

**Missisquoi Valley Union Middle School**  
**Student Program of Studies**

**2020 – 2021**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Hello and welcome to the Missisquoi Valley Union (MVU) Middle School. This course of studies is designed to provide families with information that will be helpful during the registration process. While working together with parents, we hope to provide MVU Middle School students with the experiences, knowledge, and skills necessary for a positive and rewarding experience in middle school and a successful transition to high school.

### **THE TEAMING CONCEPT AT MVU MIDDLE SCHOOL**

At the Middle School, all students are placed on one of four teams with each team sharing the same core teachers. Each team consists of teachers in English, math, science, and social studies. One of these teachers serves as the student's homeroom teacher, also known as their prime group. There are approximately seventy students on each team. Each team of teachers meets on a regular basis to plan team activities and communicate about how to best serve the needs of our students.

### **THE EXPLORATORY AND ELECTIVE PROGRAMS**

In addition to participating in all core academic classes, seventh and eighth grade students are involved in our Exploratory Program. The Exploratory Program consists of Art, Business and Technology Education, Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Science. Students are required to take all exploratory classes.

Students may also take electives\*, some of which run for a full year and others which are half-year courses. Electives include but are not limited to French, Spanish, Band, Chorus, and Agriculture. The teaming concept does not apply to exploratory and electives so students from different teams may take these classes together. Students may sign up twice for a course that runs half of the year if they are interested in taking it all year.

\*The availability of electives depends on scheduling, enrollment, and the budget. Students may also be pulled from electives to take English enrichment classes, depending on their SBAC and CLA scores. These classes are designed to increase a student's reading level to bring them up to grade level.

## **FACULTY / STAFF**

### **Administration**

**Dan Palmer, Middle School Principal**

**Jay Hartman, High School Principal**

### **Administrative Assistant**

**Laurie Kilbury**

### **TEAMS AND CORE ACADEMIC AREAS**

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Firebirds Team**

**Janet Hatin, Science – Team Leader**

**Elizabeth Percy, English**

**Sarah Hankinson, Math**

**Ben Green, Social Studies**

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade XStream Team**

**Sarah Hohmann – Science – Team Leader**

**Brooks Sturtevant, Social Studies**

**Jessica Price, Math**

**Jordan Browning, English**

#### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Voyager Team**

**Dave Szabo, Social Studies – Team Leader**

**Kelly Medor , Math**

**Adam Fortin, Science**

**Kate Hillyard, English**

#### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Dream Team**

**Julie Kittell, Science – Team Leader**

**Gage Sironi, Math**

**Tom Sumner, Social Studies**

**Selena Cook, English**

### **Missisquoi Valley Union Middle/High School Department Leaders**

**Physical Ed., and Business Education**

**Mr. Scott Lagasse**

**Art, Music and FACS**

**Ms. Lindsay DiDio**

**Social Studies**

**Mrs. Alyssa Urban**

**Foreign Language**

**Mrs. Diane Ingham**

**Guidance Services**

**Ms. Tyler Meigs**

**English**

**Ms. Miranda Becker**

**Mathematics**

**Mrs. Maria Gervais**

**Science**

**Mr. James Daly**

## **EXPLORATORY & ELECTIVE AREAS**

Ashley Bowen, Art  
Josh Sinz, Art  
Danielle Turner, Chorus  
Angela Pandis, Business & Technology Ed.  
Grant Mello, Business & Technology Ed.  
Jean Gagne, Phys. Ed.  
Tessa Massett, Phys. Ed.  
Dallas Brodhead, Phys. Ed.  
Scott Lagasse, Phys. Ed./Wellness  
Ginger Farineau, Family & Consumer Sciences  
Sarah Tanner, Foreign Language (French)  
Diane Ingham, Foreign Language (French)  
Luz Cibula, Foreign Language (Spanish)  
Aaron Garceau, Band  
Danielle Turner, Chorus  
Mark Wilde, Agriculture & Natural Resources Study  
Joe Depatie, Mechanics  
Katie Berkelhamer – Animal Science

