

THE BLAKE SCHOOL

**MIDDLE SCHOOL
CURRICULUM GUIDE**

2011-2012

THE BLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Blake Middle School is to inspire enthusiasm for learning and to nourish each adolescent's intellectual and emotional development in a supportive and diverse community grounded in the values of honesty, acceptance, respect, responsibility, and trust. Our program and strong partnership among students, parents, and faculty will empower our middle schoolers to become well-rounded, lifelong learners who are able to see through multiple perspectives in order to understand and improve their world.

OBJECTIVES

THE SCHOOL CLIMATE - Based upon respect for the uniqueness and potential of each student, the Blake School will maintain a supportive community in which a unified and coherent academic and non-academic program functions. We will:

- Foster a positive self-concept, emotional maturity, personal integrity, a sense of responsibility and respect for others.
- Create open relationships between students and teachers.
- Make possible the development of mutual cooperation and a healthy attitude toward competition.
- Contribute a sense of tradition and continuity.
- Support risk-taking.
- Strengthen moral and civic values.
- Build high standards of conduct.
- Enhance aesthetic understanding.

Within this climate, attainment of the following major objectives is possible:

- I. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE – Our tradition of academic excellence will be maintained and furthered by the attainment of objectives in the following areas:
 - A. Student Body - The Blake School will seek and maintain a diverse student body made up of students with high academic potential and many individual strengths.

- B. Faculty and Administration - The Blake School will attract and retain a superior, highly qualified and diverse teaching staff and administration who are committed to the school's goals.

- C. Curriculum - The curriculum will challenge all students to strive for excellence and attain their highest potential through an integrated, sequential, and age-appropriate curriculum of skills, knowledge and values.

- D. Athletics and other co-curricular activities will complement the academic program while emphasizing group effort and cooperation, as well as encouraging participation and the development of individual skills.

- E. Resources - The Blake School will provide adequate resources to support the previous four areas.

- II. DIVERSITY - The school will acknowledge and cultivate the uniqueness and potential of each person in the school community.

- A. Each person in the school community appreciates and will be appreciated for his/her own uniqueness and potential through both individual and group experiences.

- B. Each person will appreciate the positive value of diversity in our community.

- C. The school will develop programs that benefit our diverse community.

- III. WORTH OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT - The School will help students achieve a positive self-concept and recognize and accept their potential and limitations.

- A. The student will demonstrate self-awareness.
 - B. The student will develop and use interpersonal and group interaction skills.
 - C. The student will demonstrate self-confidence.

IV. EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP - Through climate, student body, curriculum, and faculty and administration, the school will provide leadership within the greater public and independent education community.

- A. The student body will distinguish itself through scholarship, accomplishments, and community involvement.
- B. The curriculum, evaluated on an annual basis, will incorporate what is best in educational theory.
- C. The administration and faculty will take initiative in developing and offering unique programs and/or educational approaches both within the school and to the wider community.

GRADE LEVEL TEAMS

The Middle School is divided into three grade level teams. The teachers in each team meet together twice a week to discuss both academic and social issues pertinent to the class as a whole and/or individual students. The advisor serves as an advisor and advocate for the student. The advisor collects appropriate input about the student and is the first source of contact for the parent(s) for general academic or social concerns. The annual camping trips/outings, as well as the weekly meetings, are grade level oriented and designed to support our mission.

The contents of this curriculum guide are designed to give an overview of the Blake Middle School courses, their objectives and contents. The Middle School is organized in both a grade level and departmental manner. The healthy balance of these two enables us to have a strong curriculum, while paying close attention to the total personality of the individual student. All the departments work within the framework of the Blake School's philosophy and objectives and the Middle School philosophy. The philosophy and objectives and Division Goals are followed by the courses in the departments that make up the Middle School curriculum:

English	Pages 3-5
Fine Arts	Pages 6-9
Mathematics	Pages 9-12
Modern & Classical Languages	Pages 12-16
Physical Education	Pages 16-17
Science	Pages 17-19
Social Studies	Pages 19-20

There are also three special departments in the Middle School:

Student Services And Counseling	Pages 21-22
Learning Differences	Pages 22
Information Services Dept.	Page 22

ENGLISH

I. ACADEMICS

The broad goals of the English Department are the development and improvement of the students' reading, writing, and speaking skills. Teachers help students achieve these goals by a variety of methods ranging from direct classroom teaching to individualized instruction. Skills are taught and retaught when necessary. Teachers and students set the highest possible standards.

1. Students develop skills in reading through materials appropriate and challenging to age and ability.
2. Students develop critical thinking through study of, discussion of, and written response to literature.
3. Students develop a life-long enthusiasm for reading.
4. Students have frequent writing experiences, both expository and creative, in which clarity and effectiveness of expression are stressed.
5. Students are exposed to and practice proper grammar and usage.
6. Students develop speaking skills through formal presentations and informal discussions.
7. Students will learn to use multimedia materials for research and outside reading.

II. RESPONSIBILITY

We seek a balance of the responsibilities essential to language study. The teacher provides a framework (materials, tasks, situations) which initiates and guides the study. The student participates and recognizes his or her level of involvement and improvement.

1. Students accept responsibility to improve their English achievement by using class and tutorial time effectively to conference about their work. The writing process emphasizes the importance and expectation of revision.
2. In small groups students share their ideas and respond constructively to others.
3. Students, with parent support, accept responsibility for regular class attendance, assuming their share for the continuity of the class program. Students meet deadlines.
4. Students have the opportunity to pursue individualized assignments, independent work, or research projects, based on their ability and interest.

COURSE OF STUDY - GRADE 6

I. READING/LITERATURE

A. Objectives

1. Increase reading comprehension.
2. Recognize and utilize the following purposes for reading:
 - a. reading for enjoyment
 - b. reading for information
 - c. reading for analysis and inference

3. Encourage independent reading throughout the year.
4. Become acquainted with common literary terms and devices.
5. Use literature as a basis for discussion.

B. Course Topics

1. Oral reading (expression, fluency)
2. Comprehension (themes, inferences, concepts, structure)
3. Responding to literature in writing.

C. Texts and Materials

1. Summer Reading (titles vary)
2. *Adventures for Readers* - Book 1
 - a. Elements of short stories
 - b. Poetry and figurative language
 - c. Mythology
 - d. Non-fiction essays
3. *Tangerine*, Edward Bloor
4. Independent Reading, dedicated to exploring genres including mysteries and historical fiction
5. *Ghandi: A Photographic Story of a Life* by Amy Pastan
6. *Red Scarf Girl* by Ji-Li Jiang
7. Literature Circles (titles vary)

II. COMPOSITION

A. Objectives

1. Write sentences and paragraphs clearly and concisely.
2. Write for a variety of purposes (expository, narrative, descriptive).
3. Write creatively.
4. Understand that writing is a process which includes prewriting, drafting, editing/proofreading and revising.
5. Increase independence as a writer and self-editor.

The students will start building a portfolio, containing representative samples of their best writing throughout the year, to be continued through grades 7 and 8.

B. Course Topics

1. Mechanics
2. Writing sentences
3. Writing paragraphs
 - a. topic sentences
 - b. supporting sentences
 - c. conclusion
4. Organization of creative and expository-style compositions
5. Editing skills

III. GRAMMAR

A. Objectives

1. Understand the principles of grammar, usage, and mechanics.
2. Apply these principles to composition.

B. Course Topics

1. Parts of speech
2. Parts of sentences
3. Capitalization
4. Punctuation
5. Correct usage
6. Agreement

C. Texts and Materials

1. *Writer's Choice*, Glencoe
2. *Grammar and Usage Workbook*, McDougal Littell

IV. VOCABULARY

A. Objectives

1. Understand, learn, and use the words presented in literature.
2. Utilize new words in specially designed writing assignments.
3. Use context clues and analyze word parts.

B. Text

1. *Vocabulary Workshop* - Level B

V. MEDIA LITERACY

A. Objectives

1. Conduct research*
2. Evaluate reliability of various sources
3. Practice paraphrasing
4. Select and organize relevant details
5. Cite sources

*Biography Research Report is completed in the 3rd quarter.

COURSE OF STUDY - GRADE 7

I. READING/LITERATURE

A. Objectives

1. Develop comprehension skills.
2. Learn various genres, artistic forms, and literary terms.
3. Explore values through literature.
4. Develop discussion and listening skills through study of literature.
5. Read a minimum of 3 books for outside reading.

B. Course Topics

Genres

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| a. short story | c. drama |
| b. novel | d. poetry |

C. Texts and Materials

1. *Adventures for Readers* - Book 2
2. *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
3. *Beneath My Mother's Feet* by Amjed Qamar
4. *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
5. Others by choice of instructor

II. COMPOSITION

A. Objectives

1. Write frequently.
2. Write clearly and competently for a variety of purposes and in a variety of forms.
3. Work towards mastery of the revising and editing process.
4. Develop ability to make judgments about what constitutes good writing.
5. Write freely and creatively; journals.
6. Use a word processor.
7. Develop confidence in sharing original work.

The students will continue to build their portfolios, containing representative samples of their best work throughout the year; to be continued through grade 8.

