

Program of Studies

2023-2024

Highlands Middle School
1350 Broadview Boulevard
Natrona Heights, PA 15065
724-226-0600

Highlands School District
Administrative Center
P.O. Box 288
Natrona Heights, PA 15065
724-226-2400

Highlands Middle School is designed specifically to allow all children to transition from childhood into adolescence. During these four years, students will be given opportunities to experience many disciplines taught by a strong core of teachers who work together to integrate their courses. The administrators, teachers, and counselors will constructively guide and reinforce each student as he or she explores a changing world and self.

This Program of Studies provides an overview of the Highlands Middle School curriculum with brief descriptions of the planned courses for each grade. It also contains information on services provided for students by the School Counseling Department. Please review the following guide. If you have questions, please feel free to contact any of the people listed below:

Highlands Middle School Administration/Staff

Ms. Rebecca Bragan (Principal)	724-226-2400 x3605
Mr. Cory Sakolsky (Assistant Principal)	724-226-2400 x3610
Ms. Katie Jo Stobert (Dean of Students)	724-226-2400 x3615
Mrs. Karla Phillips (Secretary)	724-226-2400 x3600
Ms. Karen Barnwell (Secretary)	724-226-2400 x3601
Mrs. Julie Seitz-Allman (School Counselor Gr. 5 & 6)	724-226-2400 x3651
Ms. Julie Hiester (School Counselor Gr. 7 & 8)	724-226-2400 x3652
Ms. Aliza Zelina (Nurse)	724-226-2400 x3700

The Middle School “Team” Concept

The team concept is an approach that has proven to be effective in middle schools throughout the nation. Highlands Middle School students in grades five through eight are assigned to one of two teams at each grade level. Each of these teams has its own group of teachers who teach the required subjects (language arts, reading, math, science, and social studies). Students

rotate among their team teachers during the school day. This concept ensures that no student will go unnoticed.

This type of team structure:

- allows students to receive instruction in their academic subjects within a contained area specifically designated for their grade level,
- provides a small group, nurturing environment while gradually exposing students to a larger, upper grade level school,
- allows interdisciplinary instruction, and provides a sense of community to foster meaningful relationships among students and teachers.

Highlands Middle School Mission Statement

The Highlands Middle School is a unified community committed to providing its students with opportunities to achieve a mastery of basic skills, to develop a positive self-image, and to foster academic, social, and personal growth.

Major Goals of the Middle School

1. Provide the students with skills for coping with everyday pressure.
2. Encourage students to respect differences among their peers.
3. Encourage open communication between the school and the home.
4. Stimulate career awareness in students.
5. Develop decision-making skills in students.
6. Provide the opportunity for students to learn and use independent study skills.
7. Provide the opportunity for students to develop good citizenship skills.
8. Recognize that reading, writing, and computing are skills necessary for success in our society and that these skills are not restricted to any one academic discipline, but are a shared responsibility of students and teachers.
9. Assist the development of academic, social, aesthetic, emotional, and physical skills.
10. Encourage students to become increasingly self-directing, moving from dependent childhood to self-actuating adolescence.

School Counseling Services

The mission of Highlands Middle School Counseling Department is to provide a comprehensive, developmental program that promotes the academic, career and personal/social development of all students. Our counseling program is committed to working in collaboration with educators, parents and community members to ensure all students have access to and are prepared with the knowledge and skills to become productive self-managing members of society.

Counselors also prepare eighth grade students for the high school scheduling process. They work in conjunction with the high school counselors to help to create a smooth transition from the middle school to the high School.

Bully Prevention Program

The Highlands School District is committed to providing all students and employees with the right to a safe and civil educational environment, free from harassment and bullying. The district recognizes that bullying interferes with the learning process and may present an obstacle to the academic, vocational and social and/or emotional development of students.

The Middle School's approach to bully prevention is designed to create a safe and caring school environment where the power is in the hands of the caring majority, not the bullies. A person is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed to negative actions on the part of one or more persons over a period of time.

Communication is a key component in preventing bullying in schools. Please talk with the nearest adult if you feel you are being intimidated, threatened, or harassed at Highlands Middle School. We will investigate the situation, give consequences to the person who is bullying, support the victim and teach the bystanders how to stand up against bullying, which is a key concept in our social-emotional program, Second Step.

College and Career Readiness

Highlands Middle School incorporates Pennsylvania's Career Standards into students' daily coursework. This instruction helps students with career awareness and preparation, career acquisition, career retention and advancement and entrepreneurship. Our teachers and school

counselors collect artifacts of this learning and help students create a Future Ready portfolio that follows them to the high school.

Second Step: Student Success through Prevention

Highlands Middle School uses the Second Step program to teach students empathy, skills for working in groups, conflict resolution and goal setting. Our students learn these lessons through direct instruction from their homeroom teachers and incorporate this learning into their everyday experiences.

PSSAs and Keystone Exams

Currently students in grades 3-8 are required to take PSSA tests in the spring of each school year. Additionally, students are required to take Keystone exams as end-of-course tests in Algebra I, Biology and Literature. Since some of our students take Algebra IB during their middle school years, the Algebra I Keystone exam will be administered to these students. It is a graduation requirement that students demonstrate proficiency on the Algebra I, Biology and Literature Keystone Exams.

Interactive Media Center Overview

The libraries of the Highlands School District function as a continuing unit, elementary through high school, to provide students and teachers with educational materials that serve to supplement and enrich the school curriculum. The libraries also serve to provide incentives for individual growth in specific areas of study and in the use of leisure time.

Highlands also partners with the Community Library of Allegheny Valley, which offers services, programs, and seminars to students and their families.

The mission of the Highlands Middle School Media Center is to ensure that students are lifelong learners and effective users of ideas and information. As the middle school library transitions to the Highlands Interactive Media Center, students will be presented with evolving opportunities to enrich their education in all subject areas and interests.

Support Services

Gifted Education (GATE)

The Highlands School District is dedicated to providing opportunities that promote the growth of skills and knowledge necessary for students identified as gifted to achieve their potential and to fulfill their future roles in our ever-changing global society. Highlands recognizes the unique abilities, talents, interests and needs of students who require specially designed instruction.

Health Services

In addition to caring for students in need, our school nurses coordinate annual health screenings, dental and medical exams, administer medications and maintain student health records and immunizations.

Highlands Virtual Academy

In conjunction with Waterfront Learning, Highlands School District teachers facilitate on-line classes in core subjects for students in seventh and eighth grade. This platform allows students to learn English language arts, math, social studies and science outside of the school building while still having Highlands teachers support them and help them as they learn. School counselors can answer questions and help facilitate entrance into this program.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

MTSS for academics and behavior is a framework that Highlands Middle School uses to provide targeted support to struggling students. It focuses on the “whole child.” MTSS supports academic growth and achievement, but it also supports many other areas. This includes behavior, social and emotional needs, and absenteeism. The multi-tiered supports are a significant part of MTSS. These tiers of support increase in intensity from one level to the next. The MTSS model helps students in the regular education setting receive interventions.

At Highlands, MTSS includes standards-aligned, culturally responsive and high-quality core instruction, universal screening, data-based decision-making, tiered services and supports, family engagement, central/building level leadership and professional learning. MTSS

represents a broad set of evidence-based practices intended to help ALL students meet with continuous academic and behavioral success.

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) is based on a problem-solving model and aims to prevent inappropriate behavior through teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2007). Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a process that is consistent with the core principles of MTSS. PBIS offers a range of interventions that are systematically applied to students based on their demonstrated level of need, and addresses the role of the environment as it applies to development and improvement of behavior problems. Both MTSS and PBIS are grounded in differentiated instruction. Each approach establishes critical factors and components to be in place at the universal (Tier 1), targeted group (Tier 2), and individual (Tier 3) levels.

Special Education Services

It is the policy of the Highlands School District that every child who qualifies for special education services be provided a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). To the maximum extent possible, children with disabilities will be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Student placement decisions are made via the IEP team that includes the parents.

After all evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Report will be compiled with parent involvement. It will include specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to deal with the child's specified needs.

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed with specially designed instruction services for the student. The IEP Team consists of the parent, the principal, the special education teacher, and a regular education teacher.

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a systematic process using effective and accountable professional techniques to mobilize school resources to remove the barriers to learning and, when the problem is beyond the scope of the school, to assist the parent/guardian and student with information so they may access services within the

community. SAP is designed to assist in identifying issues including alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and mental health issues that pose a barrier to a student's success. The primary goal of the Student Assistance Program is to help students overcome these barriers so that they may achieve, advance, and remain in school.

Student Council/Rambassadors

Student Council and Rambassadors offer students in grades 5-8 the opportunity to actively participate in school wide initiatives, lend their hands to community causes, share their perspective and see democracy in action. While representing Highlands Middle School, these student leaders will gain responsibility, increase pride in their school, and enhance their overall awareness of events at a local and/or global level.

Purpose

- To provide a channel of communication between the students and the faculty,
- To provide students with a forum for discussing school problems and other matters of student concerns
- To provide students with experiences in representative government and group processes
- To promote school spirit through student involvement in school projects.

Grading Guidelines

1. It is recommended that students who earn less than 70% for the first, second or third marking period in a core class request tutoring or help from their Team's teachers and/or their school counselors.
2. Students who do not earn a passing grade in any core course will be required to meet with the school counselor or principal to make up the course in summer school. The grade earned in summer school will not replace the original grade earned during the regular school term. Both grades will be entered on the permanent record with a notation indicating the summer school grade.
3. Students who have not earned a passing grade may be ineligible to participate in extra-curricular activities including sports, field trips and other school events.