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE**

Allison Roy – XStream + Voyager  
Matthew Smith – Firebirds + Dream

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Nikki Reese, Consulting Teacher (for remote students)  
Cheryl Miller, Firebird Team Consulting Teacher  
Amanda Higdon, XStream Team Consulting Teacher  
Timothy Arthur, Voyager & Dream Teams Consulting Teacher

## **SPECIAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

Alyssa Graves, Nurse  
Lynn Billado, Nurse Assistant  
Kim Hamel, Librarian  
Kelly Rainville, Librarian Assistant  
Kevin Cleary, School Resource Officer  
Bob Corey, Middle School Student Management  
Vickie Greeno, Student Support  
Michael Rosenthal, Math Specialist (remote only)  
Mollie Moore, Reading Specialist (remote only)

## **DESCRIPTION OF CORE CLASSES**

### **GRADE 7 MATHEMATICS**

This heterogeneously grouped Grade 7 program incorporates mathematical concepts into real-life applications. Using the Illustrative Mathematics curriculum, students actively explore, model, and communicate mathematics using a variety of tools including manipulatives and technology when appropriate. Students develop mathematical reasoning, problem-solving, and communication skills.

The 7th grade program is aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSM) and our school-wide Habits of Work (HOW) to reinforce all middle grade concepts and skills in preparation for high school.

Concepts include but are not limited to:

- Ratios and Proportion Relationships
  - Analyze and understand proportional relationships
  - Use proportions to solve real-world problems
- The Number System
  - Add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers
- Expressions and Equations
  - Create equivalent expressions
  - Solve problems using numerical and algebraic expressions

### **GRADE 8 MATHEMATICS**

This heterogeneously grouped, fully integrated mathematics course is for all eighth grade students. The eighth grade curriculum features interwoven strands of problem solving, algebra, statistics, geometry, and the Pythagorean Theorem. The course uses real-world contexts in an integrated math approach for all students. The strands are linked further by the fundamental themes of data, representation, shape, and change. Important mathematical ideas are continually revisited through these connections so that students can develop a robust understanding of mathematics. The students will blend together mathematics through projects, classroom explorations, and assessments. Technology (graphing calculators and computer) will be an integral part of this course along with the textbook and other sources of materials, and manipulative.

The goals for the students are as follows. Students will further develop their ability to reason logically. They will understand the connections among the different topics

studied and the connections between math and other content areas. They will become independent learners with a desire for life-long learning. They will work together in small co-operative groups gathering information and forming conclusions based on their data. Lastly, students will understand the value of mathematics, and become confident in using it to make decisions in daily life. These concepts and goals also continue throughout the year as students become more skilled at understanding and applying the concepts to different types of problems.

### **GRADE 7 LANGUAGE ARTS**

In Language Arts, students read short stories and novels, develop their writing skills, and expand their vocabulary. Students learn reading and writing strategies that improve students' comprehension skills. In addition, students refine their understanding of literary elements and writing techniques through a variety of writing projects, such as constructed responses, a narrative, 5 paragraph essays, and persuasive essays.

### **GRADE 8 LANGUAGE ARTS**

Students will improve their reading and writing skills through creativity, personal expression, and collaborative group work. In this course, students will read a variety of texts, such as short stories, song lyrics, articles, and novels. Students will engage in small group and whole-class discussions surrounding the main ideas and themes conveyed in their reading. Students will be able to look critically at the point of view of different characters and analyze how perspective shapes how we see the world. In addition to reading activities, students will write many short and more substantial writing pieces, which will represent the culmination of their learning. Students will also hone their speaking skills through literature groups and class discussions.

