

# The Combined Arts Rotation

Art - Barbara Ryan

Music - Diane Muffitt and Stephen Murray

Applied Science - Hipolito Rivera

Technology Integration Specialist - Bethann Monahan

Media Specialist - Sara Ravid

Drama - Tom Large

Music Ensembles - Diane Muffitt, Stephen Murray, and Whitney Tandon

The classes included in our combined arts rotation are an integral part of our middle school's comprehensive curriculum. Early adolescence is a time for exploratory learning and the development of new skills: physical, social, and thinking. While the core curriculum classes (English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and World Languages) provide students with opportunities to develop their Linguistic Intelligence and their Logical-Mathematical Intelligence, the Combined Arts classes offer the chance to strengthen other intelligences such as Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, and Extrapersonal.\*

The curriculum in each of the arts classes is designed to challenge students' problem solving and critical thinking skills and to foster a greater sense of self-esteem. As students learn about engineering and design, try different art media, rehearse a Shakespearian play, or compose a simple melody, they begin to link up with the adult world through the awareness of new competencies and strengths.

\*For more information on the theory of multiple intelligences, see *Multiple Intelligences: the Theory in Practice* by Harvard psychologist, Howard Gardner. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 1993)

## **WMS Art Program- Barbara Ryan, Art Specialist**

In 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade art classes students experience a wide variety of exciting challenges, working in a variety of mediums to create 2-and 3 dimensional artwork.

Inherent to every project all Middle School students:

1. Are challenged to plan works of art that reflect what they “care about” so that they are engaged in work that is personally meaningful and expressing to their audience what is important to them at this time in their lives.
2. Exercise creative and problem solving/critical thinking skills as they explore and consider various art media, tools and techniques:
  - a. Comparing and contrasting visual and physical properties of mediums.
  - b. Making informed decisions as to which media, tools and techniques to use to achieve desired effects.
3. Create artwork with the understanding and utilization of the basics of art- the elements and principals of design.
4. Utilize past with new knowledge, skills and techniques. Students are always encouraged to “try something you’ve never done before”. At the end of each project students reflect upon their process, what was challenging, what they have learned and what they are most proud of.
5. Are led in a study of other artists from various times and cultures for inspiration, understanding and appreciation. We use “visual references” to practice creating realism in our art that we can then use as a “springboard” for our creativity.
6. Are encouraged to use their artwork to enrich and support learning in other areas of their curriculum. Past examples are wire creatures and botanical drawings for biology and composing poetry with their “favorite creatures” and watercolor collages and self-portrait paintings for language arts.
7. Allow the “artistic process” to take place and guide the artist to re-think use of media, process, direction and outcome and use “mistakes” to take on the challenge of making the work of art- WORK- visually, structurally and functionally.

*Artists learn that the fun part of the creative process are the experiences along the way often involving a kind of “co-creating” between the artist and the medium, resulting in an artwork that is even more exciting than originally planned!*

8. Practice the skill of keen observation/“seeing the world through artists’ eyes” giving students a better understanding of and appreciation for the miracles that are all around us, often over looked.

**The possibilities for creating beauty and impressive works in art are endless!**

# APPLIED SCIENCE IN TECHNOLOGY

Hipolito Rivera

*“Technology expands our capacities to understand the world and to control the natural human made environment. Technology asks questions like ‘How does this work?’ ‘How can this be done?’ and ‘How can this be done better?’ Owning the questions of technology requires that students engage in problem solving by designing, building and testing solutions.”*

- The Massachusetts Science and Technology Framework

## **6th Grade Applied Science:**

Before embarking on their design projects, the sixth graders will be introduced to the principles of the Universal Systems Model as they practice using the “design loop” with a “Diabolical Domino Drop”. The topics of Physical Science, such as aerodynamics, thrust, drag, and mass, are studied as the students design, construct, and test basswood CO<sub>2</sub> racecars. This unit culminates with students testing their designs in our Air Flow Visualization Tunnel and run full-speed passes on our test track.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Applied Science:**

The 7<sup>th</sup> grade year begins with an investigation of structures. Teams of students will study the forces of tension and compression as they experiment with structural shapes. They will design and construct various structures to very stringent guidelines, while using only a modest amount of materials. Destructive testing is then employed to determine the load-bearing capacity of each structure.

