



Middle School Curriculum Guide

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A message about middle school

Welcome to middle school in the City School District of Albany! We have compiled this guide to help you understand what our middle schools have to offer.

You will see in the pages of this book that we provide a wealth of opportunities for middle-school students: rigorous and challenging classes, after-school clubs and activities, sports, and support for those who struggle academically or socially.

The four middle schools – Edmund J. O’Neal Middle School of Excellence, North Albany Middle School, Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School and William S. Hackett Middle School – all strive to provide students with an academic foundation that prepares them for the rigors of high school and, ultimately, college or career.

All classes in the four middle schools are aligned with New York State Next

Generation Learning Standards. Students will be expected to take state- and district-created tests that measure student progress and understanding.

Our goal is to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for success. We will do this by cultivating caring relationships and providing engaging learning experiences and equitable opportunities.

Entering middle school is a bit like emerging from a cocoon. Students leave behind the comfort and predictability of elementary school. There are more students in middle school and in most cases a different teacher for every class. Students have more freedom, and they have more responsibility for themselves.

It is a phenomenal time of growth, both physically and emotionally. It also is a time of great opportunity.



Please take time to learn about all we have to offer!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaweeda G. Adams".

Kaweeda G. Adams
Superintendent

Our guiding principles

Our vision

The City School District of Albany will be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.

Our mission

The mission of the City School District of Albany is to work in partnership with our diverse community to engage every learner in a robust educational program designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

Our goals

Increase student achievement; Enhance the delivery of quality instruction; Build our leadership capacity and increase accountability; Empower families; Partner with our diverse community.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) sets high standards and contains policies that will help prepare all students for success in college and future careers. For more information, including complaints or appeals regarding the administration and implementation of any ESSA-funded programs, visit albanyschools.org/ESSA.



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Our middle schools

Where your child attends elementary school most often determines the middle school your child will attend. The district enrolls its middle schools with a feeder pattern, meaning specific elementary schools feed into certain middle schools. Students who live within a half-mile of one middle school but whose elementary school feeds into a different middle school can apply for open enrollment and may receive neighborhood preference. Learn more about open enrollment at albanyschools.org.

Edmund J. O’Neal Middle School of Excellence

(518) 475-6600 | 50 North Lark St.

Elementary feeder schools: Arbor Hill Elementary School, Sheridan Preparatory Academy

North Albany Middle School

(518) 475-6800 | 570 North Pearl St.

Elementary feeder school: Philip J. Schuyler Achievement Academy

Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School

(518) 475-6425 | 100 Elbel Court

Elementary feeder schools: Albany School of Humanities, Giffen Memorial Elementary School, Montessori Magnet School, Pine Hills Elementary School

William S. Hackett Middle School

(518) 475-6475 | 45 Delaware Ave.

Elementary feeder schools: Delaware Community School, Eagle Point Elementary School, New Scotland Elementary School, Thomas O’Brien Academy of Science and Technology



Grade 6 curriculum

Core classes

English Language Arts

Students will:

- Continue to develop as readers, writers, listeners, speakers and thinkers;
- Strengthen comprehension and analytical skills;
- Broaden academic vocabulary and develop as strong writers; and
- Engage in a comprehensive research project and discussions driven by reading material that aligns with students' readiness and interests.

Books sixth-graders will read include *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis, *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan and excerpts from *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai.

Math

Students will:

- Connect ratio and rate to whole-

number multiplication and division and use concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems;

- Understand division of fractions and extend the notion of numbers to the system of rational numbers, including negative numbers;
- Write, interpret and use expressions and equations; and
- Develop understanding of statistical thinking.

Science

Students will:

- Engage in scientific inquiry using lab tools, measurement and experimental design;
- Explore human body systems' structures, functions and interactions;
- Study the impacts of nutrition, fitness and pathogens on human health;
- Learn about waves, light and sound;
- Investigate Earth's layers and

the geological process on Earth's surface, including the study of weathering and plate tectonics; and

- Study the composition and formation of rocks, minerals and fossils.