### **GRADE 7 SCIENCE**

Beginning with the class of 2020-2021, all students are required to take a sequence of science literacy courses as recommended by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS.) Students will receive instruction that integrates earth and space science, life science, physical science, and engineering-technology and society each year instead of focusing on a full year of each branch of science separately. The NGSS designed courses have thematic units that emphasize science and engineering practices and cross-cutting concepts for a number of disciplinary core ideas. The topics of study have a conceptual progression that is mapped out for three years at a time. Visit <http://www.nextgenscience.org/> for more information.

Life Science - From Molecules to Organisms

Life Science - Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits  
Life Science - Ecosystems, Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics  
Physical Science – The Relationship between Energy and Force and the Electromagnetic Spectrum  
Earth Science - Earth Materials and Systems  
Engineering - Engineering Design

## **GRADE 8 SCIENCE**

In the 8th Grade, students become actively involved in a curriculum that covers topics regarding the changes, structures, and energy of the Physical, Earth, and Life Sciences. Specific areas covered include global climate change and human impacts on Earth, natural selection and adaptation, Biogeology, ecosystems, and many more. As active learners, eighth graders enjoy gaining knowledge and solving scientific problems through a variety of activity-based explorations. This curriculum is aligned with the grade expectations of the Next Generation Science Standards. In conjunction with cross-discipline thematic units, these hands-on experiences help students develop a more sophisticated understanding of science concepts.

## **GRADE 7 SOCIAL STUDIES**

Grade 7 Social Studies is a World History and Geography course. Students start out learning about the physical world and the ways that people have and continue to represent it using maps. After constructing their own maps, classes explore human history from the very first steps of mankind through to the rise of civilizations. Along the way, learners will demonstrate their understanding of the driving forces and major achievements that mark humanity's progress by recreating them on their imagined landscapes. Cave paintings will reveal the evidence of human migration before environments are transformed to harness the power of farming. Law codes will emerge and monetary currencies will develop to facilitate trade as cultures continue to develop in different ways but along similar lines. In the end, students will be able to explain why different societies grew into the various expressions we see today. More importantly, learners will be able to make connections and recognize the similarities that bind our species and our experiences together. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in the National Geography Bee.

## **GRADE 8 SOCIAL STUDIES**

In the eighth grade, students investigate the history of the United States, beginning with the settlement of Colonial America through the Pre-Civil War era of 1860. Students will also analyze and follow current issues and events in American society as

well as around the world. We will explore how past events impact modern issues in American society, government, and daily life. The course explores the development of Colonial America, the Revolutionary War, the United States Constitution, and Westward Expansion up to the Civil War. Throughout the eighth grade, students will participate in performance-based projects in order to assess their comprehension and academic growth.

## **EXPLORATORY PROGRAM**

### **TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION: COMPUTERS**

**\*Students in the Middle School Computer classes will follow the “Student Acceptable Use Agreement” that is found in the Missisquoi Valley Union Middle/High School Parent-Student Handbook as well as the “Business Education Department Expectations” as outlined in the Business Education Classroom Management Plan when accessing Missisquoi Valley Union Middle School's electronic resources for the purpose of enhancing learning.**

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

#### **Grade 7**

This course is designed to provide an introduction to information technology concepts as well as the impact information technology has on the world, people, and industry and basic web design concepts.

The content includes information technology research; software applications; electronic communications including e-mail and Internet services; basic HTML web commands and design; and emerging technologies.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

#### **Grades 7 & 8**

Physical Education in the middle school focuses on the importance of play, teamwork, and personal fitness. Students engage in a variety of team sports such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, badminton, flag football, nitroball, wiffleball/softball, etc. Additionally, students identify and measure their health-related fitness components and learn to use this knowledge to help create goals and refine their personalized fitness. The teachers make these sports and activities both challenging and enjoyable for the students in a non-threatening and cooperative learning environment.



## **FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE**

### **Grade 7**

In grade 7, students will be learning about Human Development through the life cycle, with an emphasis on caring for children and others; Identify their personal resources and how to manage time for a successful school/life experience; study the 6 Pillars of Character and the importance of building good character; complete one hand sewing project, and understand what they can do to take care of our environment.