Percentage Grading System

Percentage grades are used for each nine-week grading period as well as semester and final averages. The percentage grade that the student earns in class is the percentage grade that will appear on the report card. The percentage grade earned in all classes will be calculated into a student's grade point average. The current percentage scale (90, 80, 70, 60) will be used.

Scheduling

The administration reserves the right to drop and add courses, and to adjust students' schedules based upon student enrollment and teacher recommendation, teacher availability, standardized test scores and student enrollment.

SCHEDULE CHANGES: Because of scheduling conflicts, changes in preliminary schedules may be necessary. If a conflict occurs, counselors will discuss the available options prior to the beginning of the next school year. Occasionally, students are contacted during the summer to resolve conflicts. Schedule changes after the beginning of the school year will be considered only after a principal has communicated with the parent/guardian and approved the change.

Information on Course Selection

ADVANCED MATH

Several components are involved when recommending students for advanced math classes. These components include previous course grades, teacher recommendation, standardized test scores and homework completion. Once recommended, using the math department rubric, students must maintain an 80% average in order to remain in advanced math.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

If a student is failing (less than 60%) in two academic subjects for the week, they will be ineligible to participate for one week.

Grade Five Course Listing

<u>Courses</u>	<u>Periods</u>	<u>Weeks</u>
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 5	5	36
MATHEMATICS 5	5	36
SCIENCE 5	5	36
SOCIAL STUDIES	5	36
RELATED ARTS CLASSES	5	18/36

Grade Five Course Listing

5th GRADE REQUIRED COURSES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 5: This course helps students develop a strong personal voice in their writing. This is demonstrated by the way they sometimes inject humor into their narratives and support their opinions with credible reasons. Students use precise, specialized vocabulary appropriately in content-area writing. Students develop their writing craft with an emphasis on pacing and an awareness of style. They experiment with sentence length and complex sentence structures and vary leads and endings. Students are able to summarize and synthesize important works to include in their compositions.

This course helps students broaden and deepen their understanding of informational and literary text through comparing and contrasting. Students reflect on their skills and adjust their comprehension and vocabulary strategies to become better readers. They use textual evidence and quote accurately to support their analyses and interpretations. Using evidence from multiple texts, students discuss, reflect, and respond to a wide variety of literary genres and informational text. Students read for pleasure, choosing books based on personal preference, topic, genre, theme or author.

MATH 5: This course helps students: (1) develop fluency with addition and subtraction of fractions, and developing understanding of the multiplication of fractions and of division of fractions in limited cases (unit fractions divided by whole numbers and whole numbers divided by unit fractions); (2) extend division to two-digit divisors, integrating decimal fractions into the place value system and developing understanding of operations with decimals to hundredths,

and developing fluency with whole number and decimal operations; and (3) develop understanding of volume.

SCIENCE 5: This course gives the students a solid and balanced foundation of the scientific concepts focusing on the areas of life science, physical science, earth science, environmental science and the nature of science. Students will complete hands-on experiments using the scientific process while focusing on the topics of variables, motion and design, and ecosystems.

SOCIAL STUDIES 5: This course is designed to teach the students about the world in which they live by investigating the Five Themes of Geography. These include location, place, region, human/environment interaction, and movement. Students will develop and extend their knowledge of basic mapping skills.

Advisory 5: Advisory class offers students a variety of social emotional learning through our second step and PBIS program. Students receive developmentally appropriate lessons to enhance their peer relationships, self-esteem, and also receive academic support.

MTSS:

We provide a continuum of supports and services in academics during the intervention period focused on improving math and reading outcomes. Students work in small groups to receive intensive intervention and regular progress monitoring of their learning. Teachers analyze student progress data in teams and adjust student interventions weekly to ensure the most appropriate level of support for each student.

RELATED ARTS CLASSES:

Highlands middle school follows PA Code for required related art classes. Students are able to have a choice in related arts classes once required classes are selected.

BAND 5:

Students will develop individual and ensemble instrumental performance skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. Band is a year-long course; students who enroll in both Band and Chorus will split rehearsal time between the two ensembles if scheduled class times conflict.

CHORUS 5:

Students will develop individual and ensemble singing skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances

after school or during the school day. Chorus is a year-long course; students who enroll in both Band and Chorus will split rehearsal time between the two ensembles if scheduled class times conflict.

ART 5:

This course offers students comprehensive art experiences with detailed explorations in the classics such as painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, graphic design and crafts. In addition to gaining confidence and proficiency working with a variety of mediums, students will learn about the history, analysis and interpretation of art. A strong focus on processes will be applied.

ADVANCED ART 5

This course continues to expand on skills learned in grade 5 art class. Instructor drills down on higher level skills in painting, drawing, sculpture, graphic design, and different crafts. Students will further expand on their learning to gain higher levels of confidence and proficiency working with a variety of mediums, students will learn about the history, analysis and interpretation of art.