Students in grade 6 Science complete a science project and have the opportunity to participate in the Joseph Henry Science Fair.

Social Studies

Students will:

- Study the geography and history of the Eastern Hemisphere from pre-history – history before written records – into the 1300s;
- Learn about the development of cultures, civilizations and empires;
- Compare trends in governments and economics; and
- Identify and analyze enduring issues to make connections between historical and current events.

Continued on next page

Grade 6 curriculum *(continued)*

Other required classes

Health

This class focuses on health and skills for a healthy lifestyle, including goal-setting and planning, decision-making, effective communication, self-management, stress management and resource management.

Physical Education

The goal of grade 6 Physical Education is to expose students to a wide variety of physical activities to identify those that they enjoy to support lifetime fitness and health.

English Enrichment

All grade 6 students take English Enrichment to support the transition from elementary to middle school. The class gives students the opportunity to enhance and enrich their foundational literacy skills using strategies taught by a reading teacher. Resources, assignments and projects are selected with students' individual strengths and interests in mind. Computer Assisted Instruction is a component of English Enrichment. Students will log on to the i-Ready web-based program approximately 40 minutes each week to improve and enrich their skills in English Language Arts.

Reading Enrichment

Select sixth-graders take Reading Enrichment to enhance their literacy skills using strategies taught by a reading teacher. Resources, assignments and projects are selected with students' individual strengths and interests in mind.

Math Enrichment

All grade 6 students take Math Enrichment to support the transition

from elementary to middle school. The class gives students the opportunity to develop, enhance and enrich their math skills. Resources, assignments and projects are selected with students' individual strengths, areas of need and interests in mind. Computer Assisted Instruction is a component of Math Enrichment. Students will log on to the i-Ready web-based program approximately 40 minutes each week to improve and enrich their skills in math.

Math Skills Enrichment

In place of Math Enrichment, select students will receive Math Skills Enrichment to develop foundational skills necessary to access grade-level curriculum and instruction. Resources, assignments and projects are selected with students' individual strengths, areas of need and interests in mind.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

Advancement Via Individual Determination is an elective class for specific students. AVID is a nationwide college and career readiness program. See page 14 to learn more.

Electives

Art

Art introduces students to elements of art and design historically and today, emphasizing the arts as a pathway for community and global connections.

Band*

Band in middle school provides students the opportunity to expand the skills acquired in elementary Band. As students develop more

musical independence, they will be able to perform more complex and diverse musical pieces.

Chorus*

Chorus in middle school allows students to explore basic vocal techniques in a variety of musical genres, including singing, music reading, vocabulary and theory.

Computers

In this class, students will be introduced to Microsoft Office and G Suite programs. In addition, digital citizenship, coding and typing skills will be taught.

General Music

General Music students are introduced to a variety of world music through various forms of media. Students create, perform and participate in topics revolving around world music.

Library Skills

In Library Skills class, students learn to research ideas and information in a variety of print and digital formats.

Orchestra*

Orchestra in middle school provides students the opportunity to build on the skills acquired in elementary Orchestra. Musical independence is highlighted as teachers shift emphasis from single-line melody in all instruments to individual sections.

* Students may be scheduled for Band and Chorus, or Orchestra and Chorus, but not Band and Orchestra. Instrumental students will be required to attend lessons in addition to their scheduled ensemble period and be responsible for making up any other missed class work.



Grade 7 curriculum

Core classes

English Language Arts

Students will:

- Continue to develop as readers, writers, listeners, speakers and thinkers;
- Strengthen comprehension and analytical skills;
- Broaden academic vocabulary and develop as strong writers; and
- Engage in a comprehensive research project and discussions driven by reading material that aligns with students' readiness and interests.

Books seventh-graders will read include *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park and *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson.

Grade 7 Honors English Language Arts

This course follows the same learning standards defined by New York State for grade 7 but explores these skills with greater depth. This class is reading- and writing-intensive.

