

U-32

MIDDLE SCHOOL



PROGRAM OF STUDIES

2009-2010

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Accreditation Statement

U-32 is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., a non-governmental, nationally recognized organization whose affiliated institutions include elementary schools through collegiate institutions offering post-graduate instruction. Accreditation of an institution by the New England Association indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality applied through a peer group process. An accredited school or college is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purpose through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

U-32 is a public school community dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning. We celebrate and value all of our members and, through a wide variety of opportunities, we strive to meet their emotional, intellectual, ethical, cultural and physical needs with compassion and respect.

Academic Expectations ~ All students are expected:

- To demonstrate a broad foundation of knowledge and experiences by meeting or exceeding U-32 graduation requirements;
- To meet appropriate Vermont and/or national standards; and
- To make a post-graduation plan.

Civic and Social Expectations ~ All students are expected:

- To model appropriate behavior in accordance with school rules, and take responsibility for their actions;
- To treat each other with dignity and respect, and affirm one another in their efforts;
- To demonstrate commitment, accountability, dependability, integrity, and the ability to cooperate;
- To demonstrate citizenship by responsibly participating in meaningful community and school activities; and
- To identify and actively pursue their interests.

Professional Expectations ~ All faculty and staff are expected:

- To be skilled and current in their fields;
- To regularly evaluate programs to ensure continual improvement in the fulfillment of the mission;
- To have significant exchanges with students on a daily basis;
- To create and maintain a safe, positive and engaging learning environment;
- To actively participate in the school community;
- To model and promote civility, diversity, responsibility and respect for self, for colleagues, for students and others;
- To encourage community and parent involvement; and
- To consistently utilize and enforce U-32 policies and procedures.

U-32 Middle School Parent Teacher Council Mission Statement

The U-32 Middle School Parent Teacher Council is a group of middle school parents, staff and administration who meet monthly.

Our mission is to create a partnership to benefit our students' education.

We will accomplish this by providing opportunities for two-way dialogue and information exchange, and by supporting a wide range of activities for maintaining a positive middle school experience both in and out of the classroom.

School Profile

The Community

Five rural towns, Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex and Worcester surround the capital city of Montpelier and unite to form the U-32 School District. Each of the towns has its own elementary school and those schools send their students to U-32 for grades 7-12. These towns have a total population of approximately 10,000. Our residents embody all walks of life and our community benefits enormously from their combined energy and talents.

The School

U-32 is a regional public school, grades 7-12, with an enrollment of about 850 students. Unique features include:

- A Teacher Advisor (TA) system in which faculty members act as an advocate for approximately 12 students, allowing a student to experience an ongoing, in-depth relationship with one staff member throughout his/her school career. Staff is most often addressed on a first name basis;
- The belief that sports and drama are co-curricular learning experiences rather than extra-curricular;
- The belief that learning also occurs outside of the classroom;
- An outstanding Theater Arts program;
- An outstanding Fine Arts program;
- The *U-32 Chronicle* – an award-winning school newspaper;
- Writing Across the Curriculum – the inclusion of writing in all classes;
- A strong elective system that allows students variety as well as focus;
- Branching Out – a unique mentor instructional program;
- A sustainability program that promotes recycling and composting cafeteria leftovers; and
- A renovated and expanded 198,000-square-foot building, 145-acre campus, with numerous athletic fields, cross-country running and skiing course, and high and low ropes course.

WCSU Middle Level Goals (Grades 5 – 8)

Middle School Education in Washington Central Supervisory Union is active learning that meets the unique needs of early adolescence. Social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth is fostered in a safe, caring environment. We celebrate critical thinking, diversity and creativity in our students and collaboration between community and school.

Goal #1: Students develop the attributes of life-long learners.

Goal #2: Students exhibit the qualities of a good citizen.

Goal #3: Students have an informed awareness of health/wellness issues in order to make appropriate decisions.

Goal #4: Students have access to technology throughout the curriculum.

