations are available to tutor English language learners in most subject areas after school and during study halls.

### **DESCRIPTION OF ELE COURSES**

#### **ELE ORAL COMMUNICATION 7/8**

ELE Oral Communication is designed to introduce students at the beginning and early Intermediate levels of English to the new language and culture. Emphasis is on developing listening and speaking skills through a range of interactive activities. These activities facilitate the acquisition of meaningful and appropriate communicative skills in English about daily life, social and academic situations, the students' home cultures, and the culture of American public schools, the local community, and the United States. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities are used to engage students in this acquisition process. Students must achieve proficiency at this level in order to transition from the course

#### **ELE LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION 7/8**

This course is designed for beginning and early intermediate students of English as a new language. Students in the course develop English language skills through the study of selected topics from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts curriculum. Curriculum units are explored through the lens of 7<sup>th</sup> grade school wide essential questions: *Who Am I? Who are They? Who are We?*, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade theme of *Change*. Language and literature help students explore and express an understanding of the environment, others and themselves. Students in the course explore units/topics on *Autobiography, Speaking Out, Transformation, Identity, Poetry, Mythology/Folktales* among others. Students will read books individually at home, and collectively in class. They are expected to have a reading for pleasure book at all times and read every night. Students will read a variety of literature pieces: short stories, novels, poems and plays among other genre. They will analyze reading pieces through literature circles, reading responses and journal entries. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are

ways in which students access the curriculum. The course helps students acquire and build new vocabulary, improve communication, and develop writing skills. English grammar, usage and mechanics will be taught and writing process techniques will be used. Through a variety of writing activities, students will learn how to write a three paragraph essay. Students will develop word processing skills at the Computer Writing Lab. They will demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways, including exhibitions and/or an end-of-the-year publication.

### **ELE SOCIAL STUDIES 7/8**

This course is designed for students of English as a new language at the beginning and early intermediate levels. Students in the course develop English language skills through the study of selected topics from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies curriculum. Curriculum units are explored through the lens of 7<sup>th</sup> grade school wide essential questions: *Who Am I? Who are They? Who are We?*, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade theme of *Change*. Students will learn and delve into the *Five Themes of Geography, Biomes Culture and American History*, from founding of the country into late 19<sup>th</sup> century, including *Reconstruction* among other topics. Subtopics include environment, language, religion, and the impact of people interactions. They are encouraged to go beyond facts and be critical thinkers. Student in the course work on developing and improving skills in reading strategies, writing, speaking, listening, organization, cooperative learning, and study skills. The course will help students acquire concepts and vocabulary in geography, U.S. history, current events (e.g., immigration), world cultures and global issues. It also provides the space for students to share, learn, and appreciate each other experiences and backgrounds.

### **ELE LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION 7**

This course is an inclusion model in the team Language Arts class, designed for ELL students at the Intermediate and Transitional/Advanced levels. The ELE teacher and the English team teacher work in collaboration with the students. Students read a variety of literary genres: poetry, short stories, mythology, novels and non-fiction. They will read, write, listen and speak to access the curriculum and share knew understandings. Through the use of problem solving strategies students will understand concepts and discuss character, point of view, plot, theme, mood, and setting in literature. They are expected to have a reading book at all times and read every night. Students will learn vocabulary-building and reading and strategies skills. They will analyze reading pieces through literature circles, reading responses and journal entries. Students will write paragraphs, essays, and poems using creative, narrative, descriptive, expository and critical modes. English grammar, usage and mechanics will be embedded in the course, and writing process techniques will be used. Students will demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways including exhibitions.

### **ELE Social Studies 7**

This course is an inclusion model in the social studies class, designed for ELLs at the Intermediate and Transitional/Advanced levels. The ELE teacher and the social studies team teacher work in collaboration with the students. The course helps students develop English language skills through the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum framework that include a variety of units/topics such as the *Five Themes of Geography, Culture/World Cultures ,and Biomes among* others. These units are explored through three essential questions: *Who am I? Who are We? and Who are They?* The students explore the local community of Amherst and the larger region. Through the examination of history, geography, cultures, political division, economy and people of the region students develop and improve reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. The course includes the 5 themes of geography, and a “case study” (country or region) selected from the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework Learning Standards of World Geography which is aligned with the Massachusetts framework and standards.