## **FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE**

### **Grade 8**

Grade 8 builds on the principles learned in grade 7: The importance of having good character when using technology and social media; The resources available in their community that help families lead a happy and healthy life; complete one machine sewing project, learn about where our food comes from and how to make/shop for healthy food choices; develop leadership skills while investigating career pathways in Family & Consumer Sciences.

## **ART IN ACTION**

### **Grade 8**

Art in Action provides a general art curriculum, materials, and training that empowers students to develop creativity, critical thinking, self-expression, and problem-solving skills. Through active and hands-on learning students expand their knowledge in art and art techniques, cultural understanding, technology, and more — so every student has the skills they need to succeed and be prepared for the jobs of the future.

## **INTRO TO AGRI-SCIENCE & EQUINE STUDIES**

### **Grade 8**

Introduction to Equine Science focuses on various topics surrounding the equine industry including, behavior, nutrition, handling and health management. Students will be given the opportunity to work with our horse stabled at the on-campus animal science barn. As students will be interacting with live animals, it is of utmost importance that students conduct themselves with respectful and responsible behavior.

## **ELECTIVES**

Classes marked (\*Seminar) will show up on the report card as seminar, not by the title of the class.

### **FRENCH AND SPANISH Grades 7 & 8**

French and Spanish in the middle school are designed for maximum success for all students. Students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills for practical, real-life situations. Students learn about the culture of the people whose language they are studying: where they live and work, how they celebrate holidays, what they eat, what they do in school and what they do in their free time. A variety of activities are provided to expose students to the cultures of Quebec, France, Spain and Latin America. These activities include games, hands-on projects, skits and multi-media opportunities. Successful completion of these two years allows students to start in a level 2 language class in the high school. Middle school students do not receive high school credit for this sequence.

### **THE I.D.E.A. LAB (not running 2020-2021) Grades 7 & 8**

The I.D.E.A. Lab (Innovation, Design, Engineering, and Artisanry) class is a hands-on learning environment in which students use tools and technology to solve real-world problems. Students take ideas from concept to completion, learning the design-build-communicate process. Students will explore careers and design authentic projects in areas such as architecture, inventions, alternative energy, graphics, computer programming, art/design, robotics, engineering, CAD, micro-electronics, woodshop or any of a dozen other fields of interest. Students will learn to lead, cooperate with others, and work effectively in a team to accomplish authentic design and engineering tasks.

### **BAND Grades 7 & 8**

Middle School band is for students in grades 7-8 who have participated in their elementary band program for at least two years. We focus on ensemble playing as well as the individual growth of each budding instrumentalist. Performing and memorizing scales (major and minor) and drum rudiments as well as some sight reading and rhythm work will compliment the learning of new material that we do for each of the 4 concerts which we'll perform over the course of the year. The Middle

School Music Festival is open to all students in this band (with director recommendation) and takes place in the spring of the year.

### **CHORUS**

#### **Grades 7 & 8**

Do you love to sing? Middle School Chorus is open to all students who wish to sing and perform. The ability to match pitch and desire to work as a team is fundamental to success. We begin by developing a perfect unison blend and then evolve to harmony in two and three parts, depending on skill level. Within the rehearsal structure, students will begin the music reading process; learn strategies in vocal production, and breathing. Stage presence is targeted at quarterly public performances, which are required. Singers are assessed through rubrics and performances.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDIO ART**

#### **Grades 7 & 8**

Would you like to hone your skills and create a portfolio to take with you to high school? Then, this class is for you! Studio Art consists of students who have already discovered their passion for the visual arts and want to take their skills to the next level. This course is designed to strengthen students foundation art skills in drawing, painting, sculpture, and mixed media artwork. Students' observational skills will be developed through the exploration of subjects such as still-life, landscape, and the human form as well as through the creation of original pieces. Students are encouraged to develop an expressive style and explore their own creativity.