Registration Information

March 12	Parent Information Night for sixth grade parents
March 13	Grade 6 to 7 scheduling process begins Program of Studies distributed
April 7	Grade 6 to 7 course requests due in Guidance Office
May	Grade 6 students visit U-32
May 29	Tentative Schedules to incoming 7 th & 8 th graders
June 1st	Unity Day – sixth grade students visit U-32
June- August	Schedule adjustments

WHO CAN I CALL?

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Seventh Grade Core Program

Language Arts 7

In Language Arts we explore three broad themes. The first, Understanding Place, is an integrated Language Arts/Social Studies unit which studies the history, geography and cultural heritage of Vermont. Our second theme, Continuity and Change, looks at challenges that people face. Embedded in this theme is the winter unit, which is an interdisciplinary study including a two-day outdoor adventure experience led by the Lotus Lake Adventure Center. The third theme, *Meeting New Challenges*, looks at how students can share their unique qualities with others. This theme is culminated by a book project; every student writes, illustrates and binds his/her own original picture book. These are then presented on a “Book Buddy” day to all primary schools in the WCSU district.

Students read a collection of novels, nonfiction, short stories, and poetry relating to these themes. Writing assignments include daily journal writing, and multi-draft portfolio pieces in different genres. Although many of the writing assignments are integrated with the science and social studies curriculum, all are assessed using state benchmarks and rubrics.

Math 7

The seventh grade math program is devoted to developing student knowledge and understanding of mathematics. The curriculum is related to all of the important areas of mathematics and mathematical thinking advocated by the *NCTM Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics* and the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*. The curriculum is rich in connections – connections among core ideas in mathematics, connections between mathematics and its applications in other school subjects and connections with the applications of mathematical ideas in the outside world.

The mathematical strands in seventh grade will include: geometry, linear algebra, probability and statistics, skills and problem solving. Students in seventh grade will also begin to put together a portfolio of mathematical pieces; the portfolio will be continued in their eighth grade year.

Science 7

The focus in seventh grade is life science - understanding the relationship between the environment and local communities. Throughout the year students will learn key ecological principles while exploring the inter-relationships between living creatures and their unique ecosystems. Students will be introduced to the scientific method and will be expected to design and conduct a variety of their own investigations. As part of an elevation study, they will examine how living and non-living systems respond to changes in the environment. Throughout this year students should develop an awareness of how their personal and collective actions affect the sustainability of natural and human communities.

Social Studies 7

The seventh grade year will introduce students to the study of indigenous peoples, world cultures and geography. These units will introduce students to anthropology and related fields; the movements and settlements of people; European exploration and colonization in the Western Hemisphere; and state, national, and world geography. Students will demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect relationships in human societies, analyze knowledge, make historical connections, explore concepts of culture and traditional societies and use and apply geographical knowledge. They will also learn various research techniques and formal research paper writing skills.

Seventh Grade Non-Core Program

Foreign Language 7

Students begin their sequential study of either French or Spanish in seventh grade. They begin to address the five national standards goals: to communicate in a foreign language using speaking, listening, reading and writing; to know about and understand the cultures where the language is spoken; to use the language to connect with other disciplines and acquire information; and to compare the language and its respective culture to our own. Students communicate in simple sentences on topics that include friends, family, school, calendars, food and seasons. Students experience the culture through textbooks, films, the Internet and music. Besides quizzes and tests, there are required performance assessments based on communication skills.

Reading Strategies 7

Reading Strategies 7 is designed to help students improve their reading skills. As students move into middle school and beyond there is considerable emphasis on learning new vocabulary, understanding a range and depth of text, connecting and summarizing ideas and analyzing and interpreting text. Reading Strategies 7 was created for students who need to strengthen their reading comprehension skills in preparation for the increased demands of middle and high school.

Study Skills 7

This course gives students who are on plans of assistance (IEP, 504, EST), a vehicle to aid them in receiving additional support around academic demands. Pre-teaching and re-teaching curriculum content at a more individualized pace and approach is utilized to aid students in becoming more independent learners. A large emphasis is placed on organizational skills to assist students in strengthening academic independence.

Computers 7

7th Grade Computers is a quarter-long course designed to introduce students to the U-32 networking system and familiarize them with Microsoft Office 2007. Students will learn to touch type and utilize Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. Students will complete a variety of projects that build skills and align with Core activities.

