Middle School 5-8 Course Information Guide
2015-2016
The Honor Roll School

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Head of School
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Dear Dolphin Families and Students:

This Middle School Course Information Guide has been prepared to assist you in the process of course selection for the upcoming school year. We offer a unique and challenging Middle School program that spans from 5th-8th grade. Our 5th grade serves as our “Transitional Middle School” year, as students literally transition from life as an elementary student to that of a middle school student. This guide will provide students and families the information necessary to make informed decisions and understand the program in its entirety. In addition, a description of every course offering is available for your review.

After reviewing the Course Information Guide, you will find that The Honor Roll School continues our tradition of offering a comprehensive and challenging curriculum enhanced by a variety of elective choices. Course selections should broaden students’ educational experiences and be based on student’s individual needs. All of our Middle School options are offered at an advanced level, with very high expectations. Within those advanced level offerings, students will have opportunities to accelerate at different times, based on individual needs. We are proud to offer courses and electives that reflect the unique individualism that our students possess.

As always, the THRS administration is available to assist our students and families throughout the course selection process. We are dedicated to offering the best academics for our students, while emphasizing elective choices that will enable our students to be well-rounded and prepared for high school, college and careers.

Please contact the school with any questions.

Respectfully,

Tom Heinly
Head of School
Middle School Course Selection General Information

The course selection guide has been created so the Dolphin students and families have a better understanding of the course offerings at The Honor Roll School. The guide will be organized to show the different core content academic courses offered and elective choices our students will have the opportunity to participate in for the next school year. A brief description will be available for each course as well.

All students will be provided course information by THRS administration while at school, before course selection sheets are sent home. Students will gain an understanding of what core subjects are required and what elective choices are available for the upcoming school year. Students will study the course information guide, discuss all choices and decisions with parents and make informed decisions before returning course selection sheets. All teachers and administrative staff will be available for any and all questions a student and/or parent may have during this process. In addition to your signature, your parents/guardians will be required to sign the Course Selection Sheet to indicate their approval of your choices. You must also acquire teacher recommendations/signature where needed.

Course Selection Procedures:

Students will complete fall course selections in the spring of the previous school year. The following steps will take place during the course selection process:

1. **Student Course Selection Orientation** – Students will receive pertinent information on the course selection process. Course selection sheets will be handed out, course information guides will be reviewed and instructions on how to complete the process will be covered.

2. **Parent Information** – The day the students complete their orientation and receive the course selection sheets, parents will be sent all relevant information necessary for the course selection process, including copies of the course information guide and course selection sheet that was provided to the students. No course selection sheet will be accepted without a parent signature.

3. **Course Selection Sheet Completion** - Each student will complete a Course Selection Sheet; get appropriate teacher recommendation/signature, parent/guardian signature, and student signature. Completed sheets will be returned at the date provided to The Honor Roll School administration or homeroom teacher.

*Please note: The Honor Roll School reserves the right to cancel any course offering due to lack of enrollment after the course selection process is completed.*
Grade 5 Curriculum

Fifth grade at The Honor Roll School is the beginning of an amazing journey through Middle School. Students will adhere to Middle School hours and bell schedules and be exposed to unique opportunities designed specifically for our Middle School program. It will serve as a pivotal building block to prepare them for our 6-8th grade program.

5th Grade Adv. Math

5th Grade Math is a core course that is taught at an advanced pace. Students will work in our Math program and will be evaluated informally and formally throughout the year. This program will build the foundation and launch our students into a successful transition to Middle School math. This course will begin to study important middle school mathematics concepts and understand how they are related to real data and real-life application. Students will form a solid foundation in fundamental middle grade topics such as decimals, fractions, geometry, and measurement with grade appropriate introduction to key algebraic topics. Extensive application to word problems is a part of this course. All of our THRS students will remain in an advanced level of math during their middle school years, however this year will help each student determine the pace of those advanced math classes. Students will either transition to our accelerated math program, which is more rigorous and intensive, or remain in their current advanced and challenging track.

