

John Long Middle School

Grade 8

Course Description Booklet

2018 – 2019



John Long Middle School
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ACADEMICS AND PROGRAMMING FOR JOHN LONG MIDDLE SCHOOL

Making Course Choices

How can we make the best choices for our child(ren)?

Consider your child's interests, strengths, and areas that need further exploration or work. Consult with your child's current teachers; what do they advise? Don't hesitate to talk with the middle school counselor; the counselor has an excellent overview of the entire middle school program, as well as what is being offered in the high school. Make the course selection based on your child's interests.

Does what my child takes in middle school affect high school?

Middle school courses may help a student identify areas of interest to them that they'd like to pursue in high school, particularly in related arts subjects. The Grafton School District requires that a student have 22 credits to graduate from high school. This includes the following requirements:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. ENGLISH | 4.0 |
| 2. SOCIAL STUDIES | 3.0 |
| 3. MATH | 3.0 |
| 4. SCIENCE | 3.0 |
| 5. PHYSICAL ED. | 1.5 |
| 6. HEALTH | 0.5 |
| 7. ELECTIVES | remainder__ |

It's also not too early to consider post-high school plans. Looking ahead can help ensure that students have the flexibility to take the courses that best meet their interests and plans. The Academic and Career Planning (ACP) Process supports this.

Meeting Special Needs

How will children's special needs be met?

The middle school program is designed to provide support within the school for students with special needs. Special education teachers, special education aides, library aides, RISE coordinator, school counselor, and school psychologist are all available.

Are accelerated math classes available?

Yes. All students are eligible for accelerated math by teacher recommendation and multiple data points. When placement is warranted, families will be notified.

What if my child struggles academically?

The first response should be to work closely with your child's classroom teachers to ascertain what the problem is and to develop some steps towards improving achievement. If more help is needed, support in the middle school includes the following:

- **Intervention**
Students scheduled in a math or reading intervention course receive prescriptive instruction based on individual needs. School personnel determine placement in these courses and communicate with parents to notify them.
- **Special Education Needs**
Students with identified special needs, including those with cognitive, physical, speech, learning or emotional disabilities, have individual education plans which outline the types of assistance they need. Special education teachers or aides may work with these students within a class or, at times, in small groups or individually.

What is the grading scale for middle school students?

The following is the grading scale used by our teachers in all subjects

A	93 - 100	C+	77 - 79.99
A-	90 - 92.99	C	73 - 76.99
		C-	70 - 72.99
B+	87 - 89.99	D+	67 - 69.99
B	83 - 86.99	D	63 - 66.99
B-	80 - 82.99	D-	60 - 62.99
		F	59 and below

Middle School Life

How can parents become involved?

The middle school has an active parent group. The John Long Parent Teacher Group (PTG) sponsors a variety of activities including student activity nights and a teacher luncheon. Volunteers are always welcome. In addition, parents are actively involved as volunteers for events like the musical, chaperones on field trips, and help with other school projects. Watch the Falcon Flyer for information on how to volunteer or contact the school principal.

Eighth Grade Course Offerings

Required Courses

Daily

English Language Arts (ELA)

Math

Alternate Days

Science

Social Studies

Physical Education/Health – *Every other day/all year/opposite a RA course*

Related Arts Courses

*Every other day (Choose **one** if taking a World Language. Choose **three** if **not** taking a World Language)*

Art

STEM

Business 101

Band

Choir

Every Day

World Language (*German or Spanish*)

Placement in these courses determined by school personnel

Algebra

Geometry

Historical Inquiry/Literacy

Math Intervention

Reading Intervention

When will my child register for 8th grade classes?

In February of their 7th grade year, registration materials will go home with your child, paperwork completed, signed by a parent and returned to school.

Course Descriptions for Eighth Grade

CORE OFFERINGS

American History

This American History course is a survey of American history beginning around 1450 with the colonization of the Americas and ending in 1865 with the Civil War. This course is designed to help students understand how and why particular events and patterns of events occurred in our society. The purpose of this course is to provide students with an historical background of the 21st Century. This survey course will enable students to understand the geographic, political and economic developments that affect current events.

ELA (English Language Arts)

English 8 combines strands of Communication Arts and Literacy into a unified block. While students practice reading lessons which include whole-group work, book clubs and independent reading, they are challenged to increase the volume of their reading. This challenge is increased with an emphasis on more complex texts and a specific aim of incorporating a great variety of nonfiction. Readers apply independent reading strategies, developing critical thinking skills by analyzing text through close-reading. At the Grade 8 level, there is an initiative to closely coordinate the reading and writing aspects of English. Not only do students respond in writing to independent reading, they also use writing as a way of learning and thinking about nonfiction materials, including activities that cross the lines between disciplines (e.g. English and Social Studies). Another emphasis in the Communication Arts strand is the development of vocabulary and more sophisticated sentence structure. In tandem, these broaden the abilities to both understand and communicate about the kinds of texts students will face in the future.

Historical Literacy- ELA (Requires Historical Inquiry - Social Studies)

This course addresses the college and career readiness needs of students while nurturing the academic and thinking capacities required for competent citizenry. By combining the practices of social studies and ELA, students will approach history as much more than a chronological pageant of consecutive events. Instead, we will endeavor to engage in the actual practice of history and join the great dialogue of historical inquiry. Students will gain expertise in using documentary evidence, evaluating sources, contextualizing, corroborating, and detecting bias. Students will learn to read complex historical text, to use reading and writing as a springboard for deep learning, and to engage in meaningful and genuine questioning.

Historical Inquiry - Social Studies (Requires Historical Literacy ELA)

This course is an in-depth study of American history beginning around 1450 with the colonization of the Americas and ending in 1865 with the Civil War. This rigorous academic experience is intended for students who are ambitious, intellectually curious, and highly self-motivated. The course looks at specific social, economic, political, and religious issues that have affected and shaped the United States and its development over time. The emphasis in this course is placed on critical thinking, independent research, and oral and written skills. Students go far beyond typical expectations of summarizing the information in the textbook. Students will read and analyze primary and secondary sources, write historical responses, analyze and draw

conclusions from document-based questions, formulate opinions and back them with clear and concise evidence, argue and debate points of view and use more extensive critical thinking skills. This course also looks at our country's historical background through a deeper understanding of Language Arts and literacy skills.

Physical Science

Students will learn to apply inquiry to solve problems in physical science. Physical Science introduces students to many of the Chemistry and Physics concepts they will see in high school. Units of study include matter, chemistry, motion and forces, sound, light, electricity, and magnetism. A wide variety of technology along with giving students a hands on approach to the major concepts of physical science in the form of hands-on labs will be incorporated. Students will participate in class lessons, demonstrations, and practical applications.

Math 8

The purpose of mathematics education is to build the high levels of mathematical skills, processes, thinking, and problem solving necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st century. This course is designed as a preparation for high school algebra. The topics covered include equations, transformations, angles and triangles, graphing and writing linear equations, systems of linear equations, functions, real numbers and the Pythagorean Theorem, volume and similar solids, data analysis and displays, and exponents and scientific notation.

Math - Algebra

Algebra is an accelerated math course that covers the same topics as the algebra course at the high school. The topics covered include solving linear equations, graphing and writing linear equations, solving linear inequalities, solving systems of linear equations, linear functions, exponential equations and functions, polynomial equations and factoring, graphing quadratic functions, solving quadratic equations, square root functions and geometry, rational equations and functions, and data analysis and displays. Students who successfully master concepts covered in this course will be placed in geometry for the following year. Students must have a B- average (quarter grades and semester exam) or higher to move on.

Math - Geometry

Geometry deals with the understanding of postulates, theorems and shapes. Students will learn about specific shapes and the properties of each shape. Lines, planes, angles, congruence, similarity and proofs are other major content areas covered. These ideas will be tied into what students may see in everyday life or future and current jobs. This class will have hands-on discovery activities, and the students will be challenged with how to think and problem solve. Computer software will be incorporated to help aid with illustrations and to bring to life some of the ideas in this course.