Math

Students will:

- Develop understanding of and apply proportional relationships;
- Develop understanding of operations with rational numbers and work with expressions and linear equations;
- Solve problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and work with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area and volume; and
- Draw inferences about populations based on samples.

Grade 7/8 Accelerated Math

This course covers all of the grade 7 Math standards and priority standards from the grade 8 Math standards to prepare students who may accelerate to Algebra I.

Science

Students will:

- Build on science inquiry, measurement and graphing skills;

- Explore the properties of matter;
- Examine periodic tables and trends;
- Learn about energy and energy transformations;
- Engage in the study of cells, including microscopic structures and their functions;
- Study genetics, including cellular and organism reproduction; and
- Expand their knowledge of the structure of the universe.

Grade 7/8 Accelerated Science

This course covers learning standards from grade 7 and grade 8 Science. These learning standards and units are selected to prepare students that may accelerate to Living Environment in grade 8. In addition to covering grades 7 and 8 Science standards, students will explore the content with greater depth and rigor.

Students in grade 7 and 7/8 Science complete a science project and have the opportunity to participate in the Joseph Henry Science Fair.

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Grade 7 curriculum (*continued*)

Social Studies

Students will:

- Study the United States from the settlement of North America by Native Americans through the Civil War, with a focus on people, events and places in New York;
- Learn about the development of cultures, civilizations and empires;
- Understand interactions between societies;
- Identify and analyze enduring issues to make connections between historical and current events.

Grade 7 Honors Social Studies

This course covers the same learning standards as grade 7 Social Studies, but in greater depth using more challenging information sources.

Other required classes

Art or Music*

Art introduces students to elements of art and design historically and today, emphasizing the arts as a pathway for community and global connections.

General Music introduces students to fundamental music concepts using different instruments such as piano, drums and ukulele. Students create, write, perform, respond to and analyze music with basic music theories.

Band gives students the opportunity to build on the skills built in grade 6. As students develop more musical independence, they will be able to perform more complex and diverse pieces.

Advanced Band is available to students who want to tackle more challenging music. The class is enrolled by grade level or audition.

Chorus students explore basic vocal techniques in a variety of musical genres, including two-part and three-part singing, music reading, vocabulary and theory, building on the skills gained in grade 6 Chorus.

Orchestra provides students the opportunity to use the skills acquired in elementary Orchestra. Musical independence is highlighted as teachers shift emphasis from single-line melody in all instruments to individual sections.

Advanced Orchestra is available to students who want to tackle more challenging music. The class is enrolled by grade level or audition.

* Students may be scheduled for Band and Chorus, or Orchestra and Chorus, but not Band and Orchestra. Instrumental students will be required to attend lessons in addition to their scheduled ensemble period and be responsible for making up any other missed class work.

Grade 7 curriculum *(continued)*

English Enrichment

Select seventh-graders take English Enrichment to enhance their literacy skills with strategies taught by a reading teacher. Resources, assignments and projects are selected with students' individual strengths and interests in mind.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS)

Grade 7 FACS helps students to have a better understanding of themselves, their families and their environment. It is designed to give students the skills necessary to become productive, independent adults. Units of study include cooking and nutrition, clothing management and sewing, human development and career exploration.

Math Content Enrichment

Select students will receive Math Content Enrichment to reinforce the grade-level curriculum and instruction. Resources, assignments and projects are selected with students' individual strengths, areas of need and interests in mind.

Math Skills Enrichment

Select students will receive Math Skills Enrichment to develop foundational skills necessary to access grade-level curriculum and instruction. Resources, assignments and projects are selected with students' individual strengths, areas of need and interests in mind.

Physical Education

The goal of Grade 7 Physical Education is to expose students to a wide variety of physical activities, allowing them to identify those they enjoy as a vehicle towards achieving lifetime fitness and health.