5th Grade Adv. Science

Fifth grade Advanced Science is a comprehensive program designed to introduce students to the basics of the following topics: Scientific Method/Variables; Living Systems (Kingdoms); Cells; Senses; Human Anatomy; Water and Oceans; Plants; Earth (Rocks & Volcanoes); Weathering and Erosion; Space Science – Planets; Sound and Light; and Decomposition and Conservation. Students will work through labs and hands-on activities. Technology will be infused throughout the science curriculum. This course will lay the foundation for our advanced middle school sciences.
Grade 5 Curriculum Cont.

5th Grade Adv. ELA

5th Grade advanced Reading and ELA will be offered in a double-block. This means it will have two periods in which reading, writing and English language arts skills will be taught. This block will also incorporate study skills that will prepare our students for middle school and beyond. Study skills will include, but not limited to: note taking, calendar organization, homework planning, “How to” properly use an iPad for educational purposes and programs. Class novels and different genres of literature will be incorporated throughout the school year. The student will use his/her developing knowledge of text structure, organization, and purpose to connect the essential ideas and derive meaning from his/her reading. Students will work on writing clear, coherent essays. Essays contain a formal introduction, supporting evidence, and a conclusion. The student continues to progress through the steps of the writing process, refining his/her skills. The areas of reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar are taught through a combined process that takes isolated skills and merges them together. These skills are taught as a combined process which creates strong readers, authentic writers and takes these skills to real world applications.

5th Grade Adv. Social Studies

5th grade advanced Social Studies immerses students in a powerful journey through the history of the United States from its earliest foundations to the age of industrialism. Students will be encouraged to utilize the knowledge of the past, by understanding why things happened, in an attempt to prepare them for the future. In addition, students will have the opportunity on a regular basis to research and discover information through the use of technology that is widely available on our campus.
Middle School 6-8 Reading and Language Arts Curriculum

6th-8th Grade Adv. Reading and Language Arts

Our 6-8 grade Reading and Language Arts curriculum continues our belief in a vertically aligned Reading and Writing program. The areas of reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar are taught through a combined process that takes isolated skills and merges them together. These skills are taught as a combined process which creates strong readers, authentic writers and takes these skills to real world applications. Different genres of literature will be covered and students will be assigned class novels throughout the year. Novel lists will be provided by the teachers. Students build upon previously learned reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presentation skills in reading selections and written compositions. Students use different forms of writing and more complex grammar and usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization strategies to produce error-free compositions on a regular basis. The middle school Language Arts program combines the study of literature and vocabulary. Students read various literary genres, including, but not limited to: short stories, poetry, drama, fiction and nonfiction. These selections are discussed, analyzed, and interpreted by students to increase critical reading skills. Students also read assigned novels throughout the school year and learn to identify character development, types of conflict, cause and effect, and themes. Regular independent reading and use of the Accelerated Reader program is also a required activity by all students. There is a strong emphasis on learning vocabulary. Students will learn, practice, and apply vocabulary words through the use of workbooks, written assignments, and regular informal and formal assessments. Technology will be incorporated throughout the cyclical and vertically aligned program. Resume, application writing and interview skills will be covered towards the end of our Middle School program so our students are prepared for High School, College and future Careers.
MIDDLE SCHOOL 6- 8 MATH CURRICULUM

Advanced 6th grade math (Offered for 6th Grade)

This course will take students through a spiraling fast paced review of 6th grade math, while covering an entire year of 7th grade math skills. Students will develop algebraic concepts and processes that can be used to solve a variety of real-world mathematical problems. Students will continue to build on a foundation in fundamental middle grade topics such as decimals, fractions, geometry, and measurement with grade appropriate introduction to key algebraic topics. Extensive application to word problems is a part of this course.

Advanced Pre-Algebra (Offered for 6th and 7th Grade)

This Pre-Algebra course will help students develop the skills necessary to manipulate numbers, solve equations and understand the general principles at work. Students will compute interest through percentages, graph linear functions, compare rational numbers with scientific notation, and convert fractional numbers between fractions, decimals, and percents. Practical application through the incorporation of word problems is required in this course. This course will lay the foundation for Algebra I Honors.