B. Course Topics

1. Possible forms of writing
 - a. paragraphs
 - b. analytical essays
 - c. personal essays
 - d. book reports
 - e. short stories
 - f. poetry
 - g. persuasive speeches
 - h. advertising techniques
2. Skills
 - a. topic sentence
 - b. substantiation of topic sentence
 - c. single-word and phrase transitions
 - d. mechanics
 - e. sentence structure (fragments and run-on sentences)

III. GRAMMAR

A. Objectives

1. Understand the principles of grammar, usage and mechanics.
2. Apply these principles to student writing.

B. Course Topics

1. Parts of speech
2. Capitalization
3. Use of commas and end marks
4. Use of apostrophes
5. Use of verbs
6. Sentence structure
7. Paragraph structure

C. Texts and Materials

1. *The Writer's Craft*
2. *Grammar for Middle School* - Kilgallon

IV. VOCABULARY & SPELLING

A. Objectives

1. Understand, learn and use the words presented in their vocabulary book.
2. Learn to use context clues and analyze word parts to unlock the meanings of unfamiliar words encountered in reading and literature.
3. Work towards greater mastery of spelling commonly used words.

B. Text and Materials

1. See texts under Reading/Literature

V. LIBRARY AND COMPUTER SKILLS

A. Objectives

1. Develop proficiency at computer based research
2. Use Microsoft Word for composing and editing.
3. Use the internet for literary research.

VI. SOCIAL ACTION

A. Objectives

1. Students research and write speeches regarding social issues of their choice.
2. Students create plans and take action to create positive social change.
3. Students educate others about the social issues they have researched.

COURSE OF STUDY - GRADE 8

I. READING/LITERATURE

A. Objectives

1. Analyze and interpret literature in various genres.
2. Identify literary concepts in significant writings.
3. Read with increasing comprehension.
4. Encourage independent reading.
5. Learn to actively participate in discussions using textual evidence.

B. Course Topics

1. Drama
2. Short story
3. Poem
4. Novel
5. Memoir

C. Texts and Materials

1. *Night*, Elie Wiesel
2. *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee
3. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, Sherman Alexie
4. *Leaving Home*, Hazel Rochman and Darlene Z. McCampbell, eds.
5. *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare

II. COMPOSITION

A. Objectives

1. Write in various genres including essays, poetry and memoir
2. Support an argument with quotations from a text
3. Write and deliver a persuasive speech
4. Write for authentic purposes and audiences
5. Develop writing conventions (mechanics, usage, punctuation, spelling)

B. Course Skills

1. Utilize all stages of the writing process (brainstorming, outlining, drafting, editing and revising)
2. Develop a thesis statement
3. Support claims with evidence
4. Use of single-word and phrase transitions
5. Develop sentence variety
6. Develop an authentic purpose for each piece of writing
7. Organization and fluidity of writing within each Composition
8. Establishing clear tone through precise diction

C. Text and Materials

1. Kilgallon, *Sentence Composing for Middle School* (continued from 7th grade)

IV. VOCABULARY

A. Objectives

1. Understand, learn and use high frequency, academic and conceptual words found in our texts
2. Practice using words in writing assignments
3. Use context clues and analyze word parts

B. Course Topics

1. Etymology
2. Dictionary skills
3. Use of thesaurus

C. Texts and Materials

1. *Longman Dictionary of American English*
2. *Webster's New World Roget's A-Z Thesaurus*

STUDIO & PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT **GRADE 6, 7 & 8**

The arts engage students in expression through study, dialogue, exploration, performance, evaluation and exhibition of personal and professional artworks. We call on our students to develop a language of the creative spirit and a facility for critical thinking.

SEQUENCE & STRUCTURE OF BLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL ART CLASSES

Blake Middle School offers three branches of music-- Band, Choir and Strings--and three art disciplines-- Theatre, Visual Art and Wood Studio.

All students meet twice weekly in their elected music class for the entire year, and twice weekly in their arts disciplines. The art classes rotate at the trimester in 6th grade and at the semester in 7th and 8th grade.

Each 6th grade student is required to take Theatre, Visual Art and Wood Studio. The class meets twice a week for a trimester. At the end of a trimester the class will move to the next discipline in the rotation.

Starting in the 7th grade, students continue with their music class and elect two arts choices. They will be in each art discipline for one semester.

In 8th grade, students may continue to elect one music and two arts choices for the year, OR they may apply for the Integrated Arts course. Students are accepted through an application and interview process to this course which meets four days each week for the entire year and combines the study of Theatre, Visual Art, Wood Studio, and Music.

VISUAL ART

OVERVIEW OF VISUAL ART PROGRAM - GRADES 6-8

The Middle School Visual Art program builds on art knowledge acquired in Lower School and exposes students to a variety of media and techniques. Everything we study transfers directly to arts classes at the Upper School and perhaps more importantly the lessons are useful in the student's personal life as well.

Each class offers projects in drawing, painting, ceramics and digital art. While the majority of class time is hands-on projects, art history is woven into every project.

Middle school students are often at a stage in their lives where they quickly decide they can or can't do well in art. Projects are designed to support the student's feeling of accomplishment and success through a sequence of deliberately structured assignments with practice runs that lead to projects with lofty goals that every student will be guided to reach.

ART 6

Sixth grade art provides a survey of different art techniques and media that is designed to build an enthusiasm for visual art within each student. We draw, we paint, we sculpt and we make art with computers. Sixth grade art meets twice a week for a trimester. All 6th grade students will have Art as part of their Arts rotation, which also includes Theatre and Wood Shop.

ART 7/8 A (Round A will be taught in 2011-2012)

In Art 7/8 A, we draw, paint, sculpt and make digital art. Much of our study is of expressive and emotional qualities in art. Projects include advanced study on color and how it affects your emotions, human facial features and proportion, using gradients in painting to convey depth and distance, and using digital art to create surreal images.

Art 7/8 meets twice a week for a semester.

ART 7/8 B (Round B is taught in 2012-2013)

In Art 7/8 B our study includes technical skills, methods and styles in art. Projects include perspective drawing, drafting and architecture, pinhole photography, extruded clay forms and work on the potter's wheel, digital art, designing your own currency, human anatomy and gesture drawing and some new styles of painting.

Art 7/8 meets twice a week for a semester.

THEATRE

The Theatre program in the Middle School is designed to give each student exposure to a few facets of theatre including pantomime, improvisation, playwriting and beginning acting techniques.

Theatre Improvisation 6

Students begin the trimester using pantomime to bring stories and poems, as well as original plots and characters, to life. Pantomime allows students to concentrate on movement and facial expression in their early-improvised performances. As the trimester progresses, we add voice and oral expression to the daily performances as students dig deeper into developing their characters and stories.

In class, students learn and use the nine basic stage areas, as well as the different types of stages used in theatre architecture.

Year A: Beginning Acting 7/8 (Offered in the 2011-2012 School Year)

In this semester course, students will explore and perform two roles, the first in a short scene and the second in a monologue. Beginning with the scene, students work on bringing a classic scene and character to life using the text of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Students work together in pairs or small groups, developing their characters, blocking their action, memorizing their lines, and adding the necessary technical elements to bring their scene to a final performance. Throughout this process their teacher and classmates give coaching and construc-

tive critique. Following the scene study, students choose individual monologues from a modern play to perform. Like in their scene, students will work on character development, blocking, line memorization and add technical elements to their performance. Again, throughout the process students will receive coaching and constructive critique from their teacher and classmates.

At the end of the semester an evening performance of student work is planned for parents and friends.

Year B: Performance & Playwriting 7/8 (Offered in the 2011-2012 School Year)

In this semester course, students will learn the basic steps necessary to craft a play. Using both acting improvisation and writing exercises, students will perform and write their way through numerous scenes during the semester. They will work both as individual playwrights and in small groups, creating interesting characters and plots as they learn the basic components of building a script (character, motivation, conflict, resolution, plot, etc.). However, plays are never meant to remain on the page, and beg to be performed and brought to life, so each original student scene will be performed in the class for feedback. Finally, at semester-end, there will be a showcase performance of chosen student work given for parents and friends.

MUSIC 6, 7 & 8

CHORAL MUSIC

The Middle School choral program focuses on a three-year curriculum in which students are asked to study and perform music that represents a wide variety of styles and historical periods spanning the Renaissance through contemporary works. Music chosen reflects the diverse and rich musical heritage from sacred and secular choral traditions throughout the world

Chorus 6 (Grade 6, Mixed Ensemble, mostly treble range) Chorus 6 rehearses twice a week for the entire year. When the student is not in choral rehearsal, he/she will study Visual Art, Theatre or Wood Studio on the other two days. Students will develop their musicianship through unison and part songs designed to solidify the skills necessary for singing in two or more parts. Music is chosen to fit the particular voicing of the choir. Sight singing and ear-training using solfege nurture essential skills for performing music. The Chorus 6 rehearses in two different sections but they perform together as a whole ensemble at the two Fine Arts Choral concerts in December and May. Concerts will be held in the MPAC.