Physical Education 7

This course introduces seventh graders to our adventure/challenge-based curriculum, which is designed to develop life skills through team-building concepts. The emphasis is on cooperation, effective communication, social interactions, making responsible choices, self-expression, personal challenge and enjoyment. This is a participation course in which students explore fitness/wellness and team and individual movement activities. Students are expected to dress appropriately for physical activity, participate daily and demonstrate responsible personal and social behaviors. Assessments are both written and performance-based. Activities include the following: adventure/challenge (new games, initiatives and low rope elements), field hockey, soccer, volleyball, creative world dance, basketball, juggling, pilo polo, Frisbee and Whiffleball.

7th Health

This course is designed to give all students basic health concepts, which will allow them to make healthy decisions for themselves. It is an activity and skills-based course, which encourages the students to know more about themselves and develop positive and healthy relationships. The main units include: basic health concepts, media and its influence, substance abuse, nutrition and more. There is also an emphasis on healthy decision making. This course involves project based learning activities as well as reading, writing and discussions.

Visual Arts 7

The Middle School Visual Art Program is an introduction to the visual art facilities at U-32. Students will have a taste of the different courses they could pursue in high school. Students are introduced to concepts of design, color, composition, techniques, and art history. Classes may incorporate drawing, painting and pottery as well as bookmaking, printmaking and jewelry as a way to present these concepts in a hands-on studio atmosphere. Students will exhibit their work in end-of-semester shows and in the Spring Arts show at the end of 2nd semester.

Technology Education 7

This program is designed to develop skills in the areas of math, problem solving, safety, drafting and design, as well as designing and building.

Seventh Grade Chorus

Seventh Grade Chorus helps students to develop their voice. The class also helps students to develop skills in teamwork, reading music, performance and pitch accuracy. Students will sing in two- and three-part harmony. Other areas of focus include expression and diction. Activities include rehearsals, field trips and performances.

Seventh Grade Band

Seventh Grade Band is a middle school performance class that is open to seventh grade students who have played a band instrument for at least two years. The goal of this class is to help students develop good musical skills through performance. Areas of focus include tone production, technical accuracy, rhythmic accuracy, articulation, good ensemble skills and playing with expression. Band will perform three concerts and make an elementary school tour.

String Ensemble

String Ensemble will provide string ensemble training for seventh graders. The class will focus on individual string techniques, such as bowing, tone production, left hand technique, intonation, note reading, rhythm and articulation. Students will also be instructed on good ensemble skills such as balance, blend, intonation and ensemble. The class will use an intermediate string method book as well as appropriate grade two and three string ensemble literature. The String Ensemble will perform at all middle school concerts.

Guitar 7

Guitar 7 is for students who are interested in playing the guitar and who have had little or no experience. Using a multifaceted approach of individual, small group and ensemble settings, students will be expected to perform a varied repertoire of music. Students will learn concepts of music theory as they read music notes and other symbols of notation. These concepts will be applied to the guitar as students learn notes in the first position, scale patterns and chord fingerings. Students will learn to sight read simple melodies in the treble clef and to provide harmonic accompaniment to a melody part.

Eighth Grade Core Program

Language Arts 8

In Language Arts 8, we have a yearlong focus on Teaching Tolerance. We explore universal themes of responsibility, justice, respect and citizenship. Students read a collection of novels, nonfiction, short stories, and poetry relating to these themes. All students are required to compile their final writing portfolio to determine if they have met the writing standards in six specific genres.

All students are expected to read a total of 25 books for the year. Special projects include the summer reading party, eighth grade plays, Project Citizen, Flynn Theater performances, and the Washington DC trip.

Math 8

The eighth grade math program is devoted to developing student knowledge and understanding of mathematics. The mathematical strands in eighth grade will include statistics, geometry, linear and non-linear algebra, probability and statistics, skills and problem solving. Students will also apply these mathematical principles and skills in a variety of situations with particular focus on the Middle School Mathematics Portfolio. Although some general topics are addressed in both seventh and eighth grade math curriculum, the specific units and level of difficulty are quite different.