Algebra 1 Honors (Offered for 7th and 8th Grade)

Algebra 1 Honors is a high school level course and high school credit may be earned. It is an accelerated honors level course. Students will be challenged and work at a rigorous pace with a high school level work load. This course examines the following concepts of Algebra: operations with real numbers and powers; expressions, equations, and inequalities; linear functions; polynomial and nonlinear functions; and rational functions and radicals. Learning these major topics will set the foundation for not only Algebra II, but all future math courses. The prerequisite for this course is Advanced Pre-Algebra.

Geometry Honors (Offered for 8th Grade)

Geometry Honors is a high school level math course and high school credit may be earned. It is an accelerated honors level course. Students will be challenged and work at a rigorous pace with a high school level work load. This course covers the required concepts of geometry including definitions, postulates, and theorems. Areas of study include angles, parallel lines, congruent and similar triangles, rectilinear figures, polygons, circles and arc, and the Pythagorean Theorem. Special topics covered include coordinate and spatial geometry, introductory trigonometry, and constructions. In addition to including problems which serve to review algebra, the process of “proving” theorems is introduced. The prerequisite for this course is Algebra I Honors.
MIDDLE SCHOOL 6- 8 SCIENCE CURRICULUM

6th Grade Adv. Science

6th grade advanced science enables students to investigate many aspects of science including an introduction to the discipline regarding: The Nature of Matter, Interactions of Matter, Earth’s Changing Surface, Beyond Earth, Life’s Diversity, and Life and the Environment. The inquiry-based lessons will actively engage all students through hands-on activities while exploring and reinforcing key skills and concepts. Additional goals include applying the concepts to real-world situations, emphasizing a seamless web of knowledge about the universe, and developing skills for advancement in a technologically-based environment. Students will be introduced to lab safety skills and correct use of laboratory equipment. Activities such as the science fair will help students to develop skills in critical thinking and problem solving, while understanding the significance of the scientific method. This is the start of our vertically aligned science program which the emphasis is applying science to real world application.

7th Grade Adv. Science

7th Grade Advanced Science spirals with the previous year’s curriculum, building on science concepts that were previously mastered. Students will investigate many aspects in science including an introduction to the discipline regarding: Heredity, Ecology, Earth’s Changing Surface, the Solar System, Chemistry, and Physics. The inquiry-based lessons will actively engage all students through hands-on activities while exploring and reinforcing key skills and concepts. Additional goals include applying the concepts to real-world situations, emphasizing a seamless web of knowledge about the universe, and developing skills for advancement in a technologically-based environment. Students will continue with labs and project-based learning opportunities, while utilizing technology throughout the curriculum. Students will again participate in the Science Fair while improving their investigations and understanding of the scientific method.

8th Grade Adv. Science

8th Grade Advanced Science spirals with the previous year’s curriculum, building on science concepts that were previously mastered. In this integrated science course students will investigate many aspects in science including an introduction to the discipline regarding: Earth’s Materials, Earth’s Atmosphere and Beyond, The Basis of Life, Human Body Systems, The Interdependence of Life, Matter and Energy. The inquiry-based lessons will actively engage all students through hands-on activities while exploring and reinforcing key skills and concepts. Additional goals include applying the concepts to real-world situations, emphasizing a seamless web of knowledge about the universe, and developing skills for advancement in a technologically-based environment. An emphasis on high school preparation and college and career readiness will be a focus of our entire science program. 8th grade advanced science will push the level of rigor so our students are prepared for his/her highly competitive future.
Middle School 6-8 Social Studies Curriculum

6th Grade Adv. World Geography

6th Grade world geography will enable students develop a greater knowledge of the ever changing world, which can be gained through an understanding of other people, physical living conditions, customs, values, cultures and beliefs. This foundation will allow for a better understanding of the complex physical and human characteristics of the different places and regions of the world. Additionally, this course will expose the student to the basic geographical concepts and prepare him/her to understand the world in spatial terms. The course is designed around the six essential elements of Geography. These themes are intended to enhance our understanding the world: Spatial terms, Places and Regions, Physical Systems, Human Systems, Environment and Society, and the uses of Geography. Students will apply these concepts to the seven continents. Learning will be enhanced through the integration of mass media including the Internet, videos, and texts. Students will frequently have the opportunity to research and discover information through use of the technology available on our campus.