COMPUTER SKILLS 5:

This course is an introduction to computers with a focus on typing skills and the Microsoft Office programs, primarily Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. This class will incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) concepts.

LIBRARY SKILLS 5:

This course will include a mini-research project where students will learn to identify and locate resources. They will learn the systematic research process that involves selecting an appropriate topic or formulating a question, gathering, evaluating and organizing information, drawing conclusions, presenting results to an audience and evaluating both the product and the process. They will understand ethical and safety issues related to information use, including plagiarism, citing sources, copyright, acceptable use and responsible use of school technologies and resources and evaluation of information.

MUSIC 5:

Students will practice and improve music skills and understandings through classroom performance, critical analysis, and examination of historical and cultural context. Students will sing a variety of songs, play classroom instruments, create musical works, and listen and respond to various styles of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 5:

This course provides a basic understanding of team sports concepts, lifetime activities, gross/fine locomotor skill applications and manipulative skill development through participation in the following activities: fitness/flag football, basketball, volleyball, wiffleball, tchoukball, fleeing/dodging games. Lifetime Activities : walk/jogging, disc golf, bowling, bocce ball, fitness scavenger hunts, orienteering.

LIFETIME WELLNESS 5:

Lifetime Wellness provides students with the foundational knowledge of Wellness by learning the basics of the 7 types of Health: Physical, Mental, Emotion, Social, Spiritual, Environmental, Occupational. Wellness classes are designed to teach students healthy living habits, decision making strategies, body systems, and describe and review growth and development.

BODY WEIGHT FITNESS 5

Students will learn the major muscle groups, different types of muscle and will participate in a variety of fitness activities to assess the muscle groups being used. Students may participate in yoga, fitness intervals, Tabata, fitness circuits and learn how to use a fitness center appropriately and safely. Students will perform daily workouts and even plan their own body weight fitness circuit by the end of the nine weeks.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION 5:

This course enables students to explore Technological systems first hand through a variety of experiences. Students will utilize various materials to design solutions to problems presented to them, students will work through structural design and transportation systems. This class will incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) concepts and also utilize CAD functions.

INNOVATION 5:

This course introduces students to the engineering and design process. Students learn about the history of design and explore each of the nine steps used to see a problem, create solutions, collaborate with others to implement the design and present the final product to an audience.

Grade Six Course Listing

<u>COURSES</u>	<u>PERIODS</u>	<u>WEEKS</u>
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 6	5	36
MATHEMATICS 6	5	36
SCIENCE 6	5	36
SOCIAL STUDIES	5	36
SPECIAL AREA CLASSES:	5	18/36

Grade Six Course Descriptions

6TH GRADE REQUIRED COURSES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ART 6: This course increasingly challenges students to sharpen their ability to write and speak with more clarity and coherence, providing clear reasons and relevant evidence. They examine how authors use reasons to make their points and support arguments with evidence, separating unsupported ideas from those backed by evidence. They know how to answer questions through writing and can use rewriting opportunities to refine their understanding of a text or topic. They also take a critical stance toward sources and apply criteria for identifying reliable information as opposed to mere conjecture.

This course helps students read grade-appropriate, complex literature and informational text and cite textual evidence to support analyses. Students analyze both the structure and content of complex, grade-appropriate texts, determining how sentences and paragraphs within texts influence and contribute to the unfolding of a plot and the development and elaboration of events or ideas. Students share their findings in class discussions, practicing how logically to sequence ideas and highlight the themes and key details they find most persuasive. Students' vocabularies expand as they become more attuned to using context, knowledge of Greek and Latin roots and affixes, and word analysis to determine the meaning of academic words.

MATH 6: This course focuses on four critical areas: (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the

system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking.

SCIENCE 6: This course gives students a solid, well-balanced foundation of scientific concepts based on four major areas: life science, physical science, earth science, environmental science and the nature of science. Students will be involved in hands-on activities using the scientific processes while focusing on modules that teach about matter, weather and atmosphere, basic chemistry, energy transfer and cellular structure, reproduction and growth.

SOCIAL STUDIES 6: This course engages students in the investigation of the Five Themes of Geography, beginning with pre-history to the fall of the Roman Empire. After this focused study of geography, students will apply this information as they are introduced to the rise of ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. In addition to the newly acquired geography skills, students will investigate the economics, sociology, politics and history of these regions, their cultures and contributions to modern societies.

Advisory 6:

Advisory class offers students a variety of social emotional learning through our second step and PBIS program. Students receive developmentally appropriate lessons to enhance their peer relationships, self-esteem, and also receive academic support.

MTSS:

We provide a continuum of supports and services in academics during the intervention period focused on improving math and reading outcomes. Students work in small groups to receive intensive intervention and regular progress monitoring of their learning. Teachers analyze student progress data in teams and adjust student interventions weekly to ensure the most appropriate level of support for each student.

RELATED ARTS CLASSES:

Highlands middle school follows PA Code for required related art classes. Students are able to have a choice in related arts classes once required classes are selected.