### **ELE Literature and Composition 8**

This course is an inclusion model in the team Language Arts class, designed for ELLs at the Intermediate and Transitional/Advanced levels. The ELE teacher and the English team teacher work in collaboration with the students. Students in the course explore literature through broad thematic units on Transformations, Speaking Out, Personal Narrative, and Wartime Experiences among others. Students read historical fiction novels, short stories, poems, plays, expository, autobiographies to explore social and political issues, and universal human conditions, and make connections with themselves and the world around: text to text, text to self, and text to the world. They will analyze reading pieces through literature circles, reading responses and journal entries. Students read, write, listen and speak to access the curriculum and share knew understandings. Through a variety of writing strategies and techniques such as process writing students will improve their skills. They will use multimedia/genre to demonstrate new understandings. Students will use writing for a variety of audiences and purposes, including writing to learn (reflection), expository (to inform and explain), creative and persuasive writing.

### **ELE Social Studies 8**

This course is an inclusion model in the team social studies class, designed for Intermediate and Transitional/Advanced levels students of English. The ELE teacher and the social studies team teacher work in collaboration with the students. The course helps develop English language skills through the study of the social, political, historical context of the United States, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the reform era. Students learn to use social science inquiry methods using a variety of grade level primary

and secondary source materials. Students will gather information through reading a variety of documents and texts. They will also use the library effectively for research. In this course, students are encouraged to go beyond understanding facts about U.S. history to think about point of view, to compare and contrast, generalize and draw conclusions. In addition to developing reading and expository writing skills in English, this course will help acquire concepts and vocabulary in geography, U.S. history, current events, and world cultures. This course follows the district's curriculum guideline that is in alignment with the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES**

At the Middle School we provide a comprehensive continuum of services for students with special needs. Services range from substantially separate programs to indirect consultation by service providers. Entrance into special education is through a referral process outlined by the Massachusetts special education regulations. Referrals are usually initiated by the guidance counselors in collaboration with teams and parent/guardians. As a result of the evaluation process, if a student is found eligible and in need of special education services, an individual education plan is written. The plan includes student-centered goals, which are addressed in a variety of models. The following models for delivering programs and services are most often used, in a variety of combinations to ensure the least restrictive environment:

1. consultation to staff and parents/guardians
2. support and instruction within mainstream class settings, often known as inclusion support
3. additional support ("double dip") in Math and/or English
4. academic support (pre-teaching/re-teaching) within special education settings and classrooms
5. direct instruction in content areas within special education setting

## **SPECIALIZED SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS:**

### **AIMS (Academic Individualized Mainstream Support)**

The AIMS Program is designed to support the education of students identified as having higher functioning autism spectrum disorders, or similar learning profiles, in the least restrictive environment. No two students in the AIMS program have the same schedule or program. We design each student's education programming, support services, and schedule to meet individual needs, modifying whenever appropriate. For example, some students in the AIMS program are included in general education classes for the majority of their day, but take a special education academic support class as often as the IEP (Individual Education Plan) team decides is necessary within a week. Activities within this class are also tailored to support each student's organizational, academic, behavioral, sensory, and social-emotional needs. Other students in the AIMS program may be included for some core academic subjects (e.g. Science), but receive intensive, individualized instruction in other academic subjects (e.g. Math). Students may receive speech/language services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or reading tutorial based on the specified needs in their IEP. Also, students within the AIMS program may receive direct support within their general education classes from an instructional assistant. The focus and frequency of this support also varies according to the student's specified needs. The AIMS liaison directly supervises any instructional assistants working with students in the AIMS program and maintains the necessary communication with regular education teachers, parents, related service providers, and school administration to foster students' success.

### **LLD (Language Based Learning Disabilities)**

Students who meet the criteria for the LLD program may be enrolled in the following **special education classes**:

**1. English Independent Study** The primary goal of English Independent Study is to prepare students with LLD for a less restrictive environment, either at ARMS, or at the high school level. This is a literature-based class that follows the regular education English curriculum, with the same standards, at a modified pace and with modified materials and teaching methods. Reading comprehension skills, reading and writing fluency, and structured writing are explicitly taught within the literature-based curriculum. Assistive and adaptive technology, and alternative assessments are used as appropriate. The small group setting (no more than 8) allows for more individualized instruction than a regular education classroom. **Note:** During some curriculum units, notably the 7<sup>th</sup> grade "Who am I?" unit, and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade "Drama" unit, this class will be mainstreamed with regular education as much as possible to take advantage of the opportunities for learning through multiple intelligences. During these units, and any others where "push-in" to reg. ed. is appropriate, students will have appropriate accommodations and modifications for reading, writing, and language. The English Independent Study Special Education teacher will be present in the reg. ed. classroom at all times during these units for support and assessment.

**2. Reading/Writing Workshop (see description under Regular Education Support classes)** Students in Special Education sections of RWW will focus on IEP goals in Reading and Writing.

