

Rupert A. Nock Middle School

2019-20 Program of Studies

Newburyport Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the Newburyport Public Schools, the port where tradition and innovation converge, is to ensure each student achieves intellectual and personal excellence and is equipped for life experiences through a system distinguished by students, staff, and community who:

- practice kindness and perseverance
- celebrate each unique individual
- value creativity, experiential, and rigorous educational opportunities, scholarly pursuits, and life-long learning
- provide nurturing environments for emotional, social, and physical growth
- understand and embrace their role as global citizens

Contents

Introduction	7
Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks	8
Student Schedules	8
Student Services	9
Counseling Services	9
Psychological Services	9
Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition Classroom	10
Nursing	10
Intervention Programs	10
Library and Media Services	12
Integrated Technology	12
The Nock Advantage	13
English Language Arts (ELA)	14
Grade 6	14
Grade 7	14
Grade 8	15
Language Based ELA Class	15
Mathematics	16
Grade 6	16
Grade 7	16
Grade 8, Eureka Math	17
Grade 8, Algebra I	17
Science	18
Grade 6	18
Grade 7	19
Grade 8	19

Social Studies	20
Grade 6	20
Grade 7	21
Grade 8	22
Exploratory Courses	23
Engineering	23
Music Appreciation & Literacy	23
Orchestra	23
Music Technology	24
Chorus	24
Band	25
Physical Education	25
Wellness	26
Visual Arts	27
World Language	28
Grade 6 Spanish	28
Grade 7 Spanish	28
Grade 8 Spanish or German	28
After School Clubs and Activities	30
Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Peer Leaders	30
Clipper Crew	30
Diversity Club	30
Intramural Sports	30
Model United Nations	30
Student Council	31
Theater	31
Other	31

Special Curriculum Programs	32
Grade 6 Camp Kieve, Camp Nock	32
Grade 7 Place-based Education Program	32
Grade 8 Civics Trips--Washington, DC and Home Trips	33

Introduction

Welcome to the Rupert A. Nock Middle School. With over 560 6th through 8th grade students and a staff of over 70, we are a vibrant, active learning community.

Students attending the Nock learn in a team-based model. Each grade level has two heterogeneous teams consisting of five teachers: English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies and Special Education. Being Newburyport Clippers, our teams are named Crimson and Gold.

Our educational approach is grounded in the developmental needs of 11-14 year olds. A team-based teaching approach allows us to provide specialized instruction in the content areas while also offering a whole-child, interdisciplinary approach.

Our goal is to support students to become literate, engaged citizens across all the content areas. Students learn and practice work habits such as persevering through academic challenges, managing long-term, multi-part projects, and meeting deadlines. They become more skilled in reading and writing across the disciplines as they learn, for example, to think like mathematicians, read like scientists and write like historians.

Students also explore the content and skills of music, art, physical education, engineering, world language and wellness. “Explore” classes meet daily and provide further opportunities for students to develop literacy in many disciplines.

We understand that our students are growing socially, physically and academically. Young adolescents are striving for independence while continuing to need support with handling new responsibilities. As recent brain research confirms, the influence of peers is often stronger than that of trusted adults or parents, making it critical for educators to create opportunities to develop positive peer leadership.

With these developmental needs in mind, Nock courses and community-wide initiatives include opportunities for students to build confidence in creating new friendships, setting personal goals, and taking healthy risks. We call our community development program *The Nock Advantage*. The Nock Advantage is based on the Clipper Values of respect, responsibility, kindness and awareness. Through school-wide programs and curriculum activities, students are called upon to serve as leaders within the school community.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

The content and skills taught in all Nock courses are aligned to the Massachusetts Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks. There are Frameworks for every course from physical education to mathematics to art. Each framework outlines standards and skills that guide our curriculum development. For detailed descriptions of the MA standards, please visit the DESE [Curriculum Frameworks site](#).

Student Schedules

The Nock school day begins at 7:30 and ends at 2:00. We are on a 5-day rotating schedule. Each grade level has Explore, lunch and a “flexible” block daily. On Wednesday and Thursday we have a “long block.” This two-hour block allows for deeper exploration of curricula through experiential activities, labs, projects, and other student-directed lessons. Below is a sample 6th grade student schedule:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:30-8:30	ELA	Social Studies	ELA	Math	Science
8:30-9:30	Science	Math			ELA
9:30-10:30 Explore Class	Physical Education	Art	Wellness	Music	Physical Education
10:30-11:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
11:00-12:00	Social Studies	ELA	Science	Social Studies	Math
12:00-1:00	Math	Science			Social Studies
1:00-2:00 Flex Block	Flex	Spanish	Flex	Engineering	Flex

The Flex Block is a time for students to: take an Explore class, have instrument lessons, participate in special education services, take “executive function” classes, visit the library, take a math or reading intervention class, or find a teacher for extra help. It is called “flex” because the time is flexible. Each student has a unique Flex schedule.