BAND 6:

Students will develop individual and ensemble instrumental performance skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. Band is a year-long course;

students who enroll in both Band and Chorus will split rehearsal time between the two ensembles if scheduled class times conflict.

CHORUS 6:

Students will develop individual and ensemble singing skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. Chorus is a year-long course; students who enroll in both Band and Chorus will split rehearsal time between the two ensembles if scheduled class times conflict.

ART 6:

The course offers students comprehensive art experiences with detailed explorations in the classics such as painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, graphic design and crafts. In addition to gaining confidence and proficiency working with a variety of mediums, students will learn about the history, analysis and interpretation of art.

ADVANCED ART 6

This course expands on skills learned in Grade 6 art. Students will continue to acquire experiences in painting and drawing, printmaking, sculpture., design, and graphics on a higher level than the general art classes.

COMPUTER SKILLS 6:

This course is an introduction to computers with a focus on typing skills and the Microsoft Office programs, primarily Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. This class will incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) concepts.

LIBRARY SKILLS 6:

This course will include a mini-research project where students will learn to identify and locate resources. They will learn the systematic research process that involves selecting an appropriate topic or formulating a question, gathering, evaluating and organizing information, drawing conclusions, presenting results to an audience and evaluating both the product and the process. They will understand ethical and safety issues related to information use, including plagiarism, citing sources, copyright, acceptable use and responsible use of school technologies and resources and evaluation of information.

MUSIC 6:

Students will practice and improve music skills and understandings through classroom performance, critical analysis, and examination of historical and cultural context. Students will

sing a variety of songs, play classroom instruments, create musical works, and listen and respond to various styles of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 6:

This course builds upon the basic understanding of team sports concepts, lifetime activities, gross/fine locomotor skill applications and manipulative skill development from 5th grade. Students will also focus on more rigorous bodyweight resistance training, game play strategies, advanced manipulative, locomotor skills applications . Activities: fitness/flag football, basketball, volleyball, wiffleball, tchoukball, fleeing/dodging games, tennis, bodyweight fitness, Fitnessgram assessment.

LIFETIME WELLNESS 6:

Lifetime Wellness provides students with the foundational knowledge of Wellness by learning the basics of the 7 types of Health: Physical, Mental, Emotion, Social, Spiritual, Environmental, Occupational. Wellness classes are designed to teach students healthy living habits, decision making strategies, review body systems and learn what effects physical activity has on them, and describe and review growth and development. Students will also learn what healthy relationships are and how that applies to their individual lives.

SKILL FITNESS 6

Students will learn the skill related components of fitness and will identify their importance and their applications in daily activities. Cooperative games, fitness and team building will also be a part of this class as they learn a variety of skills throughout the nine weeks.

TECHNOLOGICAL SYSTEMS 6:

This course helps students explore manufacturing and transportation systems first hand through a variety of experiences. Students will utilize manufacturing and scientific information to solve problems presented to them. Students will use scientific theories to develop transportation systems through open-ended projects to develop technological problem-solving skills. This class will incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) concepts.

INNOVATION 6:

This course builds on the learning students gained in fifth grade about the engineering and design process. Students learn about the history of design and explore each of the nine steps used to identify a problem, create solutions, collaborate with others to implement the design and present the final product to an audience. At the culmination of this course, 6 grade students present their final designs to peers and judges beyond the school setting.

Grade Seven Course Listing

<u>REQUIRED COURSES</u>	<u>PERIODS</u>	<u>WEEKS</u>
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 7	5	36
MATHEMATICS 7	5	36
PRE-ALGEBRA (By recommendation)	5	36
SCIENCE 7	5	36
WORLD CULTURES	5	36
RELATED ARTS CLASSES:	5	18/36

Grade Seven Course Descriptions

7TH GRADE REQUIRED COURSES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 7: This course helps students trace how an argument develops within a text and assess the validity of the evidence. They make their reasoning clear to their listeners and readers and constructively evaluate others' use of evidence while offering several sources to back up their own claims. The use of vocabulary has developed to the point where they distinguish between denotative and connotative meaning and analyze the effect of specific word choice on tone. As growing writers, students cite several sources of specific, relevant evidence when supporting their own point of view about texts and topics. Their writing is more structured, with clear introductions and conclusions as well as useful transitions to create cohesion and clarify relationships among ideas. In their writing, they acknowledge the other side of a debate or an alternative perspective while avoiding any trace of plagiarism.

This course helps students demonstrate their ability to read challenging complex texts closely and cite multiple examples of specific evidence to support their claims. They are able to recognize the interplay between setting, plot, and characters and provide an objective summary of a text apart from their own reaction to it. They are adept at stepping back to comparing and contrasting different interpretations of a topic, identifying how authors shape their presentation of key information and choose to highlight certain facts over others.