**3. Reading Tutorial** In this very small group or individually taught class, the teacher uses research-based methods to systematically and explicitly teach sound-symbol relationships to improve a student's reading decoding and fluency. To be eligible for this class, and to continue to be eligible, the student's present level of performance in basic reading skills must be significantly below grade-level peers. Criteria: Fluency scores below the 16<sup>th</sup> percentile (-1 std. deviation of mean) **and** basic reading scores below the 21<sup>st</sup> percentile compared to grade-level peers on a nationally normed reading assessment.

#### **4. Academic Support Class**

**In addition to these classes, students in the LLD program receive services according to their needs. These services may be Special Educations services which are documented in their IEP, or may be regular education services.**

IEP services may include:

- § Inclusion support in regular education classes
- § Speech & language consult or direct service
- § Math Independent Study

Regular Education Services may include Math Plus, or Reading/Writing Workshop if the student has earned a "Needs Improvement" or "Warning" on MCAS.

Both regular education and special education sections are offered. Special education placement decisions are made by the IEP team based on reading and writing goals as well as MCAS scores.

#### **ESSENTIAL SKILLS PROGRAM**

The essential skills program is designed to support the education of students identified as having intensive special needs. The students in the program have multiple disabilities including language, motor, behavioral, cognitive, and sensory impairments. The students receive their education in an inclusive environment that meets the needs of individual students.

Individual programs often emphasize communication skills, adaptive living skills, academic skills, community and work skills, social engagement and positive behavioral support. Students may receive speech/language services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or reading tutorial based on the specified needs in their IEP.

Students typically receive direct support within their general education classes from an instructional assistant. The focus and frequency of this support varies according to the student's specified needs. The essential skills liaison directly supervises the instructional assistants working with students in the program and maintains the necessary communication with regular education teachers, parents, related service provides, and school administration to foster students' success.

#### **BRIDGES**

The Bridges Program is designed to support the education of students identified as having social, emotional, academic or behavioral challenges, in the least restrictive environment. We design each student's educational programming, support services, and schedule to meet individual needs, modifying whenever appropriate. The classroom is self contained with potential for all four content subject areas to be taught in a small group setting, or, the student may integrate into general education classes, depending on their continually assessed needs and strengths. This is an academic setting where students are taught standards based curriculum aligned with the regular education setting, therefore keeping students aligned with general education peers and preparing for MCAS. The students in the program may be provided outside of the classroom resources in accordance with their IEP, such as Therapeutic Counseling in groups or individually, as well as Speech, Occupational or Physical Therapies. A level of case management is possible due to the lower number in the classroom, so if coordination between school and services out side of school is needed, that is managed by the staff. The program is supported by a Therapeutic Teacher/Counselor so that social skills, pragmatics, and life skills may be integrated into the curriculum. The ultimate goal is to give every opportunity for students to be supported in the least restrictive environment while receiving the academic or emotional supports they need to be successful at the Middle School.

## **GRADING**

### **MARKING SYSTEM**

Report cards are distributed three times during the school year so that students and parents become aware of the progress being made in each subject. All seventh and eighth grade courses are divided into trimesters. We use letter grades to show achievement in each course. There is space on the report card for teachers to write comments, or teachers may use computer-coded comments that print on the report card.

Progress reports are distributed at the middle of each quarter. These progress reports let students know how they are currently doing in each subject.

### **HONOR ROLL**

Students make the Honor Roll at the end of a quarter if they achieve a 3.5 gpa or better in each subject. The Honor Roll list is published in the Amherst Bulletin at the end of each quarter.

## REGISTRATION OF STUDENTS NEW TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Parents of a student new to the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools must first enroll their child in school with the Registrar. Please call (413) 362-1703 to make an appointment with the Registrar, or write to Registrar, c/o Amherst-Pelham Regional High School, 21 Mattoon Street, Amherst, Massachusetts 01002. We ask that parents provide proof of residence within the region at the time of registration (e.g., lease, purchase agreement, recent utility bill).

Massachusetts state law requires the following immunizations and documentation for all students before they can enroll. Parents must provide the dates that the immunizations were given by presenting documented records.

