

September 2015

Dear 7th Grade Family,

Welcome to the new school year! This is a brief overview of the major 7th Grade curriculum components that your child will be studying this year:

English Language Arts – Reading and writing engage students in essential questions as they build strategies and skills. Units include *This I Believe* Personal Narrative Essays, Identity & Coming to Know One’s Self, Analyzing an Author’s Style, Exploring Social Responsibility, Developing Different Perspectives, and Shakespeare.

Math – 7th grade uses a Pre-algebra curriculum, and focuses on equivalence, variables, functions, operational reasoning, and properties. Concepts are introduced through the use of models and concrete examples, and then move to the abstract. If your child is in the accelerated class, they will study Algebra, please see the website for details.

Science – 7th grade life science studies organisms from single cells increasing in complexity to humans as organisms. Students observe and study cell parts, functions and structures and study biological classification and evolution. Students also will have their first experience with dissection.

Social Studies – The 7th grade Global Studies curriculum helps students create an understanding of the world drawn from multiple disciplines including geography, political science, economics, sociology and history. Students develop skills to ask meaningful questions; acquire, organize and analyze information; and answer questions relevant to their future.

Spanish – 7th graders take Spanish alternating days throughout the year. Topics include activities, places of interest, time frames, school events, family relationships, and home life.

Related Arts – 7th graders have 2 related arts periods per day, and classes meet on alternate days.

- **Physical Education** meets alternate days for the full year. Students do change for PE, so will need to keep a set of PE clothes and a lock at school.
- Students either elect to take a performance ensemble or to participate in a trimester rotation:
 - **Band, Orchestra or Chorus** – In this year-long course, ensemble members study basic musical concepts, refine and expand their musicianship, and perform in concerts. Weekly pull-out lessons in band and orchestra further develop instrumental skills.
 - **Trimester Rotation:**
 - **Art 3D** – Students use materials like clay, plaster, fibers, wire, metal and wood to explore elements and principles of design. A variety of cultures, artists and art movements are explored.
 - **Creative Computer and Design** – students use the *Scratch* programming language and their creativity and imagination to design and develop games, digital stories, and other structures.
 - **World Drumming** – students learn about drumming from different cultures around the world including West Africa, Brazil, Japan and Latin America.

- Students also rotate through quarterly classes:
 - **Technology** – Students use Google Sketch, Microsoft Excel and Word to plan a community building, and create blue prints for architectural structures.
 - **Health** – 7th grade topics include healthy relationships, conflict resolution, external influences on health, and making healthy choices.
 - **Art 2D** – Students explore drawing, painting and printmaking techniques and various media. Art movements, artists and the art of other countries and cultures are also studied.

W.I.N. Period – The new Whatever I Need (W.I.N.) period is designed to support students' individual academic success. The W.I.N. period includes a weekly character education class focused on building relationships and community, restorative circles and effective organizational and study skills. Students will also be assessed and assigned to enrichment and/or supplemental instruction and placement will be revisited quarterly. Possible W.I.N. placements include:

- **Science Enrichment** – In the semester-long *Detectives in the Classroom Program*, students become epidemiologists, investigators who study the occurrence of disease and other health-related outcomes in human populations.
- **Social Studies Enrichment** – Semester-long participation in *Global Classrooms Model United Nations Program* which engages students in an exploration of current world issues and culminates in students becoming delegates in a school-based model UN simulation.
- **Supplemental Mathematics** – Personalized instruction targeted to each student's unique areas of needs using online and small group instruction.
- **Supplemental English Language Arts** – Focus on strengthening reading abilities and existing analytical skills through the use of Scholastic's Comprehension Clubs.

The Parent Portal of PowerSchool (powerschool.somds.k12.nj.us) is a powerful tool for monitoring assignment grades and attendance in real time, as well as checking final quarter grades. If you are having problems with your account, please email your child's name, school, and grade to Roseann Voorhees at rvoorhee@somds.k12.nj.us. Progress reports go home at the midpoint of each quarter, and report cards are mailed home at the end of each quarter. If you have questions about your child's progress, please talk to your child's teachers – this is the best place to start!

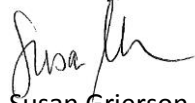
SOMSD offers additional learning opportunities for 7th Graders, including:

- **Auditioned ensembles** including **Select Chorus, Symphony Orchestra, Early Morning Chamber Orchestra, Symphonic Winds** and **Honors Jazz Band**.
- School-sponsored activities including the **MMS Musical, School Newspaper, Model United Nations, Yearbook, Student Government, Intramural Sports** and the **MLK Club**.
- **YouthNet Clubs** – 6-week sessions on a variety of academic and recreational topics.
- **YouthNet Extended After School Enrichment** – structured and fun after school program which includes tutoring and homework help, access to clubs, and time to socialize and study.
- **The Hub** (MMS Only) – homework club, open drop-in recreation program, and more.

More information about these optional programs, including fees where applicable, will be distributed before they begin.

We hope you and your child have a successful and productive 7th Grade journey!

Sincerely,



Susan Grierson

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction