

LITCHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL



PROGRAM OF STUDIES 2019-2020

LITCHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

14 Plumb Hill Road - P.O. Box 110 – Litchfield, Connecticut 06759
Main Office: (860) 567-7540 Fax: (860) 567-7544

www.litchfieldschools.org

Stephanie L. Kubisek
Principal

Carrie Gibbs
School Counselor

Dear Students and Parents,

The Program of Studies is designed to help the reader understand, not only a description the courses that middle school students will take, but also many other important components of the middle school program. Please use this resource as a guide for academic planning, to understand grading and honor roll, as well as to appreciate the social and emotional supports offered to students.

The teachers, support staff, and I are here to help all students achieve at their highest level. We monitor student performance closely and strive to build meaningful relationships with all students. Should you have any questions about the middle school program, please reach out directly to specific teachers, support staff, or me as appropriate. We are all here to help make this the best middle school experience for all students!

Sincerely,

Stephanie L. Kubisek

Stephanie L. Kubisek
Principal

The Litchfield Middle School community fosters a student-centered environment that is safe, supportive, and nurtures the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional needs unique to young adolescents.

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LITCHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION AND BELIEF STATEMENTS

LMS MISSION STATEMENT

The Litchfield Middle School community fosters a student-centered environment that is safe, supportive, and nurtures the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional needs unique to young adolescents.

We Believe:

- Students learn best when provided opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and choice.
- Students are confident and self-motivated learners when they are encouraged to advocate for their own success.
- Students are responsible and thoughtful decision-makers when empathy, tolerance, and respect are expected and modeled.
- All students can succeed!

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Litchfield Middle School expects responsible behavior from all students with particular attention and focus directed to the following responsibilities:

- Punctuality and attendance in assigned classes and activities;
- Commitment to exceed academic expectations;
- Respect for the personal property and rights of others. Per Board Policy and state statute, behavior that makes others uncomfortable will be addressed swiftly and appropriately;
- Movement throughout the building in a direct and prompt manner;
- Knowledge of and adherence to school procedures and rules;
- Compliance with class, school, and district policies and regulations;
- Appropriate dress at all times.

Standards of good conduct and respect for persons, property, and educational process are in effect. Disciplinary action may result when a student's conduct endangers persons or property, disrupts the educational process, or violates a publicized policy or practice of the Litchfield Board of Education.

Students who violate any aspect of the Student Code of Conduct may jeopardize their participation or involvement in certain school activities

ACADEMIC PROGRESS, HONOR ROLL, RETENTION/PROMOTION

POWERSCHOOL

PowerSchool is a web-based program that enables parents and students of Litchfield Middle School (using a unique username and password) to access current grades and attendance through the Internet. PowerSchool website: (<http://litchfield.powerschool.com/public>). You may also access PowerSchool directly through our website by clicking on “Family Resources” and the “PowerSchool Parent App.”

Grades are current and accurate at marking period mid-point and end. Questions about grades or grading must be referred to the teacher. Usernames and passwords are available through the middle school counseling department.

HONOR ROLL

The Honor Roll will be determined by final grades earned at the end of each of the four marking periods. NOTE: When calculating honor roll, “specials” courses are not included (i.e. exercise science, art, information literacy, and wellness).

Outstanding Honors: Students who attain a Grade Point Average of 4.0 and have no grades lower than an A- will be granted Outstanding Honors.

High Honors: Students who attain a Grade Point Average of 3.5 and have no grades lower than a B- will be granted High Honors.

Honors: Students who attain a Grade Point Average of 3.0 and have no grades lower than a B- will be granted Honors.

Letter Grade	GPA Equivalent (4-pt. scale)
A+ (97-100)	4.25
A (93-96)	4.0
A- (90-92)	3.75
B+ (87-89)	3.25
B (83-86)	3.0
B- (80-82)	2.75
C+ (77-79)	2.25
C (73-76)	2.0
C- (70-72)	1.75
D+ (67-69)	1.25
D (63-66)	1.0
D- (60-62)	.75
F (0-59)	0

RETENTION/PROMOTION POLICY

Grades 7 and 8: Students in grades 7 and 8 must pass at least three out of four core subject area courses in order to be promoted to the next grade. These subject areas include language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. **If a student fails any of the four core subjects, he/she will be expected to participate in an intervention program which may include attending summer school.** Any exception to the promotion policy can be made only after careful consideration and approval by the administration, subject to review by the superintendent. Periods of instruction, requirements for promotion, and circumstances for retention of a student shall be a team decision in accordance with State Department of Education regulations. (BOE policy #5123, Promotion/Retention.)

LITCHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADES 7-8 GENERAL INFORMATION

COURSE ADDITIONS/WITHDRAWALS

Counselors work closely with students and parents to ensure that all schedules are considered final by the end of the previous school year. Student schedules will not be honored due to teacher preference, classes with friends, time of day, or a student who no longer wishes to take a course previously selected during the spring registration process. A schedule change may occur due to unforeseen circumstances. This is a rare occurrence. Please contact the school counseling department should you have a scheduling concern due to extenuating circumstances.

COURSE OVERRIDES

At the time of course selection in early spring, students entering the 9th grade may request to override a teacher's placement recommendation. These forms are available from the 8th grade teacher in which the student would be requesting the override. The student then with their teacher develops an action plan which to finalize requires signatures from the teacher, high school counselor, parent, and the high school principal.

If a rising 9th grade student wishes to reverse an override request and return to the teacher recommended level, he/she must demonstrate to the administration that despite adequate effort, performance indicates that a level change is necessary to adequately challenge the student. Evidence of adequate effort includes, but is not limited to, participation in tutoring and/or conferencing regularly with the teachers after school.

ADVISORY PROGRAM

The advisory program at Litchfield Middle School promotes meaningful relationships with an adult (school staff member) and close social bonds with a group of classmates through weekly activities. Each student will be assigned to an advisor, who they will meet with daily throughout the entire school year.

A typical advisory schedule is as follows but based on student and curricular needs, the schedule is also flexible and can be adjusted weekly.

The structured lessons delivered weekly on Monday's and Tuesday's, follow the research-based **Second Step**® curriculum, which combines social emotional- learning, bullying prevention, and child protection. The **Second Step**® curriculum aligns with the developmental school counseling programming in grades K-1; together they teach students the skills that strengthen their ability to learn, have empathy, manage emotions, and solve problems, fostering a safer, more respectful learning environment.

On Wednesday's during advisory, students will take part in Independent Reading while Thursday's are set aside for class and/or community meetings. Friday's are club days. During clubs, students may work with a different advisor as their club assignments are based on student interest and include such activities as drawing, coding, student council, yoga to name a few.

In addition to the weekly direct instruction of the social-emotional skills outlined above, **Mindfulness** exercises will also be incorporated into our daily advisory periods. **Mindfulness** exercises are designed to help reduce stress, improve focus, and build empathy. Research shows that mindfulness strengthens the regions of the brain that help us regulate emotions and solve problems. By incorporating **Mindfulness** into our daily practice, we hope to foster a strong foundation of awareness, care, and attention while helping further strengthen students' learning and application of **Second Step** skills.

STUDENT SUCCESS PLANS

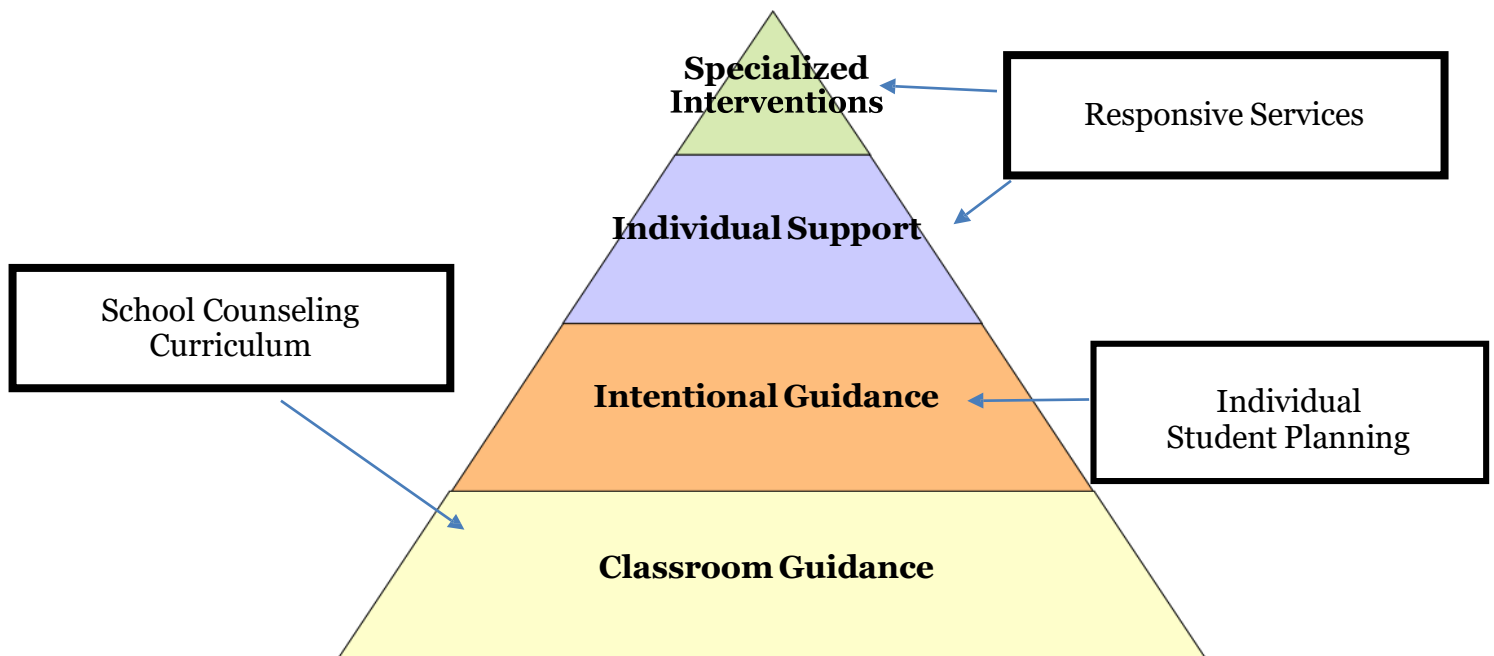
The Student Success Plan (SSP) is an individualized student driven plan that will be developed to address every student's needs and interests to stay connected in school and to achieve secondary educational and career goals. The SSP will provide students in grades 6-12 with support and assistance in setting goals for social, emotional, and academic growth, meeting rigorous academic expectations, and exploring career interests and secondary education. The Litchfield Middle School Student Success Plans are electronic and powered by a computer guidance program called Naviance. Students can access their portfolio's anywhere they have internet access.

SCHOOL COUNSELING/GUIDANCE SERVICES

The facilities and personnel of the School Counseling Department are available to all students in grades 7 through 8. This includes a full-time school counselor, a school social worker, and a school psychologist.

The function of the School Counseling Department is to assist each student with academic, career/vocational, and personal/social issues. All conferences are confidential, so students may feel free to discuss problems of any nature. Counselors have a duty to inform parent/guardians or appropriate authorities when the student's condition indicates a clear and imminent danger to the student or others. This will be done after careful deliberation and, where possible, after consultation with other professionals.

Mrs. Gibbs, the School Counselor, is located in the middle school and can be reached at (860) 567-7540. The School Social Worker, and the School Psychologist, are located in the high school guidance suite and can be reached at (860) 567-7534.



The School Counseling Curriculum Component: Developmental Guidance

- Structured developmental experiences presented to all students that address the three primary domains of human development: Academic development, career development and personal/social growth.

The Individual Student Planning Component

- Activities that focus on assisting each student to develop, analyze and assess his/her education, career and personal goals and plans.

The Responsive Services Component

- Reactions to the immediate needs and concerns of individual students whether these concerns involve individual or group counseling, information dissemination, crisis intervention, consultation or referral.
- The school psychologist and social worker are highly involved in the Response Services Component. In collaboration with the school counselor, they add expertise in the mental health, learning, and behavior, to help the whole child succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally.
- Weekly CARE meetings allow for regular communication among response services staff, teachers, and administration.
- The School Psychologist is also the primary contact for the identification of disabilities and modification of curriculum in compliance with state and federal guidelines.
- The School Social Worker is also the home-school-community liaison, monitors student attendance, and facilitates the peer mediation program.

PEER MEDIATION

Peer mediation is a process by which two students involved in a dispute met in a private, safe and confidential setting to work out problems with the guidance of two trained high school peer mediators. Students can request a mediation themselves or be referred to mediation by another student, a teacher, a parent or an administrator. Mediation is voluntary and a mediation session will not be scheduled unless both parties agree to participate. The process allows the two parties to communicate with each other and look for an agreement. It is a problem-solving approach where no one loses. It is a win-win. Mediation empowers students to communicate more effectively, develop listening skills, and address problems in a peaceful way.

If you have any question about the peer mediation process please contact Lisa Heuschkel, School Social Worker.

LITCHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADES 7-8 COURSE INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION: Housed in the same building with the high school students, middle school students in grades 7 and 8 move in a departmentalized setting, changing classes for each subject discipline: English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Spanish. In addition, within the course of these two years, all students will participate in the following specials courses: art, exercise science, information literacy and personal wellness. If interested, students may also choose to be part of a full-year course of Band or Chorus.

GRADE SEVEN

ENGLISH: The seventh grade Language Arts program is foundational and includes the areas of speaking, writing, and reading. The program introduces and develops writing skills in the areas of narration, exposition, description, persuasion, and poetry through the practice and application of the writing process. Students will learn to organize writing, to include accurate details and content, and to reinforce proper grammar, usage, and mechanics. Students develop as speakers and writers using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task. Research skills, such as note taking, outlining, and citing sources, are also introduced. Students learn critical reading skills and strategies to increase their knowledge of and appreciation for fiction and informational texts.

Students will demonstrate a general understanding, develop an interpretation, and create a critical stance. Literary elements are introduced through techniques, such as story mapping and close reading. Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts through classroom study and independent reading.

MATHEMATICS: Students in 7th grade will take one of two math classes. Students taking 7th Grade Mathematics will focus on skill building as well as investigate the new topic of algebraic concepts.

Students will not only build new mathematical ideas but be able to see how these new ideas relate to what they have already developed. Students will explore content that centers on four critical areas: developing understanding of an applying proportional relationships; developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with linear expressions and equations; 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 drawing inferences about populations based on samples. Students taking 7th Grade Mathematics will enter into 8th Grade Mathematics the following year.

Students taking 7th Grade Compacted Mathematics will follow an accelerated curriculum which will cover not only the 7th grade concepts and skills, but also include the 8th grade topics of powers and roots, linear functions, congruence, similarity, and transformations. This additional content demands a faster pace for instruction and learning with less opportunity for guided practice during class time. Students taking 7th Grade Compacted Mathematics may be eligible to take 8th Grade Compacted mathematics the following year.

**Placement in 7th grade math is determined by conversations between the 6th and 7th grade math department members and will take into account scores on 6th grade benchmark assessments, an end-of-year skills assessment, and Smarter Balanced results. Other important qualities for recommendation into the Compacted Mathematics class include, but are not limited to: the ability to critically think, make connections, and problem solve, work ethic, and the capability to work independently and in groups.

SCIENCE: The seventh grade science class supports the Next Generation Science Standards for content, inquiry, modeling and engineering skills. Students learn aspects of biology and genetic sciences. The course begins with an investigation of life in its simplest form, the cell, as well as an introduction to biological process and physiology surrounding cell structure. It continues with a

study of ecosystems, heredity and inheritance, major body systems, and evolution focusing on both unity and diversity within species and populations. Lab work, problem solving, inquiry and research will be important parts of this course. In addition, modeling and engineering practices will be utilized will students will manipulate lab materials to create an understanding of the scientific world. Students apply effective and efficient strategies for gathering information and materials, thinking critically, solving problems, and using appropriate technology. Skills learned in seventh grade science are assessed on the 8th grade NGSS Test.

SOCIAL STUDIES: The seventh grade course focuses on the foundation of Western culture and ancient civilizations. Topics include the regions of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India, as well as classical and Hellenistic Greece, the Roman Empire and the early cultures of the Americas. In each region, the themes of geography, religion/beliefs, achievements, politics and social structure will be explored. Students will also make connections to our current world.

SPANISH: The seventh-grade Spanish program provides students with solid foundational communicative skills that are essential for acquiring the language. Students will learn vocabulary and grammatical concepts that they will utilize to communicate in various real-life contexts. Students will develop and strengthen their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, while building their proficiency of the language. Students will explore the practices, products, and perspectives of the countries of Mexico, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and Peru. Students will think critically about their role as citizens of the world, as they study the Spanish language and Hispanic culture.

GRADE EIGHT

LANGUAGE ARTS: The eighth grade Language Arts program builds on the seventh grade skills of speaking, writing, and reading. Students study narrative, expository, and descriptive forms of written expression. Students will learn to organize writing, to include accurate details and content and to reinforce proper grammar, usage and mechanics. Students evaluate word choice, sentence structure, and paragraph construction to better understand and improve their writing. The skills of presenting, listening, and participating are also integral parts of the program. Research skills are developed to demonstrate proficiency in informational technology. This course builds on students' prior development as readers, writers, and thinkers, preparing them for the demands of the high school curriculum. Students are immersed in challenging young adult literature and several classics. To enhance their preparation as lifelong readers, students continue to self-select literature and to write intensively about their ideas. Students will demonstrate a general understanding, develop an interpretation, and create a critical stance of grade level appropriate texts.

MATHEMATICS: Students taking 8th Grade Mathematics will build new mathematical ideas and be able to see how these new ideas relate to what they have already developed. Students will explore content that centers on three critical areas: formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; and analyzing two-and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem. Students taking 8th Grade Mathematics will be eligible to enter directly into the high school Algebra I course.

Students taking 8th Grade Compacted Mathematics will formalize and extend the mathematics that students learned through the end of the 7th grade. Students will explore three critical areas and 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 also analyze and solve quadratic functions and equations. As a result of their studies, students will be able to view mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that makes use of their ability to make sense of problem solving situations. Since this course contains content from the high school Algebra I course in addition to the inclusion of some of the 8th Grade Mathematics curriculum, it demands a much faster pace for instruction and learning and less class time for guided practice. Students who complete 8th Grade Compacted Mathematics may be eligible to enter directly into either Academic Algebra 2 or Honors Algebra 2 the following year.

*Per Board of Education policy, students may be granted credit toward meeting a specified course requirement upon the successful completion in grade seven or eight of any course, the primary focus of which corresponds directly to the subject matter of a specified course requirement in grades nine to twelve, inclusive. Students who are recommended into either Academic Algebra 2 or Honors Algebra 2 in ninth grade will have met this requirement.

SCIENCE: The eighth grade science class supports the Next Generation Science Standards for content, inquiry, modeling and engineering skills. The course focuses on the physical and chemical nature of the natural world. Students study forces and motion, gravity, work, energy, matter, introductory chemistry topics, and simple machines. A major portion of this class will be utilizing modeling, engineering, and design practices. In addition, problem solving, inquiry and research will be important parts of this course. Students will manipulate lab materials to create an understanding of the scientific world. Students apply effective and efficient strategies for gathering information and materials, thinking critically, solving problems, and using appropriate technology. Eighth grade science is assessed on the 8th grade NGSS Test.

SOCIAL STUDIES: The eighth grade social studies program is a survey course on United States history and government. Students focus on rights and responsibilities in four units: The New Nation, the Divided Nation, the Evolving Nation, and the Powerful Nation. The principles of the U.S. Constitution will be integrated throughout the year, with emphasis on development of critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through analysis of historical documents and other primary sources. The program encourages the students to develop an awareness of the American past as well as America's role in the world today.

SPANISH: Students who have successfully completed 7th grade Spanish will continue their Spanish studies in 8th grade. The students will demonstrate increased proficiency and fluency in communication to meet the literacy demands of the global community. Throughout the course students will build on their prior knowledge while learning more complex grammatical concepts. Much of the material involves oral participation and memorization. Cooperative learning techniques and pair practice allow students an opportunity to practice the language. Students will continue to build an appreciation for Spanish and Hispanic cultures. Based on student performance, this course may qualify as the pre-requisite course for high school Spanish II.

*Per Board of Education policy, students may be granted credit toward meeting a specified course requirement upon the successful completion in grade seven or eight of any course, the primary focus of which corresponds directly to the subject matter of a specified course requirement in grades nine to twelve, inclusive. Students who are recommended into either Academic Spanish II or Honors Spanish II in ninth grade will have met this requirement.

SPECIAL AREAS

THE FOLLOWING COURSES ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF BOTH
SEVENTH & EIGHTH GRADE PROGRAMS

EXERCISE SCIENCE (7th and 8th Grade): Students in both seventh and eighth grade are involved in various traditional sport activities such as soccer, speedball, basketball, volleyball, floor hockey, basketball, lacrosse, ultimate Frisbee, football and physical fitness basics. Students learn how to improve basic sports skills to enhance overall athletic performance, as well as group skills to gain self-confidence and understanding of self and others. In addition, students are engaged in team building activities that promote effective communication and problem solving skills. This is a full year course.

PERSONAL WELLNESS 7: The seventh grade curriculum examines the concept of Wellness throughout the life cycle, with exploration of life stages and the developmental task of each stage. Using a scientific approach, students will learn about the endocrine system of hormone production, male/female reproduction and fetal development from conception to birth. Physical and emotional changes during puberty will be explored. Social media and physical safety concerns will be addressed, along with the state mandated Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness Program.

PERSONAL WELLNESS 8: The eighth grade curriculum emphasizes the significance of healthy eating, personal values, the roles of self-esteem and peer pressure in personal development while focusing on positive choices. Class activities focus on beginnings of nutrition education, anti-bullying, relationship skills, decision-making skills, and the use of positive communication styles and conflict resolution. Skills include practicing positive mental health strategies, understanding symptoms of depression, and suicide prevention. Substance abuse prevention education will highlight the physical/psychological effects of drugs and alcohol, along with the legal and personal dangers associated with use of these substances.

7th GRADE ART: The seventh grade art students learn to communicate their ideas more effectively through the application of the principles of visual design and elements of art. Students have the opportunity to work and experiment with a variety of materials and techniques-with a focus on observation, creativity, and personal expression using 2-D materials. This course exposes students to some of the initial 2-D concepts they may encounter if they continue with art at the high school level.

8th GRADE ART: The eighth grade art students learn to communicate their ideas more effectively through the application of the principles of visual design primarily with sculptural and 3-D concepts. Student will apply what they have learned in seventh grade to a broader range of concepts and have the opportunity to experiment with 3-D art techniques and materials, such as clay. This course exposes students to some of the initial 3-D concepts they may encounter if they continue with art at the high school level.

Middle School Information Literacy

The 7th and 8th grade information literacy courses are designed to equip students to become lifelong learners and informed seekers of information, safe and responsible users of information and technology, and enthusiastic readers and makers.

7th Grade Information Literacy: Seventh grade students will explore concepts of digital citizenship, including Internet privacy and safety, online bullying, the digital footprint they are creating, and appropriate social media behavior. Students will also research a current issue and create a public service announcement about their topic. In addition, they will create a project in the library MakerSpace.

8th Grade Information Literacy: Eighth grade students will build their research skills by conducting an independent research project and publishing their findings on a website they create. They will also learn about computer coding, as well as explore the issue of reliability of news published in print or online. In addition, they will create a project in the library MakerSpace.

THE FOLLOWING COURSES ARE OFFERED TO ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

CHORUS (7th and 8th Grade): This program provides an opportunity for members to develop their singing ability and an appreciation of choral music, while learning how to communicate effectively through performance. Grade level appropriate music, to include a variety of voicings and historically significant styles and genres, is chosen for practice and for performance at concerts. In addition, students learn music literacy concepts and grade appropriate skills based on the National Core Arts Standards via unit instruction and practical application in rehearsal. Members are encouraged to participate in enrichment activities such as the afterschool Chamber Singers ensemble as well as auditioning for the Northern Regional Middle School Festival Chorus. This choral program is open to all 7th and 8th graders. Participation in the Winter, Spring, and Pops Concerts is required for course completion.

BAND (7th and 8th Grade): Middle School Band provides an opportunity for students to effectively communicate music through the rehearsal and performance process in a traditional concert band setting. Students in Middle School Band continue to engage in the National Core Arts Standards that are introduced in the Intermediate School Band. Students will continue to build skills that will prepare them for effective participation in the Litchfield High School Band. Those skills include major and chromatic scales, expanding their knowledge of rhythms and meters to include compound and alla breve meters, and identifying, defining, and performing proper articulations and expressive notations in written music. Additionally, students will begin to identify, analyze, and demonstrate higher order musicality concepts such as phrasing, balance, blend, and intonation. The Middle School Band contributes to the quality of life and spirit of our community through concerts, festivals, and community performances such as the Litchfield Memorial Day Parade. Band members are encouraged to participate in enrichment activities including the Middle School Jazz Band and preparing an audition for the Middle School Northern Regional Music Festival. Participation in Winter, Spring and Pops Concerts, as well as the Memorial Day Parade, are a requirement for course completion.