

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Whitefish Bay Middle School's educational program is designed specifically for preadolescent intellectual growth. This program features an integrated learning program in reading, writing, math, science, social studies, health and communication skills. Students are also exposed to physical education, art, music, family and consumer education, construction and design, computer skills and world languages

A wide variety of teaching strategies are employed and areas of high interest to the student are used to develop basic skills for content mastery and for independent learning. This instructional balance is crucial in preparing students for the high school program. All classes are taught combining hands-on and experiential strategies as well as other, more traditional methodologies. Students experience large group, small group and even individual tutoring at various times during the school day. Cooperative groups are encouraged to enhance social skills, but individual accountability is likewise stressed.

At the sixth and seventh grade level Whitefish Bay students are grouped into "houses" supervised and taught by a set team of teachers. These teachers, from different subject areas, share the same students and are given a collaborative team planning time during which they discuss the needs of their particular group of students as well as curriculum events.

At the eighth grade level, the middle school schedule provides the opportunity to divide the day into blocks of time as it is done in high school. This practice enables teachers to lengthen or shorten the normal class period and to create large group activities for special teaching units.

All course offerings in the School District of Whitefish Bay go through an evaluation and revision process every six years. In the interim, teachers are provided time to make additional changes and revisions every three years, or as the need arises. Writing, cultural diversity, careers, and study skills are integrated across the curriculum

**Exploratory/Elective Belief Statement** - Exploratory offerings in academic, social, vocational, fine arts, and activity areas serve to:

- Meet the needs of the student's various learning styles (i.e. visual, aural and kinesthetic)
- Enable a positive self-esteem through creative, practical, hands-on applications
- Develop social skills through using cooperative learning and teamwork to achieve a finished product
- Foster group interactions, as well as self-development
- Extend the "academic" curriculum into real-life experiences
- Provide opportunities to apply knowledge from various disciplines
- Broaden the horizons of the students

Administrative approval is needed for all elective course drops after the second week of each semester. Parent approval is required for any change in their child's schedule. Dropping a course will be considered if the student's course load needs to be reduced for health or other academic reasons, or the counselor and the teacher determine that placement in the course is inappropriate.

### **Courses Offered**

All Students are required to take Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education (every other day), and Literature (every day in grades 6 & 7, 2 quarters in 8<sup>th</sup> grade).

#### **Grade 6 – Required 7-week Exploratories:**

Health  
Design & Construction I  
General Music  
Computers  
Art

#### **Grade 6 – Required 9-week Exploratories:**

PE/Health (Parents who wish to exclude their child from portions or all of the Human Growth and Development unit must place their wishes in writing. Excluded students will be furnished with and required to complete alternative assignments on health-related issues.)

#### **Grade 6 – 18-week Electives:**

Band  
Orchestra

Choir  
General Music  
Study Hall (18-36 weeks)

**Grade 7 – Required 7-week Exploratories:**

Leadership  
Design & Construction II  
Life Skills  
Art  
Computers

**Grade 7 –Electives:**

Band  
Orchestra  
Choir  
Study Hall (18-36 weeks)  
French (36 weeks)  
German (36 weeks)  
Spanish (36 weeks)

**Grade 8 –Year Long Electives:**

Band  
Orchestra  
Choir  
French  
German  
Spanish  
Study Hall

**Grade 8 – 9-week Electives:**

Advanced Design & Construction  
Computer Applications  
Fitness & Conditioning  
Hands on Music – Guitar  
Hands on Music – Drumming  
Ceramics  
Pop Art  
3D Art  
2D art  
Leadership Skills (2 quarters)  
Adventure Lit  
Contemporary Young Adult Lit  
Novel-to-Film  
Sci-Fi Lit  
Sports Lit  
Dollars & Sense  
Digital Video  
Creative Publications

**STAR – Students & Teachers Achieving Results**

The Advisor/Advisee program is a response to the unique needs of our students who enter the middle school with a myriad of social and emotional concerns. The program is more than the traditional homeroom period. STAR groups meet for 14 minutes daily and center on self-esteem, self-management, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making. The advisor is the advocate for this small group of students and will monitor each student's academic progress as well as their social/emotional adjustments. Parents are encouraged to work with their child's advisor when questions or concerns arise.

## Activity Days

The middle school has three half-day Activity Days at the end of quarters 1, 2, and 3 and a full day at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. The activities vary from year to year and at each grade level. When possible, Activity Days enhance or are integrated with the regular curriculum. Activity Days provide students and teachers the opportunity to build meaningful human connections with adults and students in situations outside the regular academic parameters, encourage positive social interactions within and between the advisory groups, observe and monitor student social behaviors in small and large groups outside of the classroom setting, develop positive student/teacher relationships through informal, high interest and non-threatening environments and promote student strengths, competence and personal worth. Activity Days are viewed as an important extension of an exemplary school program for preadolescent youth. Students at all grades are offered an alternative activity that focuses on service learning and citizenship. **All students are required to participate in these planned activities.** If a student has not met school academic or behavior expectations, he/she may be not be allowed to participate in activity day. Each grade level will communicate academic and behavior expectations in advance to parents.