Gender-Specific Choirs:

BoyChoir Grade 7 & 8 Male Ensemble) or Treble Choir (Grades 7& 8 Female Ensemble)

Students enrolled in either BoyChoir or Treble Choir rehearse twice a week for the entire year. When the student is not in choral rehearsal, he or she will study

Visual Art, Theatre, or Wood Studio on the other two days. Students will continue to expand their musical skills by focusing on music and vocal techniques specific to a single gender. Attention is given to the care and use of the developing voice that the students will experience during the next several years. Music is chosen to fit the particular voicing of the choir, which includes a wider range of ability levels and changed, changing, or unchanged voices. Special consideration is given to choosing repertoire that not only develops musicianship, but also showcases the maturing adolescent voice. Sight singing and ear-training techniques will focus on building skills needed to perform more complex music. BoyChoir and Treble Choir will perform at the two Fine Arts Choral Concerts in December and May. Concerts will be held in the MPAC.

Mixed Accelerated Choirs

Concert Choir or Choristers (Grades 7-8, Mixed Voices)

Due to the number of students enrolled in choir, the Concert Choir was added to accommodate students who show readiness for singing with mixed voices. Students enrolled in either Concert Choir or Choristers rehearse twice a week for the entire year. Both choirs are accelerated ensembles that will perform in multiple parts and move more quickly through material than gender specific choirs due to overall skill and vocal development. When the student is not in a choral rehearsal, he or she will study Visual Art, Theatre, or Wood Studio on the other two days. Placement into either choir is based on skill level and aptitude that are determined by classroom work during rehearsals, assessments done during the year, and for some students, by a placement audition in the spring. Music is chosen to fit the particular voicing of the choir that usually includes the soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone parts. The repertoire consists of compositions that build knowledge of choral performance practices among many styles of music. Sight singing and ear-training techniques will focus on building skills needed to perform more complex music, especially a cappella (unaccompanied) works. Occasionally, all members may be required to attend an additional rehearsal during a Tutorial period. The Concert Choir and Choristers will perform at the two Fine Arts Choral Concerts in December and May. Concerts will be held in the MPAC.

TUTORIAL ENSEMBLES & HONOR CHOIRS (As determined by interest, ability and schedule). Students may volunteer to participate in enrichment activities during Tutorial, which develop individual or small group singing skills. Those students interested in auditioning for a state, regional, or national honor choir need to complete audition requirements in general by September 25th of each year. See Mr. LeJeune for more information or check Moodle.

INSTRUMENTAL

Band 6

Band 6 rehearses two times a week over the entire year. When the student is not in band, he/she will have one trimester each of Art, Drama and Shop on alternate days. Each student will be scheduled for one lesson every week. Band 6 performs at least twice a year. Band 6 is the beginning of the band program at Blake where the student will begin to become familiar with basic instrumental fundamentals on his/her individual instrument. Instrumental ensemble techniques will be introduced by way of the large group rehearsal situation. Various written and aural experiences will be used to introduce and reinforce the fundamentals of music and music performance. Each student will prepare and perform a solo for the annual solo festival. With the exception of French Horn, Tuba and Euphonium players, each student is required to furnish his/her own instrument.

Concert Band (35-50 7th & 8th Graders)

Students are scheduled for two band rehearsals each week. The Concert Band performs at least twice during the year with emphasis on developing musical ability and appreciation through practice, performance and listening activities.

Complementary activities may include Jazz Lab, solos and ensembles and guest conductor/clinicians. Placement in Concert Band is by the instructor based on an audition, ability level, and past performance. Band students are required to furnish their own instrument. Students are encouraged to study privately outside of school.

Wind Ensemble (Approximately 35-50 7th & 8th Graders)

The Wind Ensemble is an accelerated instrumental ensemble that plays more challenging repertoire representative of the highest quality literature for young bands. The Wind Ensemble rehearses two times every week all year. The Wind Ensemble performs at least three times during the academic year. The emphasis in this ensemble is on increased musicality and performance technique with consequently higher expectations of the student musicians. Complementary activities include Jazz Lab, solos and ensembles, guest conductor/clinicians. Placement in Wind Ensemble is by the instructor based on an audition, ability level and past performance. Students are required to furnish their own instrument. Wind Ensemble students are strongly encouraged to study privately outside of school.

STRINGS

Strings 6 (Grade 6)

Strings 6 rehearses twice a week for the entire year. When the student is not in strings, he or she will experience one trimester each of Visual Art, Theatre and Wood Studio. Students with previous experience on violin, viola, cello or string bass may enroll in this class. Each student will be scheduled for a small group lesson once a week during recess. This class encompasses varied playing abilities, and each student follows an individualized learning plan, which will then be used as a focus when working on large

ensemble music as well as chamber music and solo repertoire. Strings 6 repertoire is chosen with special consideration for developing strong playing skills, note reading comprehension, and musicianship. Strings students are required to furnish their own instrument and related accessories. Strings 6 will perform at the Winter and Spring Orchestra Concerts.

String Orchestra (Grade 7 & 8)

String Orchestra rehearses twice a week for the entire year and is open to 7th & 8th grade students who have previous experience on violin, viola, cello, or string bass. Students will continue to develop their strings performance and creativity skills by following an individualized learning plan. This course allows for the students to discover pieces and performance practices from the common practice periods (Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary). Strings students are required to furnish their own instrument and related accessories. String Orchestra will perform at the Winter and Spring Orchestra Concerts.

Placement in String Orchestra is by the instructor based on an audition, ability level and past performance.

Chamber Strings (Grade 7 & 8)

Chamber Strings is an accelerated ensemble that rehearses twice a week for the entire year and is open to 7th & 8th grade students who have previous experience on violin, viola, cello or string bass. This course allows for students to experience repertoire from the common practice periods (Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary) and gain a rich knowledge of the performance practices through in-depth study. Students will have the opportunity to work in diverse group sizes. Students are required to furnish their own instrument and related accessories. Chamber Strings will perform at the Winter and Spring Orchestra Concerts.

Placement in Chamber Strings is by the instructor based on an audition, ability level and past performance.

WOOD STUDIO

Course Description

Introduction to wood and alternative materials as a design medium. Design and create 3D forms with an emphasis on visual communication, safe and appropriate techniques, and hand processes.

Rationale for This Class

The rationale for this class is to understand the elements of functional design while still producing artwork that is interesting and represents our personal creativity. The class is intended to develop problem-solving skills in 3-D design and craftsmanship.

A. Objectives

1. To develop in each student safe and appropriate tool techniques.
2. To develop in each student the appreciation of good design and workmanship.

3. To develop in each student an understanding of drawing and the ability to express ideas by means of design.
4. To develop in each student a feeling of pride in his or her ability to create.
5. To generate effective team working skills.

B. Program Content

6th Grade - Students will be exposed to various hand tools and carving techniques. Students will create several ink prints from carved blocks, as well as stand-alone relief carvings. Students will study cultural differences, practices, values and symbol systems that can be transmitted through a body of artwork.

Wood Studio 7/8 A (Round A will be taught in 2011-2012)

While still focusing on safety and simple to advanced wood working techniques, students will generate and develop visual ideas in response to a variety of motivations. Students will apply knowledge of the elements of design while using a variety of techniques, tools, materials, processes, and procedures. Through a new set of teacher selected design problems, students will continue to find and develop their artistic voice by designing one-of-a-kind projects. The remainder of the term will be used on individual projects such as lathe turning.

Wood Studio 7/8 B (Round B will be taught in 2012-2013)

The focus of this class will be on visual problem solving, safe and appropriate tool use, and simple to advanced construction processes. Students will be involved in the design and construction of teacher-selected projects that will reinforce techniques demonstrated during in-class tutorials. Students will also review safe use and care of hand and power tools. The remainder of the term will be used on individual projects such as lathe turning.

INTEGRATED ARTS (IA8)

How many musicians can build their own instrument? How many actors design the set for their stage? What painter or sculptor incorporates sound into their exhibition? While rare, such artists do exist and they find ways to integrate multiple art disciplines. This is the point of Integrated Arts.

In this course all four arts disciplines--Visual Art, Theatre, Wood Studio and Music—are taught. The course is team taught by four of the Middle School arts faculty. While meeting the same goals as the regular 8th grade Arts and Music classes, IA8 reaches these goals by using a student-centered curriculum which challenges students in an experience that integrates all the arts around central themes.

Integrated Arts 8 is a year-long course, meeting four times each week. IA8 replaces a student's normal Arts/Music rotation. Students are selected through an application and interview process in May and June for the following school year.

MATHEMATICS

The Middle School mathematics curriculum consists of courses and activities designed to contribute to both the common and special mathematical needs of Middle School students. The curriculum stresses the development of (1) accuracy and facility in performing fundamental mathematical computations, (2) the ability to analyze and solve problems at varying levels of complexity, (3) an understanding of the nature and structure of mathematics so that students can apply basic principles to new situations, and (4) the ability to understand and use a variety of approaches and strategies. The curriculum includes the concepts and processes of modern mathematics upon which technical and scientific progress depend. Students are continually encouraged to draw conclusions, both specific and general, from the given information.