7th Grade Adv. Civics

7th Grade Adv. Civics will enable students to develop the necessary knowledge and skills for an active participation in a democratic society. The students will understand the structure, functions, and purposes of government and how the principles and values of American democracy are reflected in the American Constitutional system; they will do so at the local, state, and federal levels. Additionally, the students will be exposed to the concepts of interests groups, political parties, media and public opinion as important aspects of the American democratic system. The learning environment will be highly participatory with many projects and activities throughout the year.

8th Grade Adv. U.S. History

The purpose of this 8th grade course is to enable students to understand the development of the United States within the context of history with a major focus on the Pre-Reconstruction period. Students will use knowledge pertaining to history, geography, economics, political processes, religion, ethics, diverse cultures, and humanities to analyze the historical events that have shaped the American society. Coursework will include the Age of Discovery, the Colonial Period, the American Revolution, Age of Expansion and Constitutional period, and the Civil War and Reconstruction. Students will be encouraged to utilize the knowledge of the past, by understanding why things happened, in an attempt to prepare them for the future. In addition, students will have the opportunity on a regular basis to research and discover information through the use of technology that is widely available on our campus.
Middle School Electives

Fine Arts

Art

The middle school art program is designed to provide exploratory experiences necessary for understanding, appreciating, and producing two dimensional works of art. The program focuses on development of the basic art skills and emphasizes disciplined art education as well as higher order thinking skills. Students are introduced to a variety of media including drawing, print making, painting, collage. Students use an art criticism process to evaluate, explain, and measure artistic growth in personal and group work. 5th grade rotation, Semester or Year course

Drama

The purpose of these courses is to enable students to develop fundamental knowledge and skills in the elements of theatre arts. Students will study all aspects of theater, including acting, directing, set design, costuming and theater management. This is a project-based class and students are required to participate in at least one yearly production. 5th grade rotation, Semester or Year course

Chorus

The purpose of this course is to enable students to develop fundamental vocal musicianship, technical skills, and aesthetic awareness through the study and performance of varied choral literature. Emphasis will be placed on: Vocal production, choral performance techniques, music literacy, elements and characteristics of music, performance analysis and connections between music and other subject areas. Students are required to participate in at least one yearly concert. Semester

Orchestra I (Beginning)

This course will put an emphasis on developmental technical skills for string instruments, from reading music to posture. Beginning students will strive to attain the necessary technical skills to perform with an ensemble. There may be rehearsals held after school. Students are required to document evidence of home practice and will have to provide their own instrument. Year course

Orchestra II (prerequisite: Orchestra I)

Orchestra is a yearlong course designed for string players with previous experience. The goals of the course at this level are to develop the knowledge of music theory, to improve individual sight-reading skills, to expand the technical capabilities on their instrument and to develop
ensemble skills. The orchestra may perform concerts during the year, and there will be rehearsals held after school. Students are required to document evidence of home practice and will have to provide their own instrument. **Year course. Completion of Orchestra 1 or to be determined by the instructor.**

**Band I (Beginning)**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the world of band music. Students will develop fundamental skills on wind or percussion instruments through the refinement and performance of entry level music. Emphasis will be placed on: Technical skills, individual and ensemble techniques, music literacy, improvisation, composition, performance analysis, and instrumental maintenance. The band may perform concerts during the year, and there will be rehearsals held after school. Students are required to document evidence of home practice and will have to provide their own instrument. **Year course**

**Band II (Intermediate/Advanced)**

The purpose of this course is to enable students to build on skills learned in Band I on their wind or percussion instruments through the refinement and performance of intermediate level music. Emphasis will be placed on: Musicianship, technical skills, individual and ensemble techniques, music literacy, improvisation, composition, and performance analysis. The band may perform concerts during the year, and there will be rehearsals held after school. Students are required to document evidence of home practice and will have to provide their own instrument. **Year course. Completion of Band 1 or to be determined by the instructor.**

**Yearbook 7 and 8**

This course provides experience in journalistic production as well as leadership opportunities. Students work individually as well as in groups and learn to meet deadlines. Students will create and design layouts, conduct interviews, take photographs and assist with the business aspect of the yearbook. Graphic design, journalism, and photography will be an integral focus of this course. **Attendance at after school extra-curricular events is required. Year course**
World Language