Student Services

Counseling Services

The Nock has two adjustment counselors and one school psychologist. Our counseling team works with students, staff, families and members of the community to encourage a safe, non-judgemental and positive school climate.

School counselors mediate social conflicts and teach preventative classes on topics such as stress reduction. Counselors may work individually with students or facilitate small groups. The goal of school counseling is to support students' social/emotional needs and skill development in order to strengthen their ability to access the curriculum.

Counselors help students:

- Understand themselves and others
- Improve their self-concept
- Develop skills for managing stress and navigating relationships with others
- Develop decision-making and executive functioning skills
- Learn to advocate for their educational, social and emotional needs
- Meet the social or emotional goals on individual education plans (IEPs) and 504 plans
- Access support in crisis situations

Counselors help parents and staff:

- Understand and meet students' needs related to their education
- Identify programs available to meet individual students' needs
- Access community resources
- Navigate accessing services for crisis management
- Collaborate to develop individual student plans

Psychological Services

School psychologists consider effective practices, research-based programs, curricula and assessment in order to best support student needs and facilitate access to and progress within the curriculum. School psychologists provide assessments of the foundations of learning that may impede progress in the general education curriculum, and which may include:

- cognitive functioning
- memory
- attention
- social/emotional/behavioral functioning

- executive functioning

Through a process of self-discovery, students can learn to appreciate their learning styles and begin to take charge with self-advocacy.

Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition Classroom

The Bridge classroom provides short-term coordinated academic and counseling support in a dedicated classroom. Bridge supports students and their families with the process of returning to school after hospitalization or an extended absence. In addition, the Bridge program can provide support to students who are having difficulty attending school or classes regularly.

The Bridge program supports students academic, social and emotional needs in a comfortable and work-oriented classroom. It is staffed with an academic coordinator and counselors, who are available throughout the school day. Bridge staff members communicate frequently with families about their student's progress with the goal of helping every student return to a full academic schedule.

Nursing

Two full time nurses staff the shared Nock-Molin nursing office. School nurses support our students and staff in many ways--from providing immediate medical attention in an emergency to monitoring students with health plans to offering a safe and quiet place for respite in a busy day.

Intervention Programs

Through small group interventions during the Flex Block and large-group instruction in the general education classroom, our evidenced-based intervention curricula are designed to provide extra support in identified areas of need in executive function skills, math, reading, and writing.

The intervention process begins with a teacher, related service provider, administrator, parent or student raising a concern regarding student performance (not meeting grade-level standards, social/emotional concerns, behavior and attendance issues).

Student concerns are generally brought forth and discussed at bi-weekly teaching team consult meetings. The teaching team completes an intake form noting specific concerns, documenting assets or weaknesses, and listing any classroom interventions that have been implemented. In addition, the teaching team is asked to identify benchmarks and progress goals.

The team determines if additional classroom interventions (often called Tier 1 interventions) will be implemented using a [Response to Intervention Tier 1 Intervention Strategy List](#) and guidance from the specialists (counselors, interventionist, speech and language, behavior specialist). If, after four to six weeks, sufficient evidence is documented with little to no progress toward the goal, more intensive

interventions may be implemented (these are referred to as Tier 2). If the Tier 1 interventions are successful and the student is making satisfactory progress toward the goal, those interventions will continue and the team will continue progress monitoring.

When tier 2 interventions are put into place, these interventions and progress monitoring are documented for approximately four to eight weeks. The interventionist will monitor Tier 2 progress. After 4-8 weeks, the team will decide whether to continue with tier 2 intervention or put in place other interventions. This process continues until the student reaches the identified goal or the team makes a referral to Special Education based on evidence of multiple and varied interventions implemented without sufficient student progress.

Some programs facilitated by our interventionist include:

Executive Function (EF) Intervention

Attention, memory, emotions, motivation, and effort all impact learning. When students get good at regulating their attention, improving their memory, understanding and managing their emotions, finding their motivation and best effort, they will become the best life-long learners they can be. All of our grade 6 students will be introduced to the executive function curriculum by way of general education classroom instruction at the beginning of the school year.

The grade 6 EF curriculum provides explicit instruction in 5 key executive function processes:

- organizing and prioritizing
- goal setting
- flexible thinking
- accessing working memory
- self-monitoring and checking

Students in this 6th grade class will get good at:

- organizing materials and time
- understanding learning goals and how best to reach them
- thinking flexibly so they can shift approaches as needed to solve problems
- accessing and using information in working memory to complete tasks
- recognizing when and how to use strategies to improve learning and behavior

Students demonstrating an executive function need following the grade 6 general education EF curriculum will engage in a structured flex block support where they can self-monitor and reflect on current progress, schedule extra help sessions with teachers, and learn and practice effective strategies that match their learning style.