The mathematics sequence in the Middle School consists of a regular mathematics sequence and an honors mathematics sequence. The regular sequence at The Blake School is comparable to an enriched mathematics sequence in many public schools and prepares students for success in mathematics at college. Especially in Algebra 1, the regular sequence is both challenging and fast paced. Students in this sequence will typically complete an introductory course in calculus before graduation from the Upper School. Because students mature mathematically at different times, the mathematics program is designed so that students not selected for the honors sequence at the Middle School will have multiple opportunities at the Upper School to enter the honors sequence, if appropriate, by completing summer work in mathematics.

Honors Program in Mathematics

In seventh grade, a small group of students are offered the opportunity to enroll in Honors Algebra I rather than in Pre-Algebra. These students will progress to Honors Algebra II in eighth grade and will typically complete two years of AP calculus, AP statistics, or both, before graduation from the Upper School. The requirements for placement into the course are:

1. ERB scores for Quantitative Aptitude and Mathematics at the 90th percentile or above using Independent School norms.
2. Grades of A or A- in the 6th grade math course.
3. An ability and willingness to learn mathematics independently and an enthusiasm for tackling and solving never-before-seen mathematics problems prior to their explication.

4. Strong performance in other academic areas, with no indication of learning or organizational challenges.
5. Teacher recommendation, especially as it relates to love of mathematics, study habits, quality of work, and the ability to quickly grasp new concepts.

Qualified students taking Pre-Algebra in 7th grade may be offered the opportunity to enroll in Honors Algebra I as 8th graders. These students will typically complete one year of AP calculus, AP statistics, or both, before graduation from the Upper School. The requirements for placement into the course are:

1. ERB scores for Quantitative Aptitude and Mathematics must be above or near the 80th percentile using Independent School norms.
2. Grades of A or A- are expected in the Pre-Algebra course.
3. Strong performance in other academic areas, with no indication of learning or organizational challenges.
4. Teacher recommendation, especially as it relates to love of mathematics, study habits, quality of work, the ability to quickly grasp new concepts, and the ability to solve problems and to learn mathematics independently.

ALL HONORS STUDENTS are required to easily maintain an 83% average during the year. If a student fails to do this, they will be asked to enroll in the regular mathematics sequence.

Final Exams in Mathematics

Final exams in mathematics are given at the end of each year. The final exam score, as well as a student's quarter grades and midterm grade, will be used to determine whether summer work will be required in order for a student to be successful in mathematics the following year. Eighth grade students are expected to pass final exams at an 80% level or above. For Honors students, 83% is the minimum acceptable final exam grade.

Objectives of the Middle School Mathematics Program

- I. The student will increase his/her ability to:
 - A. Perform arithmetic computations
 - B. Use algebraic manipulation and techniques
 - C. Visualize and use geometric relationships
 - D. Analyze and solve problems
 - E. Analyze statistical data and solve simple probability questions
- II. The student will be encouraged to:
 - A. Estimate/approximate numerical answers
 - B. Use computers and calculators appropriately
 - C. Use the metric system
- III. The student will develop adequate study skills in mathematics so that he/she will be able to effectively:
 - A. Read a mathematics textbook
 - B. Use a mathematics textbook as a resource
 - C. Use correct mathematical terminology and symbols

- D. Use class time effectively
- E. Do homework carefully and thoughtfully using various approaches to problem solving

- IV. The student will develop attitudes which lead to:
 - A. An appreciation and enjoyment of mathematics
 - B. An awareness of the role of mathematics in society
 - C. Confidence in his/her ability to use mathematics effectively

COURSE TOPICS - GRADE 6

I. Computation

- A. Whole numbers/decimals
 1. Multiplication facts
 2. Place value
 3. Add/subtract
 4. Multiply/divide
 5. Scientific notation
 6. Simple equations
 7. Applications
- B. Fractions
 1. Add/subtract
 2. Multiply/divide
 3. Simple equations
 4. Applications
- C. Integer computation

II. Number Theory

- A. Factors/multiples/divisibility
- B. Primes/composites
- C. Prime factorization
- D. Powers/roots

III. Concepts of Algebra

- A. Variable
- B. Formula
- C. Order of operations
- D. Simple equations
- E. Inverse operations

IV. Geometry

1. Perimeters
2. Area – rectangle, parallelogram
1. Area – triangle, trapezoid
2. Area and circumference – circle (π)
3. Surface areas of prism
4. Volume of prism

V. Statistics and Graphs

VI. Proportional Reasoning

VII. Probability

VIII. Measurement

Text: *Mathematics: Applications and Concepts, Course 1*
 Publisher: Glencoe, 2006 edition

COURSE TOPICS – PRE-ALGEBRA, GRADE 7

I. Tools for Algebra and Geometry

- A. Order of operations
- B. Variables and expressions
- C. Properties
- D. Variables and equations
- E. Ordered pairs and relations
- F. Scatter plots

II. Integers

- A. Absolute value
- B. Coordinate graphing
- C. Comparing and ordering
- D. Operations

III. Solving Equations

- A. Distributive property
- B. Simplifying algebraic expressions
- C. Adding and subtracting
- D. Multiplying and dividing
- E. Solving 2 step equations
- F. Writing 2 step equations
- G. Using formulas

IV. Factors and Fractions

- A. Factors and monomials
- B. Powers and exponents
- C. Prime factorization
- D. Greatest common factor
- E. Simplifying fractions
- F. Multiplying and dividing monomials
- G. Negative exponents
- H. Scientific notation

V. Rationals: Patterns in Addition and Subtraction

- A. Rational numbers
- B. Operations with like and unlike denominators
- C. Least common multiple
- D. Central tendency
- E. Solving equations and inequalities

VI. Ratio, Proportion and Percent

- A. Ratios and rates
- B. Using proportions to find percents
- C. Scale drawings
- D. Fraction, decimal, percent
- E. Estimation
- F. Percent of change
- G. Using percent equations

VII. Two Dimensional Figures

- A. Line and angle relationships
- B. Congruent triangles
- C. Transformations on coordinate planes
- D. Quadrilaterals
- E. Area: parallelograms, triangles, trapezoids
- F. Polygons
- G. Circumference and area of circles
- H. Area of irregular figures

VIII. Three Dimensional Figures

- A. Three dimensional figures
- B. Volume: prisms and cylinders
- C. Volume: pyramids and cones
- D. Surface area: prisms and cylinders

- E. Surface area: pyramids and cones
- F. Similar solids

Text: *Pre-Algebra*, Publisher: Glencoe, 2006 edition

COURSE TOPICS – ALGEBRA 1A, GRADE 8

This course is designed to:

- give students a deeper understanding of numbers
- review prerequisite pre-algebra topics as necessary
- provide additional guidance and support
- build each student's confidence in mathematics
- move at an appropriate pace

I. Rules of Algebra

- A. The real number line
- B. Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of real numbers
- C. Distributive Property

II. Linear Equations

- A. Solve equations
- B. Graph horizontal and vertical lines
- C. Graph equations, intercepts, slope intercept and two points
- D. Standard form of equations
- E. Literal equations and formulas
- F. Clear equations of decimals
- G. Graph and solve absolute value equations
- H. Graphing calculator
- I. Application: linear models

III. Inequalities

- A. Solve and graph one- or two-variable inequalities
- B. Compound inequalities
- C. Applications: linear inequalities

IV. Systems of Equations & Inequalities

- A. Solve by graphing
- B. Solve by substitution
- C. Solve by linear combination
- D. Graphing calculator: Recognizing parallel and same line systems
- E. Applications: systems of equations

Text: *Algebra 1*, Publisher: McDougal Littell, 2007

COURSE TOPICS – ALGEBRA I, GRADE 8

I. Rules of Algebra

- A. The real number line
- B. Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of real numbers
- C. Distributive Property
- D. Addition and subtraction of matrices

II. Linear Equations

- A. Solve equations
- B. Graph horizontal and vertical lines
- C. Graph equations, intercepts, slope intercept and two points
- D. Standard form of equations
- E. Literal equations and formulas
- F. Clear equations of decimals

- G. Graph and solve absolute value equations
 - H. Scatter plots and best fit line using spreadsheets, graphing calculator and paper/pencil methods
 - I. Graphing calculator
 - J. Application: linear models
- III. Inequalities
- A. Solve and graph one- or two-variable inequalities
 - B. Compound inequalities
 - C. Applications: linear inequalities
- IV. Systems of Equations & Inequalities
- A. Solve by graphing
 - B. Solve by substitution
 - C. Solve by linear combination
 - D. Graphing calculator: Recognizing parallel and same line systems
 - E. Applications: systems of equations
- V. Laws of Exponents
- A. Use of laws of exponents
 - B. Use of laws in algebraic expressions and equations
 - C. Scientific notation
 - D. Applications: geometry models, compound interest, exponential growth and decay
- VI. Quadratic Equation and Inequalities
- A. Solve using square roots and quadratic formula
 - B. Graphs
 - C. Pythagorean theorem
 - D. Graphing calculators: Finding solutions to a quadratic
 - E. Applications: falling objects
- VII. Polynomials
- A. Add, subtract, multiply and divide
- VIII. Factoring Polynomials
- A. Common factor
 - B. Special products
 - C. Trinomials
- *IX. Rational Expressions and Equations
- A. Simplifying rational expressions
 - B. Solving ratios, proportions, percents, probability
 - C. Multiply and divide rational expressions
 - D. Add and subtract rational expressions
 - E. Solving simple rational equations
 - F. Inverse and direct variation
 - G. Clear equations of fractions
- *X. Functions and Radicals
- A. Functional notation
 - B. The distance formula
 - C. Simplifying radicals
 - D. Add, subtract, multiply and divide radicals

Text: *Algebra I*, Publisher: Glencoe, 2006

COURSE TOPICS--HONORS ALGEBRA I, GRADE 7 & 8

Students in Honors Algebra I will demonstrate a broader and deeper understanding of the Algebra I curriculum. Applications and assignments will be more advanced, and independent problem solving will be emphasized. Additional topics will include:

- I. A more comprehensive study of literal equations and formulas.
- II. Connecting y-intercepts to initial values.
- III. Using the point-slope form of the equation of a line.
- IV. Absolute-value inequalities.
- V. Rational and irrational numbers.
- VI. Solving quadratic equations using completing the square.
- VII. Using the discriminant to graph quadratics and solve problems.
- VIII. Solving more-complex rational expressions and equations.
- IX. Long division of polynomials.
- X. Applications: linear models, system of linear equations, linear programming, geometry models, compound interest, absolute value models, quadratic models, exponential models, exponential growth and decay, projectiles, falling objects, scientific notation, direct and inverse variations.