### **MUSIC TECHNOLOGY**

#### **Grades 7 & 8**

Did you know that you can make music using just a computer? In this class, you will learn how to use the tools given to us by our growing technology to create music. You will learn how to create your own songs, record music and make slideshows all using just a computer.

### **BEGINNING GUITAR**

#### **Grades 7 & 8**

This class is a one-semester introduction to the art and fun of playing the guitar. Over the course of the semester you will learn guitar technique such as scales, chords and chord progressions. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening fingers to play,

picking, strumming and changing chords quickly. No guitar is required to take the class though it is strongly suggested.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL STRINGS (not running 2020-21)**

#### **Grades 7 & 8**

The string program at MVU will be a continuation of where students left off in elementary school. Focus will be on ensemble playing, playing in tune and continuing to develop technique and fluency on your instrument. Emphasis will be placed on maintaining proper playing position, listening skills, notation reading and developing a broader repertoire for performance throughout the year. Students enrolled in this class may also elect to participate in the new District Middle School Festival Orchestra Ensemble.

### **AGRICULTURE and NATURAL RESOURCES STUDIES**

#### **Grade 8**

This course is designed to introduce middle school students to the Agriculture and Natural Resource program at MVU and to promote the importance of student stewardship of their environment. Students study a variety of plants and animals and learn to recognize interactions that impact the environment. Specific topics covered are forestry, plant science, conservation, and leadership development. Instruction focuses on “hands-on” learning both in the classroom and in the field.

### **INTRO TO THE TRADES (not running 2020-21)**

#### **Grades 7 & 8**

This course will include skills involved in basic woodworking, metal fabrication, plumbing, and basic household electrical. In each of these trade topics, you will learn the tools necessary and how those tools are used in the trade. Each topic will have at least one take home project that will demonstrate what they have learned in class.

### **ANIMAL SCIENCE**

#### **Grades 7 & 8**

Intro to Animal Science will explore the various practices involved in animal production through hands-on work with an assortment of animals living at MVU's barn. Instruction will lead students through basic daily care, animal anatomy and physiology, animal nutrition, and farm management. Students will participate in a

variety of projects, including choosing an animal from our barn and designing their own farm for that chosen animal.

**HUNTER SAFETY COURSE (\*Seminar) (Not running 2020-21)**  
**Grade 7 (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter only)**

The Hunter Safety Course is connected to the State of Vermont Hunter Safety program, which enables the youth to receive their Hunter Safety Certificate. Topics to be covered but not limited to are the proper safety techniques, wildlife identification, ethics and realistic scenarios between the hunter and the landowner. Students will also cover survival techniques and basic orienteering. Students are required to take an examination at the end of the class in order to receive the Hunter Safety Endorsement.

**\*SEMINAR**  
**Grades 7 & 8**

Seminar is a co-taught class with 2 teachers from that grade level. It provides an opportunity for interdisciplinary and interconnected units of study. The class, when appropriate, will involve physical activities (inside or out), literacy, civics, geography, community projects, and personalized enrichment opportunities.

## **Middle School Clubs & Organizations**

1. National Junior Honor Society (Applications due in March, Induction in May)
2. Student Council (forms picked up from Laurie Kilbury in Sept.)
3. Crossroads (after school program – all year)
4. Sports
  - a. 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade soccer (fall)
  - b. Cross Country (fall)
  - c. Field Hockey (fall)
  - d. 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Basketball (winter)
  - e. 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Softball (spring)
  - f. 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Baseball (spring)
  - g. Track and Field (spring)
  - h. Golf (spring)
  - i. Cheerleading (winter)
5. Musical (try-outs in mid-February)
6. Spelling Team (September)

## Missisquoi Valley Union Middle School **Promotion, Placement & Retention Policy**

Optimal school achievement is obtained when students experience success in their daily activities and build upon successful experiences as they encounter new learning situations. When making promotion, placement and retention decisions, a student's educational growth, personal, physical, and social growth will be considered to place them in the educational setting most appropriate to their needs at the various stages of their growth. A student's academic history, including standardized test scores and course grades, will be taken into consideration when making decisions about promotion, placement, and retention.