Math, Reading and Writing Intervention

Multiple points of data are considered when looking at providing intervention in math, reading, and writing. Teacher observations and input, common assessments and MCAS scores are all taken into consideration. Individualized and small group instruction is available during the Flex block for students demonstrating a lack of progress toward grade-level skill areas.

Library and Media Services

Located in the center of the school, the Nock-Molin Library is a place for students to explore information and form ideas using print and online resources including books, magazines, and databases.

Students may drop into the library during the Flex Block or have scheduled classes in the library space. Our library program is designed to help students:

- Effectively use ideas and information
- Access print and online materials that provide varied levels of difficulty, illustrate diversity, and present different points of view
- Expand their ability to think clearly, critically and creatively about the many subjects they are interested in
- Develop skills to locate, evaluate, interpret and communicate information and ideas in an information-rich world using the internet, databases and print resources
- Establish a joy for reading

Integrated Technology

Each student is assigned a Chromebook. All classes have a Google Classroom set-up where students can access homework, find course-related resources and announcements, and turn in assignments. In addition, teachers use a wide variety of applications to enhance instruction in the content areas.

Our gradebook system is Aspen X2. Students have a log-in password that allows them to track their assignments and grades. Parents have their own password that allows them to see grades and assignments for all their children. For support in the Aspen X2 portal please email rt-x2@rt.newburyport.k12.ma.us (please note this is not a 24 hour help service, help is available during school hours).

Students use technology to access information, create products (e.g. writing, video, podcasts), communicate ideas, and explore concepts. From 3D printers, to CAD programming, to reading apps, to online databases, to Google Suite for schools, students use technology to learn.

The Nock Advantage

The Nock Advantage is our school culture program. Built on the tenets of positive behavior intervention and support ([PBIS](#)) school programs, the Nock Advantage highlights the connection between Newburyport's Clipper Values and successful student behavior. For more information on the Nock Advantage approach to discipline and culture, see our [Student-Parent Handbook](#).

English Language Arts (ELA)

Grade 6

The study of grade six English Language Arts includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students will build on foundational skills to allow them to strengthen their learning and habits as readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. While exploring many literary genres, including short stories, memoirs, novels, traditional literature, poetry, drama, and non-fiction, students expand their knowledge of literary terms and other vocabulary. Grammar, language usage, and mechanics are studied as necessary tools of their craft. The writing process is demonstrated and practiced through journals, expository writing, narrative writing, and persuasive writing. Classroom discussion, active participation, and working cooperatively in small groups are vital to students' development as independent thinkers.

Enduring Understandings

- Life experiences provide opportunities for personal growth.
- Good writers write to a specific audience and with a specific purpose.
- Being exposed to the stories of others provides insight into the human experience.
- Everyone has a story to tell.

Key Resources

- Pearson *My Perspectives*, grade 6
- *Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park
- A variety of novels are used in literature circles

Grade 7

Students continue to study and analyze writing from multiple genres including short stories, novels, poetry and informational texts. Increasingly complex texts, allow students to continue their development of skills in reading comprehension, critical thinking, speaking, listening, and writing. Written work produced by students illustrates an understanding of multiple styles of writing and an ability to understand how to communicate effectively with various audiences. Students learn to connect literature to their own lives in order to build a life-long love of reading and writing.

Enduring Understandings

- Literature relates to life: it can teach lessons and morals and it can persuade, incite, convince and entertain.
- Writers write with a purpose and choose specific structures and techniques to achieve their intent.
- Effective readers use strategies to help them better comprehend a text.

Key Resources

- *Language of Literature*, selected short stories and poetry
- A variety of novels are used in literature circles
- Select short stories, essays, articles, poems, and other readings

Grade 8

The grade eight English Language Arts standards-based curriculum, taught in an inclusion model, emphasizes daily independent reading to cultivate a lifelong habit and love of reading. Students build their comprehension of more complex text and critical thinking skills by participating in three literature circles and reading short stories, poetry, primary source documents, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Romeo and Juliet* as a class. The writing curriculum emphasizes the importance of revision through multiple drafts of literary analysis, personal narratives, poetry, and other creative writing. Grammar, covering comma usage and reinforcing standard writing conventions, is taught in the context of daily writing practice.

Enduring Understandings

- Literature provides insights into the human experience.
- Everyone has a story to tell.
- Standard writing conventions are a required part of clear communication.

Key Resources

- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare
- Literature circle titles that focus on dystopian societies, character conflict, and social injustice
- Select short stories, essays, articles, and poems

Language Based ELA Class

The Language-Based ELA Class is a course developed for students who meet specific eligibility criteria and are identified through the special education process. This is an intervention-based, core literacy ELA block. Instruction is based on proven literacy research. The course provides intensive instruction in an explicit language development model. Emphasis is placed on skill acquisition in reading and writing as well as rigorous grade-level content aligned to the Massachusetts standards. The content of every lesson includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, speaking and listening, and writing.

Enduring Understandings

- Specific structures and routines in reading and literacy can be applied to all content areas.

Key Resources

- Voyager Sopris Learning *Language!*

Mathematics

Grade 6

In sixth grade, students learn key concepts along the progression toward middle school algebra. Ratios and proportions emerge as a new domain of study, where students explore and reason with ratios and rates in order to solve problems. Sixth graders investigate negative numbers for the first time and round out their study of the rational number system before operating with all rational numbers in seventh grade. Work with numerical expressions extends to algebraic expressions, which sets students up to solve one-step equations and inequalities. Students also continue their study of area and volume of geometric shapes, and learn how statistics can be used to better understand data about our world.

Enduring Understandings

- Proportional relationships express how quantities change in relationship to each other.
- Operations ($+$, $-$, \times , \div) create relationships between numbers.
- Numerical representations can be used to describe and compare the value of real-world quantities.
- Patterns provide insights into potential relationships.
- Analyzing geometric relationships develops reasoning and justification skills.
- The way that data is collected, organized and displayed influences interpretation.

Key Resources

- *Eureka Math*

Grade 7

In seventh grade, students extend and apply many of the concepts they've learned in sixth grade in order to discover new types of relationships, new and efficient ways to solve problems, and new ways to analyze and look at data and associations. Students investigate proportional relationships and use this understanding to solve real-world problems involving discounts, interest, taxes, and scale drawings. Building off of their sixth-grade understanding of integers, seventh-grade students apply the properties of operations to all rational numbers in order to efficiently and thoughtfully work with the

number system, including how it applies to expressions and equations. Lastly, students learn to question what it means to be a representative sample of a population and how to effectively compare different populations.

Enduring Understandings

- Proportional relationships can be used to solve real-world and mathematical problems.
- An understanding of operations with fractions can be applied and extended to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers.
- Fractions, decimals and percents represent different forms of the same relationship.

Key Resources

- *Eureka Math*

Grade 8, Eureka Math

In eighth grade, students make several advances in their algebraic reasoning, particularly as it relates to linear equations. Students extend their understanding of proportional relationships to include all linear equations, and they consider what a solution looks like when it applies to a single linear equation as well as a system of linear equations. They learn that linear equations can be a useful representation to model bivariate data and to make predictions. Functions emerge as a new domain of study, laying a foundation for a more in-depth study of functions in high school. Lastly, students study figures, lines, and angles in two-dimensional and three-dimensional space, investigating how these figures move and how they are measured.

Enduring Understandings

- Math is foundational, and basic skills learned in previous years are applied to make sense of abstract concepts.
- Different representations of functions can be used to model most real world situations with equations, tables and graphs.
- Data can be displayed on a graph that can be used to make assumptions and predictions.

Key Resources

- *Eureka Math*

Grade 8, Algebra I

At the end of 7th grade some students may qualify for Algebra I (qualifying criteria are shared at the start of 7th grade and include: basic skills testing, Iowa Test of Algebra Readiness, and course averages). Algebra I extends students' understanding and application of functions. Students primarily explore linear functions, quadratic functions, and exponential functions. Within these functions,

students develop a deep understanding of the features of each function—graphically and algebraically—and use these to guide creation of models and analysis of situations. This course follows the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and incorporates foundational material from middle school where it is supportive of the current standards.

Key Resources

- Pearson Publishing *Envision Math Program*

Science

The middle school science curriculum is designed to provide an integrated spiraled approach to scientific skills and content. Each year, students learn and apply a deeper understanding to content within the different strands of science: Life Science, Earth Science and Physical Science. Our curriculum is designed to address the Massachusetts Science Curriculum Standards, [Next Generation Science Standards](#) and our desire to provide the best possible science education for middle school students. Each grade uses the Pearson *Interactive Science Program* which provides students with a text, digital access to content and multiple resources. In addition to our Pearson resource we have developed many rich and exciting supplemental curriculum opportunities.

Grade 6

Students in grade 6 embark upon an exciting scientific journey exploring the major strands of science which fall under the broad areas of scientific inquiry and skills as well as earth, physical and life sciences. Students relate structure and function while studying Earth’s features and processes, properties of matter, and characteristics of waves. Emphasising the acquisition and use of scientific inquiry skills, students apply their understanding to an experience-based Consumer Products Investigation among other investigations. The grade 6 curriculum is designed to help students develop a foundation for the continued spiraling of our integrated science curriculum.

Enduring Understandings

- Earth is one structure with an independent function within our Universe.
- Earth is constantly undergoing geologic changes which impact life on Earth
- Earth’s geologic and biologic evidence provides data and understanding for today's scientists to make predictions about future events
- Scientists analyze and interpret collected information to solve problems and make decisions
- Waves are used to transfer energy and information
- Matter is anything that has mass and volume and can be measured

Key Resources

- Pearson Publishing *Interactive Science Grade 6*
- Teacher created learning stations

Grade 7

Our Ecology and Environmental Science curriculum is enhanced by a place-based unit of study that connects students with local experts in the fields of science related to the conservation of the bioregion of the Gulf of Maine. Students participate in learning experiences through data collection with Audubon scientists, on-site studies of estuarine habitats while kayaking, intertidal zone exploration on Plum Island, off-shore whale studies on board the Captain's Lady, and a visit to Maudslay State Park for an ecological study of a northeastern woodland habitat.

Students develop an understanding of the processes that make up the scientific endeavor. They apply this knowledge to solving problems, conducting research, and using scientific equipment in the lab and in the field to better understand and appreciate the living world around them. Our grade seven science curriculum includes the study of the following major units: Ecology and the Environment, Water and the Atmosphere, Cellular Biology, and Earth Science. It is our hope that this curriculum fosters a life-long sense of environmental stewardship in our students.

Enduring Understandings

- It is important to act as a steward of our environment with knowledge of our community's history (natural and human) and ecology
- The physical world consists of matter and energy
- Organelles have specific functions that allow a cell to stay alive

Key Resources

- Pearson Publishing *Interactive Science Grade 7*
- Natural environment in Newburyport through field-based trips

Grade 8

Students in 8th-grade science continue to explore earth science, life science, and physical science through an inquiry-based, authentic, hands-on learning experience. Through an integrated STEM approach, students advance their study of science while exploring the impact of their learning in a 21st-century world. Students (1) ask questions and record observations, (2) engage in discussions to develop their own opinions and support their claims with evidence and (3) use data and materials to analyze real-world situations. For example, students design and construct a solar oven to model heat transfer in the atmosphere.

Topics of study in the 8th-grade science curriculum include:

- Earth Science - Changes in the Atmosphere: Weather and Climate
- Life Science – Genetics, Evolution, and System Interactions in the Human Body
- Physical Science – Calculating Speed, Understanding Forces, and Newton’s Laws of Motion

Enduring Understandings

- Heat travels from what is hot to what is cold
- Air moves from areas of high pressure to low pressure
- Genetic information is passed down from generation to generation
- Mutations are catalysts for change as living things change over time
- Our bodies need energy to survive
- Motion can be seen and measured

Key Resources

- Pearson Publishing *Interactive Science Grade 8*

Social Studies

Grade 6

The curriculum for sixth grade social studies explores the land and people outside of the United States and North America. Students begin with an introduction to geography including tools used by geographers, advantages and disadvantages of maps and globes, and identifying landforms and waterways. Students use themes of geography (location, place, human environment interaction, region and movement) as a framework to organize their investigation of the continents of the world including Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Using the lens of economics and quality of life, students examine how physical and human geography create an interdisciplinary relationship. Major units include the role of fresh water in daily life, the impact of child labor on today’s youth, the effect of European colonialism and the fight for sovereignty, and the impact humans have had on the earth.

Throughout the year, students analyze a variety of texts, research through databases, deconstruct political cartoons, develop evidence-based arguments, and investigate topics through a project based approach. Framing our year are essential questions such as: “What makes a global citizen?”, “What is the impact of plastic on our oceans?” and “How do human and environment interactions impact native animals?” Students conclude their experience with an intensive country analysis that allows them to build a perspective as a global citizen.

Enduring Understandings

- All maps distort Earth's representation of area, shape, distance and direction.
- Human activity impacts the physical world.
- Local actions can create global change.
- Economics and geography can affect a child's ability to flourish.
- Major religions are anchored in a set of shared elements.

Key Resources

- Maps
- Nonfiction reading
- Fiction reading: *A Long Walk for Water* by Linda Sue Park; *Iqbal* by Francesco D'Adamo

Grade 7

From the dawn of existence, our species has been explorers. This course traces the development of human civilization from the first humans to the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. We analyze and seek to answer the essential questions that drove and still drive the progress of human civilization: What are the challenges of building and sustaining a complex society? What are the founding characteristics required for a complex society to exist? What are the similarities and differences between ancient civilizations as compared to modern civilizations?

Students develop a historical literacy skills such as: critical and analytical thinking, claim and evidence support, proper documentation/citation, information synthesis and multi-media presentation. Students are encouraged to connect the ancient past to the modern world while developing a sense of community citizenship.

Enduring Understandings

- There are common characteristics to the development and continued growth of every civilization. These characteristics include: the development and use of agriculture, the establishment of governing bodies, the creation of a system of written language and expression, the establishment of social classes and structures, the establishment of a chosen religion, and the creation of artistic expression representing the beliefs, practices, and values.

Key Resources

- History Alive, *The Ancient World*
- *I Promised I would Tell* by Sonia Schreiber Weitz

Grade 8

Our 8th grade curriculum is an exciting blend of early American government and civics. Students explore the ideals of justice and define it for themselves. We use modern day local, regional and national issues as springboards for discussion and reading exploration. The course tracks the origins of our nation and the development of government and citizens' rights.

Following our exploration of the origins and consequences of the American Revolution, students turn their attention to the ideals outlined in the Declaration of Independence. Our eighth graders later learn about race and class through complementary units in social studies and language arts. The social studies course provides an in-depth chronological overview of slavery to civil rights and uses primary sources to deepen students' knowledge of the history of inequity.

Finally, the course emphasizes the impact that individuals and groups have on changing laws so that the rights of the people are protected. The 8th grade year culminates with student-generated civic-action projects called "I am We". These projects reflect the students' personal interest in state or local initiatives.

Enduring Understandings

- Governments are structured to protect the rights of individuals.
- Individuals can advocate and make changes when their rights are not protected.
- Citizens have the power to make small and large changes in their community when they understand the structures and functions of government.

Exploratory Courses

Our Explore courses offer students an opportunity to learn in new ways, expand their literacy across a number of areas, and explore their own interests. Student Explore schedules are individualized based on their educational needs and interests.

Engineering

The Technology/Engineering program focuses on design, innovation, and real-world problem-solving in a fun, hands on, environment. From the use of [CREO](#) as a 3D solid modeling software to our Makerbot 3D printers, students are engaged and challenged throughout the engineering design process. Logic and coding skills are introduced through Lego Robotics while projects such as bridge design allow students to explore the use of emerging technologies and how they will influence both local and global communities now and in the future.

Enduring Understandings

Grade 6

- Tools and machines make engineering more efficient
- Formal processes are needed to innovate efficiently (design process)

Grade 7

- Complex societies rely on technological innovation for enduring progress
- Engineers look to the natural world for inspiration (biomimicry)
- Traditional technologies will become smart to increase product quality and efficiency

Grade 8

- Multiple fabrication processes are needed to create prototypes
- Society relies on technology for enduring progress

Music Appreciation and Literacy

Orchestra (elective course for grades 6-8)

Students in this ensemble strengthen their ability to play and perform on a string instrument. Skills previously taught in elementary school provide a foundation for playing in a large ensemble and in smaller chamber groups. Though students entering this class will typically have prior skills, beginners are also welcome. Standards outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks will be addressed

through age-appropriate repertoire that are performed at seasonal concerts and community events. Students continue to grow their ability to read musical notes and rhythms.

Enduring Understandings

- What does it mean to play in tune?
- What does it mean to actively listen to others and to myself?
- How do I organize my time each week to include individual practice on my instrument outside of class?
- How can I contribute to the ensemble besides through just my playing ability?
- How can I apply the skills I learn in the orchestra to the rest of my life?

Music Technology (elective course for students in grades 6-8)

Music Technology is an exploration of music as a creative and expressive tool. The course integrates technology with hands-on, brain-storm-based creativity and design. Students develop musical knowledge, analytic listening skills, and creative expression using music and video software in addition to interactive instruments. Audio engineering technology is used as students create thematic composition and arrangement projects throughout the semester.

Enduring Understandings

- Music composition is a skill that can be developed as strongly through concentrated effort and creative use of tools as through traditional musical instruction and performing skills.
- Using computer software enables personal musical expression and artistry.
- The instruments of the band/orchestra are separated into five categories each serving a purpose in ensemble performance
- Film scores affect the mood and character of a given scene.
- The human voice is an instrument capable of being utilized beyond traditional lyrical singing.
- The drum set, as used in rock/pop music, is multi-instrumental entity capable of setting or drastically shifting the style and groove of a piece of music.

Chorus

Students develop their vocal skills, broaden their knowledge of music theory, and understand the cultural relevance of performance pieces. Students experience performing in a large choral ensemble, as well as in small chamber groups. Students have the opportunity to listen to, create and analyze a variety

of musical styles while learning to accompany themselves on a harmonic instrument. This class is intended to promote singing as a universal skill and foster personal and team growth through singing.

Enduring Understandings:

- Communities, across cultures, connect through vocal music.
- Each individual voice has an important role in a larger ensemble.
- Vocal music can be a meaningful reflection of experience and emotion.
- Everyone can sing.

Band (elective course for grades 6-8)

The middle school Concert Band provides students with opportunities to engage in the appreciation, creation and analysis of various musical styles. Students build instrumental skills and participate in live performances. The Concert Band curriculum focuses on the connections across the physical body, voice and instrument. Through engaging and challenging instructional practices students develop musical and instrumental aptitude and participate in performances relevant to their multiple intelligences. The course aims to instill a lifelong advocacy for the impact and power of participation in musical ensembles of any size and style.