Text: *Foerster Algebra 1 Expressions, Equations, and Applications*, Publisher: Prentice Hall Classics and
Math 1 (problem sets from Phillips Exeter Academy)

COURSE TOPICS – HONORS ALGEBRA II, GRADE 8

- I. Real numbers, algebra, formulas, and problem solving
- II. Equations, inequalities and absolute values
- III. Systems of equations and inequalities and three-variable systems
- IV. Matrices and determinants
- V. Quadratic equations
- VI. Relations, functions and transformation of graphs
- VII. Powers, roots, and radical equations
- VIII. Exponential and logarithmic functions
- IX. Polynomials and polynomial functions
- X. Rational functions
- XI. Quadratic relations and translations of conics

Text: *Heath Algebra II: An Integrated Approach* (Larson, Kanold, Stiff), Publisher: McDougal Littell **or** *Foerster Algebra and Trigonometry*, Publisher: Prentice Hall Classics

MODERN & CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

Our Middle School language program offers four languages, Chinese, French, Latin and Spanish. All students are expected to take the same language for three years. At the end of 8th grade, a proficiency test will determine students' placement in the US language program.

FRENCH & SPANISH

GRADES 6 & 7

In 6th grade, students begin a formal study of French or Spanish. Emphasis is placed on communicative skills as well as the acquisition of vocabulary and grammatical concepts.

The 6th and 7th grade sequence is intended to build interest and enthusiasm for learning a foreign language; to build tolerance and understanding of cultural differences; and to introduce good study habits for learning a foreign language. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are stressed. Cultural elements are an integral part of classroom expansion. A proficiency approach includes such techniques as dialogues, role-play, music, projects, games, among others.

Content includes (but is not limited to) the introduction to regular verb forms in the present, near future, and past tense; introduction to common irregular verbs; building and augmenting a basic vocabulary (e.g. greetings, numbers, weather, food, school subjects, places, directions, and family); introduction to simple grammatical structures; and familiarization with pronunciation and intonation. A variety of methods are employed to create a balance in the acquisition and application of study skills, proficiency skills, and cultural awareness. Practical experiences such as language camp, in-school international activities, visiting speakers, field trips, pen-pals, and written and oral language competition (if available) augment and supplement the class experience.

At the end of the two-year sixth and seventh grade foreign language sequence, the student will be expected to be able to:

Reading:

1. Comprehend written expressions that use the vocabulary introduced.
2. Identify familiar vocabulary in a cultural context (e.g. magazines, advertisements, newspapers).

Writing:

1. Apply the knowledge of basic vocabulary and grammar to the construction of simple sentences, paragraphs and short essays.
2. Formulate and answer simple questions.

Speaking:

1. Communicate in the foreign language by relying on learned utterances and will be able to expand these through simple recombination of their elements.
 - a. Formulate and answer simple questions
 - b. Communicate basic needs
2. Communicate well enough to be understood by a native speaker.

Listening:

1. Understand short, learned utterances, particularly where context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible.

2. Comprehend words and phrases from simple questions, statements, high-frequency commands and courtesy formulae; even though the student may require repetition, rephrasing and/or a slower rate of speech for comprehension.

Culture:

1. Learn to understand, appreciate and respect cultural differences and similarities.
2. Begin to appreciate the close relationship between language and the culture of its speakers.
3. Understand that many cultural concepts are evident in common everyday activities.

GRADE 8

At the end of 8th grade all students take a proficiency exam based on all four skills. Students will be either placed in levels two or three at the Upper School according to the results of the proficiency test and teacher's recommendation. In both languages the majority of students will be placed in level two.

At the end of the year the student will be expected to be able to:

Reading:

1. Read short stories at the novice-mid to novice-high level
2. Read articles from sources other than the text (e.g. supplemental magazines and newspaper articles)
3. Read short poems at the novice-mid to novice-high level

Writing:

1. Write letters and/or postcards
2. Compose longer paragraphs, essays, compositions
3. Integrate more complex structures in their writing

Speaking:

1. Communicate more creatively with expected improvement in areas of pronunciation and diction
2. Communicate using culturally and idiomatically appropriate language in simple face to face conversations
3. Participate in classroom lessons in the target language

Listening:

1. Understand more complex dialogues both from the teacher and from other sources (e.g. CDs, outside speakers videos, etc.)
2. Follow classroom lessons in the target language

Culture:

1. Learn to understand, appreciate and respect cultural differences and similarities.
2. Begin to appreciate the close relationship between language and the culture of its speakers.
3. Understand that many cultural concepts are evident in common everyday activities.

Texts

French: (Grades 6, 7 and 8)

C'est A Toi, EMC publishing 2007
Text, workbooks, CDs, DVD programs
Additional readers based upon need

Spanish: (Grade 6, 7 and 8)

Realidades, Prentice Hall, 2008
Text, workbooks, CDs, DVD programs
Additional readers based on need

Accelerated Language Classes

On occasion a Middle School student enters the program at an accelerated level. The school will be able to accommodate a level three language class in most every case. Factors considered in making the decision to offer such class include the number of students eligible and the existence of available staff.

Research shows, and it has been the school's experience, that even if a MS student possesses the ability to communicate with proficiency in the language, he/she is not usually developmentally and intellectually prepared to deal with subject matters, text, literary analysis and other linguistic nuances that require a deeper and more complex knowledge of the language at level four. After careful, close work with our level three students, we will, in the Spring of the level three year, make a determination about the appropriateness of a level four class for that child. Other options include beginning another language or continuing the study of the current in a tutorial arrangement.

LATIN

GRADE 6

In sixth grade, students will embark on a study of Latin via four paths, language, etymology, mythology, and Roman daily life.

The course will inspire kids above all to enjoy the nuances of powerful language. Students will learn basic sentence structures, parts of speech, and the finite verb system. They will also study Latin vocabulary, highlighting etymology and the ubiquity of Latin roots in modern Romance Language. In the course of their study, students will come to know major Classical myths and trace out their influence in the art and literature of later ages. They will also complete projects on the daily life of a typical Roman teenager, including school, home, sports, and food. Methods used include reading cards, disappearing texts, projects, epigraphy, games, scavenger hunts and other exploratory learning strategies.

Content will include: basic sentence structures - transitive active, intransitive active, and passive, the finite verb system in all six tenses, the noun declension endings, adverbial modifiers such as prepositional phrases, and adjectives. To this end, kids will read a variety of texts: poems, inscriptions, mottoes and seals, and simplified

literary texts. Students will also build an extensive Latin vocabulary, always with an eye towards etymology. In addition the Blake Bears Latin Club will offer opportunities for certamen (Latin Jeopardy) and chariot races against other schools throughout Minnesota.

At the end of the year, the sixth grade will be able to:

Reading:

1. Read simplified prose stories, poems and epigraphs linearly, understanding how semantic, morphological and syntactic cues raise and fulfill reader expectations.
2. Use top down and bottom up reading strategies to read Latin passages at sight.

Writing:

1. Compose Latin sentences and short passages, emphasizing select linguistic structures.
2. Compose an inductive comparative grammar.
3. Expand the syntactic palette of their English composition.

Culture:

1. Appreciate the Roman legacy in Western life, poetics, art athletics, etc.
2. Recognize and appreciate the depth dimension that Latin etymology lends to the English usage.
3. Understand the universality of language structures and how such structures inform communication in all modern and ancient languages.

Texts:

Teacher produced materials

GRADE 7

Building on the foundation of their first year, 7th grade students will accelerate their study of Latin grammar, continue their study of mythology, and complement both with more in depth study of the ancient arts.

The course will allow students to read increasingly complex Latin. Students will learn how to recognize and translate a variety of dependent clauses, finite and non-finite. Having studied the creation myths and the Olympians in 6th grade, 7th graders will focus on the hero myths, including Hercules, Jason, and Odysseus. In addition students will do projects on Greek and Roman art, architecture, and drama. Methods used include marking and chunking text, projects, performance, games, scavenger hunts and other exploratory learning strategies.