Spanish IA

This high school level IA Spanish course is a one-year introduction to the language. The students will earn 0.5 credit toward their high school transcript. This course assumes no prior knowledge of the language. Although emphasis is placed on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, a greater focus is placed on basic skills of speaking and listening at this level. The course includes a significant cultural component in which students learn about the richness and variety of other countries and worlds within the scope of the language they are studying. Students are required to perform situational realistic oral and written activities, individually and in small groups, to develop their language skills. Students will earn 0.5 credits toward their high school transcript for public high school or obtain higher proficiency for private school subject placement exam. Year course

Spanish 1B (prerequisite: Spanish 1A)

This high school level 1B preparatory Spanish course requires basic knowledge of the target language, as it is a continuation of Spanish 1A. Emphasis is placed on all four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students will recycle and broaden basic vocabulary and grammatical structures in their speech. Grammar skills are emphasized and taught within the context of the communicative objective. Specific cultural information is increasingly presented and discussed through additional readings (short articles, short stories), audiovisual material (radio and television programs, movies) and research projects. Students will earn 0.5 credits toward their high school transcript for public high school or obtain higher proficiency for private school subject placement exam. Year course

Spanish II (prerequisite: Spanish 1A and 1B)

This high school level II intermediate course requires basic knowledge of the target language. This course reinforces the fundamental skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students are required to manipulate increasingly more complex grammatical structures in their speech. Grammar skills are emphasized and taught within the context of the communicative objective. By the end of the year, students will be able to understand and discuss authentic materials. Specific cultural information is increasingly presented and discussed through additional readings and research projects. Students will earn 1 credit toward their high school transcript for public high school or obtain higher proficiency for private school subject placement exams. Year course

Students who complete the recommended courses of Spanish 1A and Spanish 1B will earn 1 high school credit. Students who complete the recommended courses of Spanish 1A, Spanish 1B, and Spanish II will leave THRS with 2 high school credits on their transcript. Private high schools may require a placement exam.
Interest and Competition Electives

Speech 6, 7, and 8

The purpose of the course will enable students to develop communication skills as well as self-confidence through the preparation and presentation of speeches. The content will include logical and critical-thinking, and techniques of public speaking such as body posture, eye contact, facial expression, voice tone, etc. Students will focus on informative and persuasive speeches Research using creditable sources will be addressed throughout this course. 

Semester

Contest Math 6, 7, and 8

MathCounts Competition Series is ideal for students who have a talent and passion for math and who would like to be challenged. The course is designed to improve skills in each of the TMSCA areas of competition: number sense, calculator, mathematics and science. Initially, students are tested and then work at their own pace to increase competency in one or more areas. Students will work in groups or individually. Students will engage in exciting, "bee-style" contests in which they will compete against and alongside other motivated students in the classroom, potentially qualifying for the local, state and national level. Evening, Saturday and/or weekend competition practices and meets may be required. Year course

Contest Science 6, 7, and 8

Contest Science students participate in various competitions throughout the year including, but not limited to, Junior Science Bowl and Science Olympiad, which are similar to academic track meets. By combining all aspects of science and engineering, Contest Science encourages a wide cross-section of students to get involved. Emphasis is placed on active, hands-on group participation. Teamwork is a required skill in most scientific careers today, and Contest Science encourages group learning by participating in various competitions that build alliances and academic expertise. Students could potentially qualify for the local, state and national level. Evening, Saturday and/or weekend competition practices and meets may be required. Year course

Broadcasting 7 and 8

This semester course provides the daily news broadcast covering all news and events at THRS. Students will learn all aspects of creating and running a TV news show and perform each job, including preparing and editing news copy, on-screen reporting, camera function, lighting, sound, and reporting. Semester
Introduction to Coding 6, 7, and 8

Coding is what makes it possible to create computer software, apps, and websites. A skill for our 21st Century Students will learn what coding is, the importance of knowing how to code, and create simple apps, games, or websites using the process of coding. Semester

Introduction to Computer Programming w/3D Animation 7 and 8
(Prerequisite: Intro to Coding)

This project-based, semester-long course teaches users programming in a 3D environment. Students will learn programming skills and will apply these in the design of characters, backgrounds and stories within the 3D environment. Students will develop logic and problem-solving skills that are necessary for more advanced programming courses. Semester