Reading Enrichment

This course is designed for students in grade 7 who need support to enhance their foundational literacy skills. Students have the opportunity to work with a reading teacher in a small group in order to enrich reading ability.

Technology

Grade 7 Technology students explore basic concepts and the history of technology. Major areas of focus include the engineering design process, design and drawing, systems and materials processing.

World Languages

Students can choose one of the language offerings in their school. These courses explore the culture(s) where the language is spoken and learn basic vocabulary, reading, speaking and writing skills in the target language.

Electives

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

Advancement Via Individual Determination is an elective class for specific students. AVID is a nationwide college and career readiness program. See page 14 to learn more.

Computers

In this class, students will be introduced to Microsoft Office and G Suite programs. In addition, digital citizenship, coding and typing skills will be taught.





Grade 8 curriculum

Core classes

English Language Arts

Students will:

- Continue to develop as readers, writers, listeners, speakers and thinkers;
- Strengthen comprehension and analytical skills;
- Broaden academic vocabulary and develop as strong writers; and
- Engage in a comprehensive research project and discussions driven by reading material that aligns with students' readiness and interests.

Books students will read include *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand and *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai.

Grade 8 Honors English Language Arts

This course follows the same learning standards defined by New York State

for grade 8 but explore these skills with greater depth. This class is reading- and writing-intensive.

Math

Students will:

- Formulate and reason about expressions and equations;
- Grasp the concept of a function and use functions to describe quantitative relationships;
- Analyze two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity and congruence; and
- Understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem.

Grade 8 Accelerated Math is Algebra I

This is a high-school level course that teaches students a variety of algebraic skills and processes that help them solve problems in a variety of settings. Students take the state Algebra I

Regents exam at the end of school year.

Science

Students will:

- Continue to build on understanding science themes and practices;
- Explore the impact of forces on the motion of objects;
- Examine forms of energy, work, and power, including simple machines, circuits and magnetism;
- Engage in studies of weather and climate;
- Learn about the processes and evidence for evolution; and
- Study natural ecosystems, including the negative and positive impacts that humans can have on ecosystems.

The Grade 8 Science course culminates in the New York State Intermediate Level Science Test.

Grade 8 curriculum *(continued)*

Grade 8 Accelerated Science is Living Environment

This is a high-school level course that includes the study of the organization of living things, genetics and heredity, life processes and homeostasis, reproduction and development, evolutionary processes and ecology, including the human impact on the environment. This course culminates with the New York State Living Environment Regents examination.

Social Studies

Students will:

- Study the United States from Reconstruction through modern-day America, with a focus on people, places and events in New York;
- Participate in academic discourse;
- Analyze historical context, turning points in history and enduring issues;
- Develop academic writing and researching skills; and
- Work collaboratively to think critically, share ideas and build consensus.

Grade 8 Honors Social Studies

This course covers the same learning standards topics in grade 8 Social Studies but they are explored in greater depth using more challenging resources.

Other required classes

English Enrichment

Select eighth-graders take English Enrichment to enhance their literacy skills with strategies taught by a reading teacher. Resources, assignments and projects are selected with students' individual strengths and interests in mind.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS)

Grade 8 FACS helps students develop self-confidence, learn about the importance of good nutrition and its relationship to lifelong wellness, be smart consumers and accept responsibility for their actions. Units of study include college and career readiness, personal environment management, financial management, nutrition and consumer resource management.

Math Content Enrichment

Select students will receive Math Content Enrichment to reinforce the grade-level curriculum and instruction. Resources, assignments and projects are selected with students' individual strengths, areas of need and interests in mind.

Math Skills Enrichment

Select students will receive Math Skills Enrichment to develop foundational skills necessary to access grade-level curriculum and instruction. Resources, assignments and projects are selected with students' individual strengths, areas of need and interests in mind.

Physical Education

The goal of grade 8 Physical Education is to expose students to a wide variety of physical activities, allowing them to identify those they enjoy as a vehicle towards achieving lifetime fitness and health.

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Grade 8 curriculum *(continued)*

Reading Enrichment

This course is designed for students in grade 8 who need support to enhance their foundational literacy skills. Students have the opportunity to work with a reading teacher in a small group in order to enrich reading ability.

Technology

Grade 8 Technology classes build upon concepts learned in grade 7. Major areas of focus include engineering careers, the engineering design process, computer-aided design, systems and materials processing.

World Languages

Students can choose one of the language offerings in their school. These courses explore the culture(s) where the language is spoken and students learn basic vocabulary, reading, speaking and writing skills.

Electives

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

Advancement Via Individual Determination is an elective class for specific students. AVID is a nationwide college and career readiness program. See page 14 to learn more.

Art or Music*

Art introduces students to elements of art and design historically and today, emphasizing the arts as a pathway for community and global connections.

General Music students are introduced to fundamental music concepts using different instruments

such as piano, drums and ukulele. Students create, write, perform, respond to and analyze music with basic music theories.

Band gives students the opportunity to build on the skills built in grades 6 and 7. As students develop more musical independence, they will be able to perform more complex and diverse pieces.

Advanced Band is available to students who want to tackle more challenging music. The class is enrolled by grade level or audition.

Chorus students explore basic vocal techniques in a variety of musical genres, including two-part and three-part singing, music reading, vocabulary and theory, building on the skills gained in grade 7 Chorus.

Orchestra provides students the opportunity to use the skills acquired in elementary Orchestra. Musical independence is highlighted as teachers shift emphasis from single-line melody in all instruments to individual sections of the orchestra.

Advanced Orchestra is available to students who want to tackle more challenging music. The class is enrolled by grade level or audition.

* Students may be scheduled for Band and Chorus, or Orchestra and Chorus, but not Band and Orchestra. Instrumental students will be required to attend lessons in addition to their scheduled ensemble period and be responsible for making up any other missed class work.

Computers

In this class, students will be introduced to Microsoft Office and G Suite programs. In addition, digital citizenship, coding and typing skills will be taught.





Honors and accelerated classes

The City School District of Albany strives to challenge all students to reach their full potential and embrace rigorous coursework. It is our goal to assure that all middle-school students have ongoing opportunities to succeed in demanding classes.

In general, students who meet the following criteria will be recommended for honors and accelerated courses:

- State Assessment Performance Level of 2 (raw score at/above median), 3, 4;
- NWEA MAP at or above the 50th percentile; and
- Course averages at or above 80.

Honors classes usually cover the same content and skills as general classes but at a faster pace and with more challenging work. Accelerated classes, on the other hand, lead to or are high-school classes that students take in middle school.

Honors classes and accelerated classes are open to students in grades 7-8.

English Language Arts

Honors English Language Arts

These courses in grades 7 and 8 focus on the same learning

standards for those grades as defined by New York State, but explore them in greater depth. There is a strong emphasis on developing students' ability to analyze and discuss complex reading, establish and defend a claim, and work collaboratively.

Math

Grades 7/8 Accelerated Math

This course will cover grade 7 Math standards and priority standards from the grade 8 Math standards to prepare students who may accelerate to Algebra I.

Grade 8 Accelerated Math is Algebra I

This is a high-school level course that teaches students a variety of algebraic skills and processes that help them solve problems in a variety of settings. Students take the state Algebra I Regents exam at the end of the school year and earn a high-school credit.

Grade 7 students with historical trends of NWEA MAPs at or above the 90th percentile, State Assessments Performance Levels of 4, and course averages at or above 95th percentile may take Algebra I.

Science

Grade 7/8 Accelerated Science

This course covers learning standards from grade 7 and grade 8 Science courses. These learning standards were selected to prepare students that may accelerate to Living Environment in grade 8.

Grade 8 Accelerated Science is Living Environment

This is a high-school level course that is the study of the organization and maintenance of living things, reproduction and development, the human body and evolution. Students take the state Living Environment Regents exam at the end of the school year and earn high-school credit.