MATHEMATICS 7: This course focuses on four critical areas: (1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; (3) solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; and (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples.

PRE-ALGEBRA: (By recommendation ONLY) This course emphasizes concepts needed for success in algebra. The course introduces integers, fractions, equations and the process to solve equations using variables. The course also reviews arithmetic algorithms. Students engage in methods for analyzing and using functions and learn to move between multiple representations of functions including but not limited to linear, exponential and quadratics.

SCIENCE 7: This course continues providing a well-balanced foundation of scientific concepts based on four major areas: life science, physical science, earth science, environmental science and the nature of science. Students will be involved in hands-on activities using the scientific processes and informational technology while focusing on earth and space science, geology, biology and ecological systems.

WORLD CULTURES: This course includes the study of countries and people of the world with an emphasis on early African, Chinese, Japanese, and European Nations from the beginning of the A.D. time period to the Middle Ages. This course also extends the knowledge of the Five Themes of Geography into world geography. The disciplines of geography, economics, sociology and government are examined to emphasize the themes of history and the underlying concepts that unify historical events. The class will focus on reading, writing and map skills.

Advisory 7:

Resource class offers students a variety of social emotional learning through our second step and PBIS program. Students receive developmentally appropriate lessons to enhance their peer relationships, self-esteem, and also receive academic support.

MTSS:

We provide a continuum of supports and services in academics during the intervention period focused on improving math and reading outcomes. Students work in small groups to receive intensive intervention and regular progress monitoring of their learning. Teachers analyze student progress data in teams and adjust student interventions weekly to ensure the most appropriate level of support for each student.

RELATED ARTS CLASSES:

Highlands middle school follows PA Code for required related art classes. Students are able to have a choice in related arts classes once required classes are selected.

BAND 7:

Students will develop individual and ensemble instrumental performance skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. Band is a year-long course; students who enroll in both Band and Chorus will split rehearsal time between the two ensembles if scheduled class times conflict.

CHORUS 7:

Students will develop individual and ensemble singing skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. Chorus is a year-long course; students who enroll in both Band and Chorus will split rehearsal time between the two ensembles if scheduled class times conflict.

ART 7:

This course offers students comprehensive art experiences with detailed explorations in the classics such as painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, graphic design and crafts. In addition to gaining confidence and proficiency working with a variety of mediums, students will learn about the history, analysis and interpretation of art.

Painting and Drawing

A basic course that introduces a wide variety of media and techniques. Included in the course are topics in design and composition in areas such as painting, drawing, cartooning, and work in the sketchbook. Students will be encouraged to work creatively and to become competent in the use of different materials and basic processes.

CERAMICS

Ceramics: This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to explore methods of artistic expression through studies in pottery and three-dimensional art making. Study will

include a four-week concentration in pottery work with experiences on the pottery wheel, hand-building pottery, and glazing. The other half of the 9 weeks is devoted to the creation of sculptures while exploring a variety of media including clay, plaster, metal, wood, glass, and plastic. Within each unit of study, various artists and artistic styles will be covered as well as different sculptural techniques and surface renderings. Some of these techniques will include: under and over glazing, marbleizing clay, and traditional patina finishes

COMPUTER SKILLS 7:

This course helps students build on the concepts they learned in Computer Skills 6 using Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft Word. Students will use their acquired skills to create real world projects that use technology as well as critical thinking skills. Students will continue to complete a daily typing drill to increase their typing speeds. This class will incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) concepts.

MUSIC 7:

Students will practice and improve music skills and understandings through critical analysis, examination of historical and cultural context, guided research, and project-based learning. Students will explore various styles of music, view and analyze performances, and complete relevant research and composition projects.

POP MUSIC ICONS:

Students will explore significant genres, musicians, and technological advancements that have defined popular music throughout history. Students will listen to and analyze various styles of music, examine historical and cultural context, and complete relevant research and composition projects.

BROADWAY MUSICALS 7:

Students will learn the elements, history, and performance techniques of musicals through classroom practice and performance, viewing and analysis of selected musicals, and relevant research and design projects. Students will sing selected songs, practice script-reading, plan blocking and choreography, and explore specific aspects of musical productions through project-based learning.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS 7:

This course helps students learn about human growth and development, controllable and uncontrollable risk factors, weight management, components of fitness, communicable and non-communicable disease, mental health, bully prevention, drug awareness.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 7:

This course allows students to improve and add to sixth grade skill concepts. Lifetime activities will continue to emphasize a sound level of fitness leading to a healthy outlet for stress. Activities: fitness/flag football, basketball, volleyball, wiffleball, tchoukball, fleeing/dodging games, tennis, bodyweight fitness, resistance Band training, fitnessgram assessment.

NOTE: Students must follow the guidelines for approved gym clothing as outlined in the student syllabus.