Science 8

Students build upon skills learned in seventh grade through concepts in physical science. During independent and group lab investigations, they will observe and measure properties of matter and learn about elements and compounds. Students will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of the scientific method as they develop their own experiments to test a specific idea or question. While analyzing technological advances in science, students will examine the roles and responsibilities of scientists as they focus on current ethical issues and their potential impact on society.

Social Studies 8

The eighth grade year will serve as an introduction to American government and history from 1600 to 1865. The units focus on the colonial American experience; the American Revolution; origins of American government and the legislative process; and slavery before the Civil War. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the uses of evidence and data, analyze knowledge, make historical connections, examine the meaning of citizenship, compare different types of government, and explore the nature of conflict and human rights. Students will read extensively and will be assessed in a variety of ways, including research papers, unit tests, role-playing scenarios and various projects.

Eighth Grade Non-Core Program

Physical Education 8

This course continues to develop our students' life skills through team-building concepts. The curriculum is adventure/challenge-based with the emphasis remaining the same as for PE7. Students are expected to dress appropriately for physical activity, participate fully in each class and demonstrate responsible personal and social behaviors. Assessments are both written and performance-based. Activities may include the following: adventure/challenge, football, modified rugby, hockey, volleyball, creative line dancing, circus arts, floor hockey, personal self-defense and cricket.

BEAM: Body Exercise Agility and Music:

Daily elective physical fitness and tournament games course for eighth graders. Introduction to plyometric exercise and activities leading to higher levels of physical fitness will be the focus of this class. This class will offer traditional and non-traditional games, often within tournament structures. This will add to the increased enhancement and enjoyment of the activities. Students should come prepared to be active, burn calories and have fun. Being physically fit through activity that works to a student's target heart rate is an important goal of this class. This BEAM course is for all eighth graders.

Foreign Language 8

Students continue the sequential study of either French or Spanish that they began in seventh grade. They continue to address, at a basic level, the five national standards goals: to communicate in a foreign language using speaking, listening, reading and writing; to know about and understand the cultures where the language is spoken; to use the language to connect with other disciplines and acquire information; to compare the language and its respective culture to our own; and to participate in multi-lingual communities. Students use basic language skills to communicate about friends, family, weather, school, food, clothing, geography, town and country, leisure activities and transportation. Students experience the culture through films, the Internet, music, and textbooks. Besides quizzes and tests, there are three required performance assessments based on communication skills. Upon successful completion of Foreign Language 8, a student will have completed year one of that language.

Health 8

This course will continue to reinforce the basic concepts of Health 7 while adding important and developmentally appropriate units for eighth grade students. During this class students will focus on the 10 areas of Health. There will be special emphasis on healthy dating relationships, sexual decision making, sexually transmitted infection/disease, stress, depression and suicide. Again, healthy coping skills and healthy choices will be the main focus within each unit the students study.

Career Development

This course will help students develop an understanding of self while building and maintaining a positive self concept.

Students will focus on integrate growth, career development, and balance of personal, leisure, community, learner, family and work roles. Students will be exposed to educational achievement and performance levels needed to reach personal and career goals. Students will use the Real Game curriculum and be exposed to career exploration.

Living Arts 8

This course covers nutrition and food preparation at the next level. Seasonal food projects and foods for school events are also included. Handcrafted projects are introduced to students. This unit encourages our students to develop positive and lifelong activities that can be creative, productive and fun.

Visual Arts 8

The Middle School Visual Art Program is an introduction to the visual art facilities at U-32. Students will have a taste of the different courses they could pursue in high school visual art. Students are introduced to concepts of design, color, composition, techniques, and art history. Classes may incorporate drawing, painting, and pottery as well as bookmaking, printmaking, and jewelry as a way to present these concepts in a hands-on studio atmosphere. Students will exhibit their work in end-of-semester shows and in the Spring Arts show at the end of the year.

Computers 8

8th Grade Computers is a quarter-long course designed to reinforce skills acquired during computer 7 and introduce students to a variety of editing programs. Students will complete a series of projects using Microsoft Office and media editing/creation software. Students will learn to efficiently manage and share files on the network and develop a system of organization. Assessments will be project based and align with Core activities.