Enduring Understandings

- Effective practice is about enabling progress not experiencing completion. Building consistently successful practice methods will enhance the enjoyment of playing music and willingness to take on more challenging material.
- A section sound should sound like 1 instrument is playing, an ensemble should have a hierarchy of melody, melodic support, harmony, color, and rhythmic and tonal accompaniment.
- There are various musical elements used in a section of a piece
- Music communicates ideas, philosophies, moods, and themes
- Effective musicians independently problem solve, articulate questions or struggles encountered to peers or teachers, and use appropriate language in describing the rhythmic/tonal notation used by the composer

Physical Education

The Nock Physical Education program provides a fun and all inclusive atmosphere. Students are able to move with competence and confidence by participating in activities in different environments. Units support the development of healthy fitness habits and meet national and state standards.

Students are introduced to activities that improve strength, endurance, flexibility, and balance. In addition, students learn to use [IHT](#) software and other fitness devices to set and track goals.

Enduring Understandings

- Movement and spatial awareness is important to be successful in participating in activities.
- Knowledge of skills is essential to maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.
- Exhibiting personal and social behavior that respects self and others provides a positive environment for learning and improvement.

Wellness

Our Wellness course is based on the [All Stars Program](#), an evidence-based curriculum designed to provide students with a comprehensive and sequential health education. Within the Massachusetts and National Comprehensive health framework curriculum and our school's philosophy, our wellness program seeks to provide a balance between the expression of individuality and an opportunity to examine, monitor and improve one's own level of wellness. The elements we will cover in this class include: physical, social, emotional, and intellectual aspects of health education. Within each unit, we reinforce the understanding that all components of wellness are interrelated and share equal importance.

Grade 6 - All Stars Core

- Five research strategies that have shown to have the greatest impact on delaying the onset of risky behaviors with middle school age students:
 1. Building idealism and a belief in the future
 2. Establishing positive norms
 3. Establishing personal commitments to avoid risky behaviors
 4. Promoting bonding to school or the group
 5. Promoting positive parent/adult attention
- What are some of the short and long term outcomes of getting involved in risky behaviors related to nicotine, tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and other drugs during these developmental years?
- How does having positive ideals and positive aspirations for the future influence decision making in the moment?

Grade 7 - All Stars Booster

- The focus of All Stars Booster is on strengthening participants' motivation to avoid high-risk behaviors. Like Core, Booster prevents alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, reduces bullying and fighting, and postpones sexual activity by:
 1. Building idealism and a belief in the future

2. Establishing positive norms
3. Establishing personal commitments to avoid risky behaviors
4. Promoting bonding to school or the group
5. Promoting positive parent/adult attention

Grade 8 - Relationships

- Identifying what makes a healthy relationship (including defining sexual harassment) supports teens in building strong relationships .
- Personal choices impact current and long term outcomes on individuals, family and society.
- Emotional health affects a person’s physical health and overall well being.
- Assertive communication skills can enhance health.

Visual Arts

The Visual Arts curriculum explores the elements and principles of art and allows students to experience a variety of art materials. Students have autonomy to create projects that allow for self-expression and creativity. Art skills prepare students for a 21st century workplace that requires creative, innovative, and collaborative thinking. Students have the opportunity to create both two-dimensional and three-dimensional artwork. Specific projects will look different between classes each semester.

Enduring Understandings

Grade 6

- Mandalas are universal symbols that represent cultural beliefs, tell stories and share history.
- Symbols tell stories.
- People communicate developing ideas into realistic representations through drawing.
- Imagination is the foundation to create original art.
- Art expresses emotions.
- Each piece of artwork is as unique as the artist’s identity.

Grade 7

- Each piece of artwork is as unique as the artist’s identity.
- Three dimensional objects relate to one another in the physical world.
- Art is influenced by the world around us.
- Imagination is the foundation to create original art.

Grade 8

- Art is influenced by the world around us.

- Emotions and ideas can be expressed visually.
- Art has played an important role in human development throughout history.

World Language

Grade 6 Spanish

In the sixth grade, students learn to use Spanish to meet and greet, to trade ages and telephone numbers, and to discuss where people are from (along with an introduction to the Spanish-speaking countries). They also learn how to discuss days, dates, weather and seasons.

Grade 7 Spanish

In seventh grade, students learn how to say what people like to do and eat, and express preferences and dislikes. They can also use Spanish to describe their own physical traits and personalities, along with describing others around them, such as family members, friends, real and fictional people outside of the home, and pets.

Grade 8 Spanish or German

In eighth grade, students who continue with Spanish learn to talk about a variety of topics related to school -- schedules, classes, times and school activities and locations. They also learn how to express their feelings on any given day and how they feel about classes, activities and what they need to do and where they are going. Students may choose to begin German as a new language.

Enduring understandings for all three levels

- Communication: Practicing all the three modes of communication in the target language makes language acquisition possible.
 - Interpersonal: Oral and written conversations.
 - Interpretive: Listening and reading.
 - Presentational: Presenting and sharing ideas and information.
- Culture: Cultural comparisons help to develop tolerance and appreciation of other cultures and connect with others.
- 21st Century Skills: Being competent in a second language can provide social-, school- and career-related advantages in an increasingly global world and economy.