Social Studies

Honors Social Studies

These courses in grades 7 and 8 focus on the same learning standards as defined by New York State, but explore content and skills in greater depth. There is a strong emphasis on developing students' capacity to analyze and discuss context, turning points in history and ongoing issues. The classes also emphasize developing strong writing and researching skills.



Additional programs

After-school activities

All of our middle schools offer a variety of after-school programs. For more information and a comprehensive list of what is offered at each, please contact the school directly.

Albany International Center

Students in our English as a New Language program have the option to attend a transitional program at the Albany International Center, which serves grades 6-12. The program is located at North Albany Middle School.

Learn more at albanschools.org/AIC.

Athletics

A variety of competitive after-school sports opportunities are available to all seventh- and eighth-graders in the City School District of Albany throughout the school year.

Students may try out for these modified sports teams, which are

offered throughout the school year. If practices and home games take place at a different school than your child's, the district will transport your child there.

Before students can play a sport, they must have a physical exam and parent or guardian permission. Both are required by state law.

Modified athletic teams include cross country, soccer, football (boys) and volleyball (girls) in the fall, basketball, swimming and wrestling (boys) in the winter, and outdoor track, lacrosse, baseball (boys) and softball (girls) in the spring.

Learn more at albanschools.org/athletics.

AVID

Advancement Via Individual Determination – AVID for short – is a national kindergarten-high school initiative designed to increase the number of students who enroll and succeed in college and beyond.

Middle-school participation in AVID is voluntary and open to students

in grades 6-8 at all middle schools. (AVID is not available to sixth-graders enrolled in the Spanish Language Studies program at Hackett).

Sixth-graders learn about the program from guidance counselors when they meet to discuss their schedules for the next year. Students apply to the program and are chosen based on their interest, teacher recommendation and performance on district and state tests. Not every student who applies is automatically accepted. Those who are accepted are required to take an AVID class that meets daily.

AVID has had great success nationwide in narrowing the achievement gap. This persistent gap in academic performance exists between African-American and Hispanic students and their white peers. There is a similar academic disparity between students from poor families and those who are better off financially.

AVID students are more likely to take and succeed in rigorous high-school classes and attend college.

Learn more at avid.org.

Additional programs *(continued)*

English as a New Language

Our district offers specialized instruction for English-language learners called English as a New Language – ENL for short. Whether students take ENL classes is determined by their performance on the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners.

Once placed in ENL, students take the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test each May to determine if they need more ENL instruction.

Learn more at albanyschools.org/enl.

Parent University

The City School District of Albany launched its Parent University program in 2015, and it continues to grow and evolve in all of our middle schools.

Parent University offers monthly workshops on a variety of subjects parents and guardians want to know about. The programs are free and conducted by local experts in their fields. Parents and guardians are encouraged to ask questions and participate in these discussions. Parent University also is a source of information about services in our schools and our community.

Learn more at albanyschools.org/parentuniversity.

Special Education

Our district is committed to making sure all students receive a quality education that fits within the framework of their individual needs. Our Special Education programs provide specially designed instruction and services to help meet the unique

needs of students with disabilities.

Programs for students with disabilities are offered in academic settings that range from general education classrooms to self-contained classrooms with fewer students and more teacher support.

Learn more at albanyschools.org/specialed.

Student Support

In addition to academic help, each middle school in the City School District of Albany has a team of professionals with expertise in student support and behavior management. The team includes a behavior specialist, school psychologist, social worker and school counselor; these individuals are available to serve all students.

All students have a right to be in a school environment where they are treated with respect and dignity. Moreover, all students are protected by a state law that prohibits discrimination and harassment by other students or adults.

The law is called the Dignity for All Students Act. It prohibits harassment and discrimination of individuals on school property or at a school function based upon a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

Learn more at albanyschools.org/PPS.



albanyschools.org

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