Technology Education 8

This program is designed to build on the seventh grade experience and to continue to develop skills in the areas of math, problem solving, safety, drafting and design, as well as designing and building. This course meets 40 minutes for one semester.

Reading Strategies 8

Reading Strategies 8 is designed to give students an opportunity to refine and broaden their knowledge of how specific reading strategies work and to improve their skills in interpreting and analyzing text. Students read fiction and nonfiction books, learn and practice reading comprehension strategies, study frameworks that improve reading and expand their vocabulary through content reading and through studying Latin prefixes and roots. Students write responses to literature in conjunction with core Language Arts assignments.

This class is for students who would benefit from direct, small-group instruction and who need to strengthen their comprehension skills as they move toward high school. This is not a special education class. Students are offered this additional instructional time based on teacher recommendation and their performance on state, district and classroom assessments.

Study Skills 8

This course gives students who are on plans of assistance (IEP, 504, EST), a vehicle to aid them in receiving additional support around academic demands. Pre-teaching and re-teaching curriculum content at a more individualized pace and approach is utilized to aid students in becoming more independent learners. A large emphasis is placed on organizational skills to assist students in strengthening academic independence.

Guitar 8

Guitar 8 is a continuation of Guitar 7. Theory and performance requirements are developed further, with emphasis on more diverse styles of music. Students will use pentatonic scale patterns to learn about improvisation on the guitar. Students will also listen to exemplary selections in order to analyze and describe music as well as to understand more about the guitar's role in history.

Eighth Grade Chorus

Eighth Grade Chorus is designed to give intermediate level singers experience with standard chorus repertoire. The course emphasizes the development of performance, sight-reading and vocal techniques. Students sing in three- and four-part harmony. Other areas of focus are expression, music theory and intonation. Activities include small ensembles, field trips, music festivals and performances at U-32.

Eighth Grade Band

Eighth Grade Band is a middle school performance class for eighth graders who have successfully completed Seventh Grade Band. The goal is to help students to continue to develop good musical skills and prepare them for playing at the high school level. Areas of focus include playing with expression, music theory and intonation. Eighth Grade Band performs three concerts, makes an elementary school tour and performs at music festivals each year.

Intermediate Jazz Band

Intermediate Jazz Band is a multi-grade ensemble for eighth, ninth and tenth grade instrumental and rhythm section students who have an interest in and an aptitude for jazz. It will provide a sound basic music education in all areas covered by seventh and eighth grade band as well as an in-depth introduction to the study of jazz. Students will work in several jazz ensemble method books and learn and perform grade two and three jazz literature. They will perform in three concerts and a jazz festival. They will also study the history of jazz,

Including the great jazz recordings, and learn jazz theory and improvisation. They will work to develop a musical style using jazz vocabulary and performance practices. *Admission will be by audition or invitation.*

Intermediate String Ensemble

Intermediate strings will provide string ensemble training for eighth graders. The class will focus on individual string techniques, such as bowing, tone production, left hand technique, intonation, note reading, rhythm and articulation. Students will also be instructed on good ensemble skills, such as balance, blend, intonation and ensemble. The class will use an intermediate string method book as appropriate grade two and three string ensemble literature. The string ensemble will perform at all middle school concerts.

Special Education

Special Education serves to assist students with disabilities to access and benefit from regular education through direct instruction in the basic skill areas of oral expression, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, basic reading skills, written expression, motor skills, mathematical calculation or mathematics reasoning. The Special Education Department offers services and programs so that students may increase their basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and oral expression. Courses and/or support are also provided to help students improve their social, study and organizational skills.

Eligibility for Special Education services is determined through a Comprehensive Evaluation process, facilitated by a Special Educator and determined by an Evaluation Planning Team (E.P.T.).

Students with Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.) participate in regular education classes to the greatest extent possible. They may receive direct instruction from a Special Educator or para-educator within a regular education class and/or in smaller “skills” classes as needed. Accessing some “skills” classes may require schedule adjustments.



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