Content will include: adverbial dependent clauses, relative clauses, participial clauses, and the four major uses of the infinitive. Students will read a variety of simplified literary texts including the stories of the heroes Hercules and Jason. Students will continue to build both their Latin and their English vocabulary. The highlight of the year will be the performance of a Roman comedy in Latin.

At the end of the year, the seventh grade student will be able to:

Reading:

1. Read complex Latin sentences, understanding how semantic, morphological and syntactic cues raise and fulfill reader expectations.
2. Use top down and bottom up reading strategies to read Latin passages at sight.

Writing:

1. Compose Latin sentences and short passages, emphasizing select linguistic structures.
2. Compose an inductive comparative grammar.
3. Expand the syntactic palette of their English composition.

Culture:

5. Appreciate the Roman legacy in Western life, poetics, art, drama, etc.
6. Understand the universality of language structures and how such structures inform communication in all modern and ancient languages.

Texts:

Teacher Produced Materials

GRADE 8

8th grade continues to build upon the material mastered in 6th and 7th grade classes. Students continue to learn the Latin language system and more advanced reading strategies. Cultural studies will turn increasingly to Roman history and political system.

By the spring of the 8th grade year students will complete their study of Latin grammar. At this point they will begin reading Roman authors, including Livy, Petronius, and Pliny the younger. At the completion of the three years of Latin most students should be ready to enter an intermediate reading course in the Upper School. In order to put these authors in their historical context, students will spend the year studying Roman history from the founding of Rome in 753 BC to the Silver Age of the Roman Empire. Methods used include marking and chunking text, projects, reports, games, scavenger hunts and other exploratory learning strategies.

Content will include: comparative and superlative adjectives, and the subjunctive in main and dependent clauses. Students will read a variety of slightly simplified Latin texts, building a solid Latin vocabulary with an eye toward the possibility of the AP in a few years. The highlight of the year will be a school wide Roman election.

At the end of the year, students should be able to:

Reading:

1. Read transitional Latin prose - slightly simplified Livy, Petronius and Pliny the younger.
2. Read Imperial dedicatory and funerary inscriptions, coins and other artifacts of the Roman imperial age.

Writing:

1. Compose more complex Latin sentences and short imitative passages.
2. Add non-finite clauses to their English writing palette.

Culture:

1. Appreciate the Roman legacy in Western political, judicial systems, poetics and art.

Texts:

Teacher Produced Materials

MANDARIN

Grade 6

In sixth grade students will be introduced to Mandarin Chinese. Emphasis will be placed on the skills necessary for communication, studying a foreign language, and building respect and understanding of other cultures. The course is intended to nurture enthusiasm for learning Mandarin, which can be applied to the study of other foreign languages. Students will be introduced to Chinese culture within the classroom environment by studying true-to-life dialogues, singing songs, learning rhymes, playing games, doing projects, watching movies, celebrating cultural holidays, and listening to stories.

Content includes (but is not limited to) Pinyin, the Western phonetic system for pronouncing Chinese, proper pronunciation, the four tones, basic strokes and stroke order for characters, radicals and how they are used in dictionaries, the history of the formation of characters, expressions used in and outside of the classroom, appropriate Chinese classroom behavior, building basic vocabulary (e.g. greetings, introducing one's self and others, numbers, dates, school subjects, identifying people, asking age, nationalities, countries, family members, question words, measure words, animals, sports, friends, foods, hobbies), introduction to simple grammar structures, geography, and Chinese culture, with attention to balance between study of language and the study of culture. Practical experiences involving speakers/visitors, performances, field trips, and language camps supplement the classroom experience.

Reading

1. Comprehend sentences written in Pinyin using vocabulary learned.
2. Recognize characters learned both in paragraph form and to make phrases.
3. Recognize the radical of a character, what the meaning is, and how to find it in a dictionary.
4. Unscramble sentences in Pinyin or characters so the grammar is correct.

Writing

1. Spell words correctly in Pinyin with the correct tones.
2. Write characters in the correct stroke order and proportion.
3. Apply grammar and vocabulary to simple sentences and paragraphs in both Pinyin and characters.

4. Formulate and answer simple questions in Pinyin and characters.

Speaking

1. Communicate basic needs (e.g. May I go to the bathroom).
2. Participate in the classroom in the language (e.g. I have a question).
3. Communicate well enough to have simple conversations with a native speaker.
4. Communicate creatively using what one has learned.
5. Formulate and answer simple questions.
6. Improve in pronunciation, tones, and fluency.

Listening

1. Understand short, learned utterances, particularly where context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible.
2. Comprehend words and phrases from simple questions, statements, high-frequency commands and courtesy formulae, even though the student may require repetition, rephrasing, and/or a slower rate of speed for comprehension.
3. Follow through with responses, physical or verbal to demonstrate understanding.

Culture

1. Learn to understand, appreciate and respect cultural similarities and differences.
2. Begin to appreciate the close relationship between language and the culture of the speakers.
3. Understand that many cultural concepts are evident in common everyday activities.

Grade 7 & 8

Students in 7th and 8th grade will be expected to build upon the previous years' study. Increasing amounts of Chinese will be spoken in the classroom to create more of an immersion environment. Students will be expected to respond in Chinese and use what they know as much as possible. By 8th grade, students should have a strong set of study skills ready to be able to move through lessons at a faster rate. More complex grammar forms will be introduced as well as building vocabulary. Lessons will include (but not be limited to) time, daily routine, position of things, clothes, shopping, visiting/inviting friends, making phone calls, eating at a restaurant, the weather, getting places, celebrations, feeling sick, describing people, and traveling. At the end of the 3 year sequence students can place in either levels 2 or 3 at the Upper School.

Texts:

Far East Chinese for Youth 1-2

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The mission of The Blake School's Physical Education & Health Education programs is to prepare students to live healthy, productive, and physically active lives. Students are empowered to view physical education and wellness as an essential lifelong process that fosters character, physical fitness, self-discipline, and informed decision-making. Through development of physical, cognitive, and affective skills, students are exposed to a variety of activities in a dynamic, safe, and supportive atmosphere in which every student is challenged and given the opportunity to be successful.

The comprehensive goal of the program is to develop physically educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

Enduring Understandings

- I. A physically educated person:
 - A. Develops competency with motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities
 - B. Demonstrates understanding of movement concepts, principles, and strategies as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities
 - C. Participates regularly in physical activity
 - D. Works towards and maintains a health-enhancing level of physical fitness
- II. Responsibility
The student will:
 - A. Exhibit responsible personal and social behaviour that respects self and others in physical activity settings
 - B. Further develop the attitude of risking failure as a step in learning
- III. Self-Concept
The student will:
 - A. Further develop skills and attitudes that foster a feeling of self-worth and desire to attempt new and more advanced skills
 - B. Values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction

GRADE 6 & 7 PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

All 6th and 7th grade students will participate in a variety of activities, which includes an overview of all varsity sports played at Blake. Students will also focus on wellness related items, aquatics, ice rink activities, physical fitness, cooperative activities, and an introduction to weight training. 6th and 7th grade physical education courses are single gender.

Grade 6 & 7 WELLNESS

The 6th and 7th grade Wellness Unit is taught by a Middle School counselor as part of the ongoing Middle School Initiatives regarding Affective Education. This unit will allow students to delve deeper into a better understanding

of the social-emotional topics that are integral to their physical, mental and emotional development.

Our goal is to provide opportunities for students to reflect upon and evaluate their personal wellness choices and take ownership for their decisions for health. We will be utilizing a wide variety of methodologies to create a vibrant, hands-on learning experience to capture the interest and minds of students. The students will hear from Blake faculty as well as outside speakers. They will grapple with issues by participating in class discussions, create projects, complete homework assignments and interact with parents. Students will come away from the Wellness Unit with a deeper understanding of themselves and their ability to make healthy choices for their own lives.

The curriculum for all 6th grade students will be comprised of a 12-day unit covering the following topics:

1. Cultural competence
2. Friendship and anti-bullying
3. Media and Internet safety
4. Chemical health

The curriculum for all 7th grade students will be comprised of a 12-day unit focusing on the following topics:

1. Cultural competence
2. Electronic safety
3. Social-emotional health
4. Chemical health

GRADE 8 PHYSICAL EDUCATION ELECTIVE PROGRAM

In 8th grade, students elect which course they would like to participate in each quarter. Each course meets four days per week and will rotate at the end of each quarter. Although we are able to schedule the majority of students in their first and second choices, the occasional schedule conflict may result in an alternative placement. Please review the following course descriptions before making your choices:

Wellness

The Wellness course will aim to educate and empower our students to make their own well-informed and thoughtful decisions regarding their mental, physical and social development. In addition, this course will broaden the students' knowledge and appreciation of physical activity and its effect on their health. But more importantly, it will also teach students that physical activity is only one piece of the puzzle in creating a healthy and well-rounded lifestyle. Students will learn that emotional and social health is equally important in their personal wellness, and they will gain tools to help them achieve and promote healthy behaviours.