The primary goal of the education system is to educate all students. Since each child develops physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially at an individual rate, every student may not complete grades 7 and 8 at the same time. Some students may need to repeat all or part of a grade in order to be fully prepared for the next grade.

The following is the criteria that will be considered when determining if a student is going to be *retained*.

- A student does not complete 80% of the proficiencies in any course with a 3 or better
- A student unsuccessfully completes summer school
- A student's retention history
- A student's age
- Any other information that will help make the best placement possible for the student including standardized test scores and Habits of Work.

The decision regarding retention will involve the four core teachers (math, English/Language Arts, social studies, & science), elective/exploratory teachers (as applicable), guidance personnel, parent, co-principal, and the consulting teacher (as applicable). When considering retention, such actions as cooperative efforts with families and/or participation in summer school should be evaluated. Teams will make every effort to connect and communicate with families if a student is in jeopardy of failing.

### **Student Participation in Co-curricular Programs**

Students and parents should recognize that, when exercising the privilege to participate in any co-curricular activity, some additional time and effort is necessary. When participating in co-curricular programs, students must conduct themselves in a manner which is beyond question both in and out of school. Students in these programs have greater responsibilities as school citizens.

### **ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY FOR GRADES 7-9**

Athletics in grades 7-9 is the start to understanding that academics come first followed by athletics. Together, they are powerful for the student/athlete's growth. We want to encourage every athlete to work hard in both academics and athletics. Athletic eligibility will be based on the Habits of Work.

	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Consistently</b>
<b>Personal Responsibility for Learning</b> <i>I demonstrate initiative and responsibility for learning.</i>  Self Direction (TS 2.d)	I often need reminders to bring the required materials to be ready for learning. I often need reminders to complete and submit tasks on time I often need reminders to arrive to class on time and remain in class as expected	I frequently have the required materials to be ready for learning. I frequently complete and submit tasks on time I frequently arrive to class on time and remain in class as expected	I consistently have the required materials to be ready for learning I consistently complete and submit tasks on time I consistently arrive to class on time and remain in class as expected I positively and respectfully advocate for my learning needs
<b>Persistence</b> <i>I persist in solving challenging problems and learn from failure.</i> Creative and Practical Problem Solving (TS 3.h)	I often need prompting to approach a challenging problem. I sometimes give up when a task seems too difficult.	With feedback, I persist in solving challenging problems and sometimes learn from mistakes and stuck points.	I seek out and/or persist in solving challenging problems and learn from mistakes and stuck points
<b>Responsible Citizenship</b> <i>I take responsibility for personal decisions and actions.</i> Responsible and Involved Citizenship (TS 4.b)	I am working on taking some ownership for my productivity and decisions in terms of how they affect the learning environment	With reminders, I can take ownership for my productivity and decisions in terms of how they contribute to a positive learning environment	I can demonstrate responsibility for my productivity and decisions in terms of how they contribute to a positive learning environment

The MVU Thunderbirds Habits of Work are based on the Vermont Transferable Skills

**Students will be assessed several times throughout the season. Any student who does not meet or exceed the following requirements may face ineligibility before or during the season.**

1. **Eligible:** If a student has received a ***Frequently or Consistently*** for their score, they may participate and play on the team.

2. **On Warning:** If a student has received a score of a ***Rarely*** from one teacher, they are eligible to continue to participate but are required to follow up with the teacher that week to determine a plan for growth and progress.



3. **Probation:** If a student a received a score of ***Rarely*** from two or more of their teachers. Players will have 1 week to demonstrate positive growth.

4. **Not Eligible:** If the player does not demonstrate growth after the week probation, they will be considered ineligible until growth is once again determined.