Students who successfully master concepts covered in this course will be placed in Advanced Algebra for the following year. Students must have a B- average (quarter grades and semester exam) or higher to move on.

RELATED ARTS OFFERINGS

Art 8

At the end of ART 8, students will have created meaningful artwork guided by big ideas. Big ideas are important human issues that artists explore to give their work significance. Beyond a theme or subject matter, a big idea tells in broad conceptual terms what the art is about and can drive an individual artist's art making over long periods of time. The focus of this course is to explore a wide range of art mediums (painting, drawing, ceramics, etc.) through creativity, practice and collaboration. This course also has a focus on preparing students for the rigorous art courses offered at Grafton High School.

Band

Band provides students with the opportunity to study an instrument (brass, woodwind, percussion, string or keyboard) both individually and in a large group setting. This group is open to any student regardless of level of experience; beginners are welcome. Students participate in a variety of performances from formal concerts to parades. Most performances occur outside of the regular school day. The literature used exposes students to a variety of musical genres while paying specific attention to developmentally appropriate musical elements. Students participate in weekly small group lesson instruction in addition to large group rehearsals every other day.

Business 101 (Business & Information Technology)

Through the use of technology during this semester-long course, students will gain basic business and financial literacy skills. Units in Marketing, Personal Money Management, Career Exploration, Communications and Social Media, as well as basic leadership concepts will be discussed and discovered through practical group and individual projects. Students will also work with volunteers from Junior Achievement who come into the classroom to share their real-world experiences with the Economics for Success program.

Choir

Choir provides the opportunity for students to study vocal music, with public performance as an end result. The literature used exposes musical styles as well as instruction in musical elements. Concert etiquette is stressed. Students will participate in concerts and performances outside the regular school day.

German (Prerequisite - 7th Grade German)

8th grade German students meet every day and are engaged actively with each other as they work to improve the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Topics include: free time activities, school, geography, food, clothing, celebrations and travel, and current events. Upon successful completion of German in 7th and 8th grade, students can sign up for German 2 at GHS. Students who continue with German through their senior year can graduate with 14 UW College credits! We also have a German Exchange Program and travel to Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

Physical Education/Health

In 8th Grade, our primary focus is on Skill Advancement & Game Strategy. Units are designed so students can advance their skill level. Game play and individual/team strategy is used to advance that development. Students will be assessed daily on their level of participation. Students also will be assessed on their skill development and their level of understanding through performance and written assessments. Physical Education/Health is a blended class where more advanced Health topics on self-esteem, peer pressure, nutrition, disease prevention, human growth and development, conflict resolution, substance abuse, group membership and goal setting will be connected within our Physical Education units.

Spanish (Prerequisite - 7th Grade Spanish)

8th grade Spanish meets every day and continues to build on 7th grade curriculum. Introductory level grammar and vocabulary are practiced as students are actively engaged with speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities. Through readings, videos, and cultural activities students will continue to learn about the people found in the many countries where Spanish is spoken. Students will be assessed on vocabulary acquisition and grammar application. Topics include building on vocabulary and grammar that was learned in 7th grade Spanish as well as new topics of foods and health, places, sports and activities, family and celebrations and verb conjugations in the present tense including regular and irregular verbs along with other grammar concepts. Upon successful completion of 7th and 8th grade Spanish, (B- average or above throughout the year), students would qualify to take Spanish 2 at GHS.

STEM 8

This semester-long course meets every other day for the year and builds on applied learning from STEM 7 through independent and collaborative learning opportunities. STEM 8 student experiences include machine and tool mastery through application of the product-to-process cycle, applied physics with concrete math explanations, energy applications, image design, circuits, CADD within SolidWorks and SketchUP 8. Also, mechanical engineering challenges with a continuous focus on safety and accurate measurement as well as real-work simulations through community outreach activities will be experienced. A \$5.00 consumables fee, 4-gig flash drive and appropriate safety gear including closed-toed shoes and z87+ eye protection is required for this class.