## STUDENT SUCCESS

WFBMS prides itself on the high academic standards and supportive environment that fosters student success. The staff works diligently to provide students with instructional strategies and academic supports for all learners. These support opportunities are critical in helping students secure the necessary skills to be successful with their grade level requirements. A key component for success in the following support programs is the relationship between home and school.

**Reading Support** – Reading support is a supplementary class for students needing specialized help with reading skills. Students receive small group reading comprehension instruction in content area material as well as literature. Also included are vocabulary development, fluency practice, word attack skills instruction and practice, and test taking strategies and preparation work. Students are placed in the course following a review of reading specialist administered test scores and grade level academic progress.

**Math Support** – In addition to the regular mathematics classroom instruction, students receive instruction on the basic factual and functional math skills. Students may be placed in math support based on teacher recommendation, classroom performance, and testing results.

**Support Study Hall** – The purpose is to help students develop independent study and organizational skills. Students are expected to record assignments and complete them on time. In addition, students will be closely monitored and assisted while getting started on the following day's assignments. Students may also use the period to clean and organize materials in their binders and lockers, meet with content area teachers, and study for upcoming quizzes or tests. Placement in support study hall is through referral by a teacher, parent, or a guidance counselor. Support study hall is most successful when parents check and sign the assignment notebook on a daily basis.

**ELL – English Language Learners** – It is the policy of the district that an ELL program will be implemented for the students identified as English Language Learners. Upon enrollment, if the student's primary language is other than English, the district will administer the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) to assess English proficiency. The LAS measures those English skills necessary for functioning in a mainstream academic environment. The degree of curriculum modification, the duration and type of ELL program will be determined individually and be based on student need.

**Collaborative Intervention Team** – may include the following professionals: guidance counselor, psychologist, academic teacher(s), specials' teacher(s) and a building administrator. Our middle school collaborative intervention team may be called into action when a student is demonstrating a concern either academically or behaviorally. They will meet to discuss ideas on how to best meet a particular student's needs. Defining alternative educational strategies and assistance is part of the team's process. Some of these strategies or program changes may include reading support, math support, support study hall, ELL and special education.

## Reporting on academic progress

Communication between home and school is critical for student success. The school has a formalized process for this communication through progress reports, report cards and parent/teacher conferences. Additionally, teachers may contact parents due to a concern during any time of the school year. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teachers if they have any academic or school-related concern. Student progress reports are sent home every 5 weeks of the quarter and report cards are sent home at the end of each quarter. These progress updates are sent home through the Thursday folder. WFBMS will honor a "second mailing" request should a family situation require it. Scheduled parent-teacher conferences occur in the fall and spring.

## Grading

Whitefish Bay Middle School has a uniform grading scale that includes both an academic grade and an attitude/effort grade.

A+ = 100, A = 93-99, A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62

F = 50-59

NHI = 40

P = pass, I = incomplete, EX = excused, WD = withdrawn, M = medical

### Attitude / Effort Guidelines

- Come to class ready to learn with all necessary materials.
- Demonstrate and model the virtues of good citizenship (Respect, Cooperation, Friendliness, Helpfulness, Kindness, Consideration, Honesty and Tolerance) on a consistent basis.
- Positively behave in classrooms, hallways and locker bay.
- Complete work in a timely fashion to the best of his/her ability.
- Participate actively and appropriately in class.
- Use class time wisely.
- Support classroom expectations.
- Work toward improvement.

**O** = outstanding (Demonstrates the above behaviors on a daily basis.)

**G** = good (Demonstrate the above behaviors on a consistent basis.)

**S** = satisfactory (Demonstrates the above behaviors regularly and responds well to redirection when given.)

**N** = needs improvement (Demonstrates the above behaviors inconsistently. Does not always respond to redirection. The inconsistent attitude/effort has a negative effect on student learning.)

**P** = poor (Needs to focus on improvement in the above behaviors. Parents have been contacted on more than one occasion. The poor attitude and effort have a detrimental effect on student learning.)

### Proud Crowd

On a quarterly basis, students who earn all O's and G's will receive a reward certificate for their positive attitude and effort. In addition, their names will be listed in a "Proud Crowd" display case to honor their achievement.

### Counseling

Three full-time counselors are available to all students and parents. Each counselor is assigned to a specific grade and will remain with the same students throughout their three years at the middle school. These services include assistance with educational planning, interpretation of test results, occupational and career information, and confidential discussion of school, personal or social concerns. Counselors will be with the child's academic team of teachers on a regular basis and will be a resource for the STAR advisor.

### Homework

All homework is posted on the Middle School website. After an absence of 2 or more days, parents may call the office to request any worksheets. "Homework Club" is a quiet working environment provided for a half hour of prime-time study after school.

### Student Agenda / Planner

Every student will be issued an agenda planner at the beginning of the school year for recording daily homework and long-term projects. The planner also outlines school rules and expected behavior. Only this school issued agenda/planner is acceptable. Other assignment notebooks are not. Individual teachers may require a daily parent signature to ensure that parents are aware of upcoming assignments and tests. If the notebook is lost or damaged, a replacement may be purchased in the school office.

### Communication

An important communication tool for parents from teachers and the school is the "Thursday Envelope" which will be posted to the web each week. Items that cannot be accessed on the web, like progress reports and report cards will be sent home with the students.