Aquatics

The 8th grade Aquatics course is a program of instruction to enhance participation in physical activities throughout one's life. The primary emphasis for aquatic activities will include acquiring a knowledge base, learning new skills

and/or refining skills, developing components of health-related fitness, and enhancing affective skills. Students will be exposed to the following areas: two weeks basic water rescue course as outlined by the American Red Cross, goal development geared towards improvement of swimming skills, springboard diving, snorkelling, introduction to water games/activities, integration of fitness components, and boating safety.

Outdoor Activities

The Outdoor Education class is filled with a variety of stimulating and challenging activities. The main emphasis of Outdoor Education is to introduce the students to a multitude of activities and skills that could be implemented in an outdoor recreational setting. Map reading, camping, shelter building, fire starting, cooking, fishing and boating safety are the main areas of focus. Due to the changing weather conditions throughout the year, some of the curricular areas may be stressed more than others.

Cooperative Activities

Cooperative activities students will understand how to go beyond perceived boundaries, which requires working with others in a physically safe environment. Over the quarter, students will solve problems together, participate in a variety of trust activities, learn how to set up belaying equipment, and climb the wall and the high ropes course, while providing a safe and supportive environment for all.

Lifetime Sports

In the lifetime sports course, students have the opportunity to participate in a number of different sports. Badminton, volleyball, broomball, golf, cross country skiing, archery, tennis and table tennis are a few of the options provided depending on the time of year.

Weight Training

The focus of this course is to provide students the tools to improve muscular strength, flexibility, and overall fitness. Students will develop individual goals from research-based standards and then implement and evaluate a personal fitness program. This personal program will identify physical activities that are effective in improving each health related component.

SCIENCE

The science courses aim to provide students with a deep understanding of science as a process of inquiry with an emphasis on teaching experimental methods in the context of earth, life and the physical sciences.

OBJECTIVES

I. Content

The student will:

- A. Learn evidence-based reasoning and experimental methods.
- B. Develop scientific concepts required to gain a better understanding of real world issues involving health, energy and the environment.

II. Attitudes

The student will have the opportunity to develop:

- A. New ideas about the natural world.
- B. Confidence in one's ability to "do science".
- C. Awareness and a sense of responsibility towards both local and global environmental issues.
- D. Appreciation for the important roles played by science in understanding our world.

III. Skills

The student will:

- A. Work as a team
- B. Identify questions that can be answered through scientific investigations.
- C. Design and conduct scientific investigations.
- D. Use appropriate tools and techniques to gather, analyze and interpret data.
- E. Develop descriptions, explanations, predictions and models using evidence.
- F. Think critically and logically to understand the relationship between evidence and explanations.
- G. Learn to recognize and analyze alternative explanations and predictions.
- H. Communicate scientific procedures and explanations.

IV. Technology Skills

The student will:

1. Use a computer connected to probes and sensors to collect data.
2. Use a computer to store, organize and share the results of their investigations.
3. Conduct an effective internet search for reliable scientific information.

6TH GRADE SCIENCE

I. Earth in Space

- A. Sun-Earth-Moon System
- B. Solar System
- C. Earth's History as a Planet
- D. Stars in the Universe as viewed from Earth

II. Human Body Systems

- A. Cell structure and function
- B. Diseases, infection, and the Immune System
- C. Digestive System
- D. Respiratory and Circulatory Systems
- E. Reproductive System/Human Sexuality
- F. Health Fair (student data-gathering experiments Involving the school community)

III. Astrobiology (culminating project on living in space)

Textbooks:

Earth in Space, and Human Body Systems, Science and Technology Concepts for Middle School, National Science Resource Council and the Smithsonian Institution, 2006.

Human Body Systems, Science and Technology Concepts to Middle School, National Science Resource Council and the Smithsonian Institution, 2006.

Good Friends and Germs, It's About Time Publishing 2009

7TH GRADE SCIENCE

I. Science Experiments

- A. Measurements in science
- B. Experimental design
- C. Science Fair
 1. Background research
 2. Completion
 3. Presentation

II. Interactions and Energy

- A. Energy description
- B. Energy transfer
- C. Water, sound, and earthquake waves
- D. An object's speed and motion
- E. Wave speed and motion
- F. Elastic interactions

III. Interactions and Forces

- A. Force description
- B. Pushes, pull, and motion
- C. Friction and backward forces
- D. Applying force
- E. Changing force strength and mass
- F. Weight
- G. Unbalanced and balanced forces
- H. Buoyancy

IV. Interactions and Conservation

- A. Conservation of mass
- B. Conservation of energy
- C. Potential energy
- D. Thermal energy
- E. Efficiency

V. Catastrophic Events

- A. Storms (tornados, thunderstorms, hurricanes)
- B. Earthquakes
- C. Volcanoes

VI. Global Energy Issues

- A. Energy resources
- B. Global climate change
- C. Energy conservation

Text Books

Interactions in Physical Science, 2nd Edition, It's About Time Publishing, 2007.

Catastrophic Events, Science and Technology Concepts for Middle School, National Science Resource Council and the Smithsonian Institution, 2000.

8TH GRADE SCIENCE

I. Review of Science and the Scientific Method

- A. Characteristics of a scientist
- B. Collecting background information
- C. Forming a hypothesis
- D. Designing an experimental procedure
- E. Collecting and analyzing data
- F. Drawing conclusions

II. Chemistry

- A. Materials and their interactions
 - 1. Describing and classifying materials
 - 2. Mixtures
 - 3. Solutions and chemicals
 - 4. Acids and bases
- B. Physical interactions and phases
 - 1. Properties of liquids, gases, and solids
 - 2. Thermal expansion
 - 3. Atomic structure
- C. Chemical interactions
 - 1. Particle interactions
 - 2. Energy and reactions
 - 3. Conservation of mass
 - 4. Polymers
- D. Hazardous household chemicals

III. Health

- A. Sexual education
 - 1. Values
 - 2. The reproductive system
 - 3. Sexually transmitted disease
 - 4. Birth control methods
- B. Healthy relationships

IV. Environmental Science

- A. Basic concepts
 - 1. Cell structure and function
 - 2. Organisms, communities, and ecosystems
 - 3. Cycles in nature
 - 4. Energy flow through food chains, webs and and pyramids
- B. Environmental issues
 - 1. Population case study
 - 2. Student initiated case studies
- C. Water Ecology
 - 1. Field collection of data from Minnehaha Creek
 - 2. Analysis of water health

Text Books:

Interactions in Physical Science, 2nd Edition, It's About Time Publishing, 2007.

Watersheds, by Clive Dobson and Geger Gilpin Beck, Published by Firefly Books

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Middle School Social Studies program has four overall objectives. First, the department seeks to provide each student with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to develop into an independent thinker and global citizen. Second, the department encourages the students to understand the relevance of history in the world today and in their lives. The third overall objective is to provide the means and opportunities for each student to develop a sense of self-worth and social responsibility. The fourth objective is to increase student success by using a variety of instructional methods to teach different learning styles.

OBJECTIVES

I. The student values the following attitudes:

- A. Positive attitudes toward
 - 1. Self
 - 2. Others (understanding and respect for others)
 - 3. The learning process
- B. Accepts the need for responsible and ethical decision making and willingness to act on these convictions
- C. Positive respect for other viewpoints
- D. Willingness to take risks
- E. Unafraid of and profit from failure
- F. Defining of values (for self and others)
- G. Developing trust in others

II. The student acquires the following skills:

- A. How to prepare a daily assignment for class discussion
- B. How to gather and present information
 - 1. Speeches
 - 2. Oral reports
 - 1. Projects
 - 2. Technology (on-line research)
- C. How to participate effectively and lead in class discussion
- D. How to use various source materials
- E. How to keep notes and keep a useable notebook
- F. How to work independently and in groups
- G. Know how to study for exams and others types of evaluations
- H. Know how to write and differentiate between various types of essays and papers
- I. Responsibly evaluate one's own development and progress
- J. Development of creativity and objectivity
- K. Social skills
- L. Know how to think critically (hypothesize, generalize, synthesize)
- M. Know how to use multimedia technology for research and the presentation of ideas

III. The student gains exposure to the following types of knowledge:

- A. Concepts
 - 1. culture
 - 2. religion
 - 3. customs
 - 4. society (socialization)
 - 5. communication
 - 6. law
 - 7. change
 - 8. technology
 - 9. interdependence
 - 10. the individual
 - 11. ideology
 - 12. leadership
 - 13. competition/cooperation
 - 14. government
 - 15. bias
 - 16. cause-effect relationships
 - 17. capitalism
 - 18. race
 - 19. class
 - 20. gender
- B. Generalization and facts related to these concepts

Note: Throughout the entire social studies program, emphasis will be placed on relating the course of study to contemporary "current" events. Topics of current interest will be discussed and serve as an integral part of the student's learning experience. Also, students will study

different areas of the world and learn basic factual information about these selected areas.