RESISTANCE TRAINING 7

This course is designed to introduce students to the health benefits, techniques, training principles, safety procedures and the etiquette of resistance training. Students will learn to identify specific muscle groups being targeted by specific exercises, demonstrate proper technique during all resistance training exercises, identify and apply various training principles (FITT, Progression, Specificity,) when designing an individualized plan, and promote resistance training as lifetime fitness activity within their own lives.

MANUFACTURING 7:

This course allows students to explore manufacturing processes and techniques while developing hands-on skills used in our manufacturing world. Students will be presented with design problems that they will develop a solution or product for, while using equipment to allow them to design and create their product. The course will introduce various tooling and finishing techniques relating to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

SCIENCE OF TECHNOLOGY

This course helps students see how science has influenced the design of technology throughout history. Students incorporate physics, chemistry, and nanotechnology to activities and projects, including making ice cream, cleaning up an oil spill, and discovering the properties of nano-materials. This course uses a curriculum developed by Project Lead the Way, incorporating the PA state science and Next Generation Science Standards.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE ROTATION:

This rotation course studies the relationship between individuals, families, and communities and environments in which we live. Our goal is to help educate students in recognizing the importance of positive human relationships, food science and nutrition, financial management, community responsibility, child development, and a balanced lifestyle. Family and consumer

science supports students in gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to be family members both now and in the future.

SHOW CHOIR 7-8:

Students will develop individual and small ensemble singing skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Selections will include choreography (as musically appropriate). Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. All students enrolled in Show Choir must also be enrolled in Chorus.

JAZZ BAND 7-8:

Students will develop individual and ensemble instrumental performance skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. Band must also be enrolled in Band.

Grade Eight Course Listing

<u>REQUIRED COURSES</u>	<u>PERIODS</u>	<u>WEEKS</u>
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 8	5	36
PRE-ALGEBRA	5	36
ALGEBRA 1 (BY RECOMMENDATION)	5	36
SCIENCE 8	5	36
U.S. HISTORY	5	36
RELATED ARTS:	5	18/36

Grade Eight Course Descriptions

8TH GRADE REQUIRED COURSES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 8: This course helps students develop a strong vocabulary of academic words which they learn to use to speak and write with more precision. Their writing continues to grow focusing on organizing ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; choosing relevant facts well; and using varied transitions to clarify or show the relationships among elements.

This course helps students grapple with high-quality, complex, nonfiction texts and great works of literature. The focus of informational texts shifts from narrative to expository. Students cite textual evidence supporting an analysis or critique, question an author's assumptions and assess the accuracy of the claims. Students in grade 8 read closely and find evidence to use in their own writing; they analyze two or more texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify whether the disagreement is over facts or interpretation. They analyze how point of view can be manipulated to create specific effects such as dramatic irony and investigate how particular passages within a text connect to one another to advance the plot, reveal a character, or highlight an idea.

PRE-ALGEBRA: This course emphasizes concepts needed for success in algebra. The course introduces integers, fractions, equations and the process to solve equations using variables. The course also reviews arithmetic algorithms. Students engage in methods for analyzing and using

functions and learn to move between multiple representations of functions including but not limited to linear, exponential and quadratics.

ALGEBRA I: (By recommendation ONLY) This course helps students formalize and expand on Algebraic concepts established in previous coursework. Students will deepen and extend their understanding of linear and exponential relationships by contrasting them with each other and by applying linear models to data that exhibit a linear trend. Students will engage in methods for analyzing, and using functions. Students will fluently move between multiple representations of functions including but not limited to linear, exponential and quadratics.

SCIENCE 8: This course helps students use the scientific method aided by informational technology and hands on activities to solve problems as students learn about the diversity of life, human activity and the changing Earth, chemistry, motion, energy and machines.

U.S. HISTORY: This course helps students see an overview of history with an emphasis on the Colonial Period to 1890, the Civil War, and America's role in the industrial revolution and its attendant social problems. Minority problems and current affairs are included in the program. The course draws upon the disciplines of geography, economics, sociology and political science to emphasize the themes of history and the underlying concepts that unify historical events. It is organized on a chronological basis to help give the students a sense of time and continuity.

MTSS:

We provide a continuum of supports and services in academics during the intervention period focused on improving math and reading outcomes. Students work in small groups to receive intensive intervention and regular progress monitoring of their learning. Teachers analyze student progress data in teams and adjust student interventions weekly to ensure the most appropriate level of support for each student.

Advisory 8:

Advisory class offers students a variety of social emotional learning through our second step and PBIS program. Students receive developmentally appropriate lessons to enhance their peer relationships, self-esteem, and also receive academic support.

RELATED ARTS CLASSES:

Highlands middle school follows PA Code for required related art classes. Students are able to have a choice in related arts classes once required classes are selected.

BAND 8:

Students will develop individual and ensemble instrumental performance skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. Band is a year-long course; students who enroll in both Band and Chorus will split rehearsal time between the two ensembles if scheduled class times conflict.