	GRADES 7-12
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	3 doses
<b>DTaP/DTP/DT/Td (Diphtheria-Tetanus) Td Booster</b>	4 doses DTaP/DTP or 3 doses Td 1 Td booster must be within the past 5 years
<b>Polio</b>	4 doses (unless third dose was given after the fourth birthday)
<b>MMR (Measles/Mumps/Rubella)</b>	2 MMR (or 2 doses measles, 1 mumps, 1 rubella) (First dose must have been after 1 <sup>st</sup> birthday)
<b>Varicella</b>	1 dose (if received before age 13), 2 doses (if first dose received after age 13 years), or documentation of having had chicken pox

- Questions pertaining to immunization requirements can be answered by Health Services in your child's school.
- A copy of a physical examination that has been completed within the last six (6) months must be provided if the student intends to participate in school sponsored sports. If a physical examination has not yet been completed within the past six (6) months, the student may be temporarily enrolled if the parent provides us with the name of the health care provider and the date of the scheduled physical examination. Medical and/or religious exemptions for immunizations require written documentation.
- A birth certificate or passport must also be shown at the time of enrollment.

It is helpful if parents bring an unofficial transcript from the previous school to assist in grade placement and selection of courses. We will send for an official transcript after enrollment takes place, or the parent can request in writing that the former school mail the transcript directly to us.

Students are placed in ninth grade upon successful completion of the eighth grade. In order for a student to be placed in tenth grade, s/he must have earned 16 credits, and in eleventh grade s/he must have earned at least 36 credits. The minimum for placement in twelfth grade is 58 credits.

Students who are native speakers of languages other than English or whose home language is other than English are required to be tested by the English as a Second Language Department Head before they are placed in English and social studies classes.

After officially enrolling their child, parents are then ready to meet with a guidance counselor. If ELL testing is required, the Registrar will arrange for it. Then the Registrar notifies the guidance department that a new student has been enrolled and that an appointment should be arranged with one of the counselors. In this conference the counselor reviews the student's previous records, discusses selection of appropriate courses with the parents and student, and builds an appropriate schedule.

The entire process of registration may take two or three days to complete. We will be glad to send the parents any materials needed for registration prior to arrival in Amherst. This will speed up the process and will assist parents and students who are new to the system. Once here, a student may be required to take placement tests so that we can determine the most appropriate classes.

### WITHDRAWAL AND RE-ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES FOR FAMILIES ON SABBATICAL

When a family has finalized its plans for sabbatical leave, we ask that the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student at the Middle School notify the student's guidance counselor **and** the secretary in the principal's office. Procedures for withdrawal and re-enrollment will be explained to the student at this time.

Several weeks prior to departure, parents should request transfer forms, clearance cards, and information release forms. These forms must be completed, **signed by parents(s) or guardian(s)** and returned to the Middle School secretary.

Students who leave during the school year should understand that a grade with Withdrawn-Pass or Withdrawn-Fail is recorded on the report card and transcript and no credit is awarded unless **all** course requirements are completed. The receiving school may award grades and credits for those courses completed under their jurisdiction. **Students who leave just prior to the end of**

**a course should meet with individual teachers to negotiate the details of completing the course requirements.** When the student completes all of the requirements, the teacher may award a final grade and/or credit.

Parents and students could save much time and effort by meeting with the appropriate school staff for academic planning before departure. They should meet with the student's guidance counselor to be sure that they understand the ARHS graduation requirements if the student intends to return to ARHS, to plan an academic program for the new school, and to plan for courses that will be necessary when the student returns to ARHS. Parent(s) or guardian(s) should call the school health office to request a copy of the student's health records for the new school. The office secretary at the Middle School or the Registrar at the High School can provide unofficial copies of the student's transcript to be hand-carried to the new school.

While on sabbatical in the spring, parents or students should write to the Principal at the Middle School during March to request course registration materials for the following school year. Parent(s) or guardian(s) should also request that the temporary school forward the student's official records to the Registrar's Office as well as provide an unofficial copy of the records to be hand-carried to the re-enrollment appointment with the Registrar. The Registrar is Dana Tarr, and her office is located in the High School at 21 Mattoon Street, Amherst, MA 01002 (Phone: 413-362-1703).

Upon return to the Amherst Region, parent(s) or guardian(s) should first call the Registrar for a re-enrollment appointment. The Registrar will check the student's records and will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the necessary re-enrollment procedures, such as proof of immunization or a physical examination. Students and parent(s) or guardian(s) should be aware that course work completed outside of the Region does not count toward a student's Amherst Regional High School grade point average. Credit toward graduation will be determined by the Registrar and the Instructional Director. Finally, after completing all re-enrollment procedures, the family should call the office secretary for an appointment with the appropriate guidance counselor. At this meeting, the student, parent(s) or guardian(s) and guidance counselor will plan a schedule of courses unless the student previously requested, filled out, and returned a course selection worksheet and has already been scheduled. The school strongly encourages the parent(s) or guardian(s) to attend this meeting with the student to be sure that everything is in order and to begin reorientation to the Regional Schools.