COURSE OF STUDY - GRADE 6

World Geography, Cultures, & Current Issues

Students will investigate cultural, political, and economic features of regions in the Eastern Hemisphere. Each unit will include introduction to physical features of the region, a brief exploration of the contributions of the ancient civilizations, an in depth study of the major religious influences, an analysis of rise of the modern nations, and projects that investigate current issues. Units of study include:

1. Introduction to how to study geography, cultures, and religion
2. Africa (ancient civilizations, indigenous cultures, colonialization, & African nations today)
3. Southwest Asia (with introduction to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity)
4. South Asia (Indian Sub Continent with an introduction to Hinduism)
5. East Asia & Southeast Asia (China, the Koreas, Japan, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand with an introduction to Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism)

Throughout the year there will be a strong emphasis on current events via a weekly reader, research projects, and young adult fiction & non-fiction literature circles. 6th grade social studies and English classes are closely aligned in skills and content. Further, the 6th grade program serves as a progression of the PK-5 social studies program while intentionally building upon the 5th grade social studies units on human needs, rights, and responsibilities in the United States and around the world.

Texts and Materials

World Cultures & Geography, McDougal Littell
History Alive! Ancient Civilizations, TCI
Classroom reference materials/maps/audio visual materials/internet/videos
Maps and classroom handouts
World History Atlas - Nystrom
Research skills handouts
World Population Data Sheet, PRB
Jr. Scholastic Current Events Weekly
Under the Persimmon Tree by Suzanne Fisher Staples

COURSE OF STUDY - GRADE 7

Foundations of Democracy & Republic

Is their story our story? This course will foster understanding of the foundations and challenges of western societies. Tracing the ideals of democracy, liberty, equality, opportunity, and rights through Greece, Rome, Enlightenment Europe, and the establishment of the United States through the Civil War. Students will also investigate a pressing world issue through participation in the World Affairs Challenge. The class relies on active participation involving discussion, research, debate,

hands-on projects as well as close reading of texts. Students also develop study skills such as note taking, test preparation, highlighting and essay writing. Current events and world geography are ongoing themes in this class and students will participate in the *World Affairs Challenge* to develop research, writing, critical thinking, and presentation skills.

Texts and Materials:

History Alive: The Ancient World, Teacher Curriculum Institute
History Alive! Pursuing American Ideals, Teacher Curriculum Institute
Selected readings & video
Classroom reference materials/handouts

COURSE OF STUDY - GRADE 8

United States History: Post Civil War to Civil Rights

Students will continue their U.S. history studies from sixth grade to investigate the cultural, political, and economic history of the United States from the Civil War to the Civil Rights era. Students will explore how the United States faces triumph and tragedy in living out its founding ideals of equality, opportunity, democracy, liberty, and rights. The "Business Day" project will serve as an inquiry into economic systems, development, and opportunity. Students will investigate the following essential questions throughout the theme driven, year long study:

1. Who is defined as individual? Who is defined as a citizen? Who is defined as a citizen with rights? Who has the power to define the rights of others?
2. How do the founding ideals of equality, rights, liberty, opportunity, and democracy see triumph and failure from the Civil War to the Civil Rights era?
3. Why is change so challenging?
4. What should be the role of government in the lives of individuals and free enterprise?

Texts and Materials

Selected readings, speakers, videos
Making \$ense, Dean and Johnson
History Alive! Pursuing American Ideals, Teacher Curriculum Institute

STUDENT SERVICES

While major portions of the Middle School curriculum are devoted to intellectual and physical development, the Student Services Department focuses on the social and emotional domain, helping the students internalize the Middle School HARRT Code.

The goal of the Middle School Counseling Department is to structure programs which support and enhance normal development in grades 6, 7 and 8. All of our developmental programming is part of the Middle School's Affective Education Curriculum. Each program is aimed at developmental and preventive guidance for large numbers of students.

Keeping in mind that "normal development" occurs over a range of ages and not at a specific point in time, the counselors also engage in prevention/intervention strategies. Prevention strategies usually include relationship building, maintaining visibility, and an "open door" policy for students, faculty and parents. Intervention is usually completed through individual counseling. These strategies are appropriate when a student appears to be struggling in some developmental area. Individual intervention is most appropriate (and has the greatest chance of success) when the student can join with the counselor in exploring and practicing change.

In addition, individual counseling sessions can be initiated in several ways. The student may seek out the counselor him or herself. Family members, teachers, and administrators may seek to have the counselor initiate a conversation with a student. The counselor may also take the initiative to have a conversation based on their own observations that such a conversation is warranted. Individual counseling is frequently remedial in nature and several sessions may be required. Most interactions with the counselor are informal. The goal is solution focused problem solving and support of the student.

Individual counseling works best if it is voluntary on the part of the student. If resistance continues through the third attempt, the counselor will no longer seek appointments. However, the parents may be advised to seek outside help if the problem seems serious. However, the Middle School counseling staff does not offer psychological or educational assessment or diagnosis. When the problem is seen as beyond the scope of the school situation, the counselor will contact the student's parent(s) or guardian and a referral to an appropriate agency or professional in the community will be made.

FOSTERING COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION

A parent may consult with the counselor on an individual basis at the request of either party. Sometimes a teacher or student may be included. Generally this should be prearranged with the date, time and place agreed upon by all participants.

Teachers may also consult with the counselor on an individual basis regarding a particular student's academic, behavioral or emotional problems or progress. Either counselor or teacher may initiate this contact. Teachers may also consult the counselor over matters of classroom management and discipline, school climate, professional growth or other issues of mutual concern. One of the functions the counselors carry out is to meet with the three grade level teams of teachers. At each grade level team meeting, information and referrals on students will be exchanged.

Another weekly commitment for the counselor is to meet with the Director and Assistant Director. The purposes of these meetings are to share information on students, plan the school calendar, deal with problems, and give follow up reports on action taken.

DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDANCE

The list below enumerates three areas and 18 tasks of adolescent development. At the Middle School, preventive guidance programming supports and enhances mastery of these tasks. Intervention strategies seek to remediate problems with task mastery. These are the general objectives of the Middle School Guidance Program.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT

To help the child achieve self-confidence, understand physical development, to recognize feelings and emotions, and to develop acceptable patterns of behavior.

Counseling activities will provide an opportunity for the child:

1. To understand, accept, express, and cope with emotions
2. To understand and accept self as a unique person
3. To learn how feelings effect behavior
4. To learn to deal positively with stressful situations
5. To develop self-reliance, responsibility and independence
6. To develop greater self-confidence and self-awareness

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

To help the child relate effectively and positively to fellow students, family members and others in the community.

Counseling activities will provide an opportunity for the child:

1. To accept differences among people
2. To build and maintain appropriate relationships with others
3. To resolve conflicts appropriately
4. To develop effective communication skills
5. To achieve emotional independence from family and peers
6. To develop socially acceptable behavior

INTELLECTUAL/EDUCATIONAL

To provide support for an educational program which develops intellectual potential, cultural appreciation and positive attitudes toward learning.

Counseling and Advisory activities will provide an opportunity for the child:

1. To develop skills in problem-solving and decision making
2. To develop positive attitudes toward learning as a life-long process
3. To identify values and set goals
4. To develop skills for effective expressions of values, opinion and goals
5. To discover, understand and pursue interests and talents
6. To develop ethnic awareness

For the 2011-2012 school year the Middle School counselor is Jeanette Gadeberg.

LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Students with mild learning differences are accepted at Blake. The Middle School provides support for students with diagnosed learning differences provided that their learning profile allows them to meet the academic expectations. The Learning Specialist is responsible for collaborating with students, faculty, administration and parents to assess any need for outside evaluation. Pre-screening for potential learning differences is included in this process if necessary. Steps in this process include:

1. Identification of a possible learning difference by a teacher, administration or parent.
2. Individual assessment of student as a pre-screening tool in response to concerns with parental permission.
3. Meeting with faculty and parents to review test results and establish a tutorial plan.
4. Weekly study support for students identified with a learning difference.
5. Ongoing contact with faculty and parents to monitor student's progress.
6. Any academic accommodations are determined by individual's diagnosis and as reasonably provided by the Blake School.

For the 2011-2012 school year the Middle School Learning Specialist is:
Kaari Simonson

INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Information Services Department supports the Middle School curriculum.

We work closely with all departments to acquire print materials, videos and DVDs, software and multimedia equipment necessary for research, classroom activities, presentations and productions. Our Media Center consists of a library and two computer labs. The library has seven networked computers, two printers and presentation capability. Our labs are equipped with 40 networked computers, two printers, two presentation computers and video support equipment. There are also two carts of laptops as well as digital still and video cameras available for checkout and use throughout the building. All classrooms are equipped with a computer and most have ceiling-mounted LCD projectors and VCR/DVD players.

Our curriculum is integrated into all disciplines at the Middle School using projects and classroom activities.

Areas of instruction include:

1. Print and online research
2. Media literacy
3. Word processing
4. Spreadsheets
5. Graphing and graphing calculators
6. Multimedia production
7. Digital video editing
8. Web resources
9. Electronic communication skills
10. File server skills
11. Desktop publishing

The personnel of the Information Services Department feel it is important that each student:

1. Know how to gather information from library and electronic resources
2. Be able to discriminate in the choice of materials and/or equipment for specific tasks
3. Develop skill and literacy in the use of technology
4. Be responsible and ethical in the use of media and technology
5. Develop communication skills
6. Develop problem-solving skills
7. Work collaboratively