CHORUS 8:

Students will develop individual and ensemble singing skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. Chorus is a year-long course; students who enroll in both Band and Chorus will split rehearsal time between the two ensembles if scheduled class times conflict.

ART 8:

This course offers students comprehensive art experiences with detailed explorations in the classics such as painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, graphic design and crafts. In addition to gaining confidence and proficiency working with a variety of mediums, students will learn about the history, analysis and interpretation of art. Focus will begin to shift towards the end product in preparation for advanced high school courses.

CERAMICS 2

Ceramics 2 is a class designed for students who are interested in a more in-depth clay experience. Emphasis will be placed on refining basic skills to produce work that is more complex and mature. A variety of glazing/decorating techniques will be explored. In addition, the study of ceramic history will include a focus on contemporary artists.

PAINTING AND DRAWING 2

This course moves past just the basics of using a wide variety of media and techniques that was previously taught in course 1. Included in the course are advanced topics in design and composition in areas such as painting, drawing, cartooning, and work in the sketchbook. Students will be encouraged to work creatively and to become competent in the use of different materials and basic processes.

COMPUTER SKILLS 8:

This course helps students learn the necessary computer skills to prepare them for the rigorous high school curriculum. They will expand and build on the previous skills acquired in Computer Skills 6 and 7. Through project completion they will learn how to research, create, cite and edit research papers. They will be introduced to Microsoft Excel and how to create and add formulas to spreadsheets. In addition, students will be introduced to and practice proper internet and email etiquette. This class will incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) concepts.

MUSIC 8:

Students will practice and improve music skills and understandings through critical analysis, examination of historical and cultural context, guided research, and project-based learning. Students will explore various styles of music, view and analyze performances, and complete relevant research and composition projects.

MUSIC IN MOVIES AND THE MEDIA:

Students will explore the role of music in movies, television, and other historical and contemporary media. Students will learn about significant composers and musical works, view and analyze excerpts of relevant media, perform selected songs, and create their own works for specific media projects.

BROADWAY MUSICALS 8:

Students will learn the elements, history, and performance techniques of musicals through classroom practice and performance, viewing and analysis of selected musicals, and relevant research and design projects. Students will sing selected songs, practice script-reading, plan blocking and choreography, and explore specific aspects of musical productions through project-based learning.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS 8:

This course emphasizes health concerns during teen years. Topics include growth, heredity, weight management, nutritional basics, body systems, reproduction awareness.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 8:

This course continues basic elements of team sports and individual fitness from Grade 7, and may include archery, golf, bowling, and martial arts. This course will also build upon resistance training concepts from Grade 7 to now include free weight, and machine resistance training. Students will apply FITT Principle of training to design personal fitness programs that promote a lifetime of wellness.

NOTE: Students must follow the guidelines for approved gym clothing as outlined in the Student syllabus.

ADVANCED RESISTANCE TRAINING

This course is designed to develop a foundation of resistance training terminology, exercise principles and techniques to improve all 5 components of Physical Fitness during Grade 7. In 8th Grade, this course will then build upon knowledge acquired in 7th Grade to further develop and improve all components of physical fitness by Incorporating new training principles, performing advanced exercises, and developing personal resistance training plans.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT 8:

This course is designed to be a capstone course, incorporating previously learned concepts about manufacturing systems. Students will be introduced to advanced manufacturing and CAD software programs that will allow them to design and develop a product. Students will be working through an entire production process beginning with inputs, processes, outputs and feedback and also calculating cost of production along with labor.

AUTOMATION & ROBOTICS

This course builds a foundation for students to work with automation and robotics as they explore the history and impact of this technology. Students learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Using the VEX Robotics® platform, students apply what they know to design and program traffic lights, robotic arms, and more. This course uses a curriculum developed by Project Lead the Way, incorporating the PA state science and Next Generation Science Standards.

INTRODUCTION TO WORLD LANGUAGE

This course allows students to gain the knowledge of different cultures in the world, the different languages they speak, the different foods they eat, and different geographic locations. Students will also deep dive into a culture and language of their choice to research and present on. Students will be exposed to students from other countries and partner with teh high school for different and enhancing experiences.

SHOW CHOIR 7-8:

Students will develop individual and small ensemble singing skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Selections will include choreography (as musically appropriate). Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. All students enrolled in Show Choir must also be enrolled in Chorus.

JAZZ BAND 7-8:

Students will develop individual and ensemble instrumental performance skills and musicianship through preparation of music for public performances. Attendance at evening concerts is required, and students may occasionally be required to participate in additional rehearsals or performances after school or during the school day. All students enrolled in Jazz Band must also be enrolled in Band.

NOTICE: The Highlands School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in the enrollment and admission of students, the recruitment and employment of professional and classified staff, and in the operation of any of its programs and activities as specified by federal laws and regulations. Inquiries may be directed to the Title IX and Section 504 coordinators, who can be reached at the Administrative Center, 724-226-2400.