Key Resources

- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt *Avancemos*
- Online vocabulary resources (Classzone for *Avancemos*, Quizlet and Conjuguemos, among others)

After School Clubs and Activities

Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Peer Leaders (open to grades 7-8)

This is mostly an in-school program where selected student leaders participate in the [Anti-Defamation League World of Difference Peer Leader Institute](#). After completing a four-day training with the ADL, student leaders facilitate activities and discussions around diversity and creating an inclusive community.

Clipper Crew (open to grade 8 only)

The Clipper Crew is an 8th grade leadership program. Students must submit an application in the spring of 7th grade to participate. The Clipper Crew provides leadership in many areas across the school including: community service, supporting school-wide assemblies, peer mentoring, volunteering at community events (e.g. recycling, road races, PTO events). Students attend both in-school and after school meetings.

Diversity Club (open to grades 6-8)

All students are invited to join this after school club. The club meets weekly. Students plan special events (e.g. *Start with Hello Week*), discuss current school-related concerns, and work to create a welcoming school climate.

Intramural Sports

Nock sports programs are managed by the [Newburyport High School Athletic Director](#). The programs are fee-based and open to all Nock students. Look for announcements about the fall programs in late August/early September and the spring programs in February.

- **Fall**
 - Cross Country (grade 6-8)
 - Introduction to Cross Country (grade 6-8)
 - Field Hockey (grade 6-8)
- **Spring**
 - Track (grade 6-8)

Model United Nations (open to grades 6-8)

Students meet after school to participate in state-wide Model UN programs. Students learn the complexity of international relations, practice speaking, research and writing skills, and attend Model UN Summits.

Student Council (open to grades 6-8)

Each grade level has a student council team. Students are selected by staff and can volunteer to join. There are both in-school lunch-time and after-school meetings. This group of students provides student voice to decisions around community, culture and curriculum.

Theater

- **Fall dramatic production (grades 7-8)**--a smaller show, students in 7th and 8th grade are invited to audition. Information on the show comes out in early September with a final show in November.
- **Spring musical (grades 6-8)**--this is also an audition-based show, but is open to students in all grades. A larger cast and crew are involved in this musical tradition. Information about the spring musical comes out in November with auditions in early December and shows in late March or early April.

Other

- In addition to the above activities, many of our teachers offer drop-in clubs during their after school hours. Look for details in the announcements. We also often have student and/or teacher-run clubs and activities. These vary by year.
- **Newburyport Youth Services**--there are many after school offerings available through the [Newburyport's Youth Service Programs](#). Programs range from a drop-in center to weekly classes to vacation trips.

Special Curriculum Programs

Each grade level has an experiential program that has long been a part of the Nock tradition. These programs are designed to support our middle school students in taking healthy risks, developing a connection to the world around them, and creating new and lasting friendships.

Grade 6 Camp Kieve, Camp Nock

Each year our sixth grade students have the opportunity to participate in Camp Kieve's Leadership School Program. The experience is a five-day program that is a part of a year-long, curriculum designed to build student skills in leadership, decision-making, and goal setting.

Our teaching team facilitates adventure-based curriculum throughout the year, building toward a year-end residential trip to Maine in May. The five-day program begins with Monday and Tuesday at the Nock with Camp Kieve staff. Students who choose to attend the residential program in Maine Wednesday through Friday. Some students may choose to stay at the Nock for the final three days--these students will have a similar curriculum without the overnight stay. For more information on Camp Kieve's Leadership Program visit their [website](#) where you will find detailed information on both the school-based and residential programs.

Grade 7 Place-based Education Program

Each fall our 7th grade students study environmental science and the connection between geography and human development through a place-based, experiential program. A series of field experiences are designed to bring students to places in our community where they meet, learn from, and work with local conservationists and experts. Students explore six of Newburyport's natural and built environments.

What is place-based education?

Place-based education (PBE) connects students to their community and provides lessons that are built around our local heritage, cultures, and landscapes. Lessons are literally in *places* around Newburyport. In addition, PBE emphasizes civic action and service projects for the local school and community.

Place-based education encourages students to become stewards of their world by exploring and understanding where they live and taking action in their own backyards and communities.

Grade 8 Civics Trips--Washington, DC and Home Trips

In the spring of 8th grade our students take part in a four-day program to build on their civic understanding, explore the landmarks, monuments, and traditions of our democracy, and create lasting memories as a class. Students who choose to attend the Washington DC trip drive by bus to DC. While in Washington, they are engaged in a variety of activities including visiting monuments, exploring museums, and attending a dance. Students have a chance to visit our nation's capital while also learning to navigate an overnight experience with their peers.

Students who choose to attend the home trip explore Boston's monuments, museums and attend an evening show. In addition, local trips like an afternoon at a ropes course and a morning at a local bakery provide some social experiences.

Both Civics Trips allow our 8th grade class to make place-based connections to the study of civics while also celebrating the culmination of the middle school years.