Finally, students are introduced to the science of flight. The forces of thrust, drag, lift, and gravity are studied and applied to student-built model aircraft.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Applied Science:**

Eighth grade students will be expected to have a working understanding of the proper and safe operation of all of the major tools in our shop by the end of the term. This will be accomplished through two woodworking projects.

The first project is a continuation of an Art project. The students will learn how to build wooden frames for their projects made in Art class.

For their final assignment, students will work on their “Personal Project”. They will be expected to implement their knowledge of design and tooling to come up with, design, and build a project which they feel passionate about.

In all classes, instruction is differentiated among large groups, small groups and individuals. Students are encouraged to work at their own pace, and to assist each other whenever necessary. Letter grades will be determined by effort, class participation, and completed projects. Extra help and free work time is always available upon request.

# THEATER ARTS

Tom Large

Theater Arts brings together a variety of skills and talents. In Theater Arts classes, student class work will concentrate on these four areas.

- **Public Speaking Skills:** Students will develop the fundamental skills essential to any type of public performance.
- **Reading Skills:** Students will experience the intensive reading that is required to interpret a script and prepare a role.
- **Theater Appreciation:** Students will experience the planning and preparation that is invested in the staging of a theatrical performance
- **Theater Literacy:** Students will work on and watch scenes from a broad variety of classical and contemporary plays.

The sixth grade class meets for approximately ten class sessions and focuses on the areas of storytelling, improvisation, and public speaking, including such fundamental performance skills as projection and articulation. Students perform monologues and dialogue scenes, and they are introduced to the works of Shakespeare by memorizing and reciting a soliloquy to their classmates.

The seventh and eighth grade classes meet for a full quarter, approximately twenty class sessions. Seventh graders rehearse a forty minute version of one of Shakespeare's plays and perform it for other seventh graders at the end of the term. This initial exposure to Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies prepares students to read the Shakespeare plays included in the eighth grade and senior high school English curricula. Eighth graders are introduced to a variety of modern American playwrights by rehearsing scenes from contemporary plays and performing them for other eighth grade students at the end of the term.

The Spring Musical, which commences preparation in November and goes up in March, involves the entire middle school community. All students who wish to perform are accepted as members of the cast of the production.

Parents who would enjoy assisting with set building, lighting, sound, painting, costumes, props, make-up, artwork, ticket sales, or refreshments are always welcome. Theater is a cross-generational community activity. I hope to see you!

# Technology

One term in the sixth grade combined arts rotation is divided between theatre arts and computer technology. For half of this term students will have class in the Library Media Center. These classes are designed to reinforce and build upon the students' abilities to use research and technology tools for finding and evaluating information, then organizing and presenting their work.

The computer technology program at Wayland Middle School supports instruction and learning in all areas of the curriculum. We do not have specific computer classes for the seventh and eighth grade as these skills are better learned in conjunction with the curriculum.

Wayland Public Schools is very excited to have a new computer network that incorporates the use of both Mac and Windows computers. The MS has 2 carts of 24 Dell netbook laptops, one cart of 25 Dell 5400 laptops, one cart of 25 Macbooks and one cart of 18 iBooks. There are two computer labs in the building, one located in the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade area that houses imac desktops and one in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade area that houses Dell thin clients.

This is the second year using Open Office on student machines. The program is free, available on both Windows and Mac computers, and is compatible with MS Office files. Having this program on home computers may help students bring files to and from school. Additionally, students have the ability to type, save and share files online with Google Documents. Not only will this provide one location to which students can save work and access from anywhere in the world, but it will facilitate group work with peers and digital submission of homework to teachers.

If you have any questions please email Bethann Monahan, Instructional Technology Specialist: [Beth\\_Monahan@wayland.k12.ma.us](mailto:Beth_Monahan@wayland.k12.ma.us)



## **Library Media Center**

### *Mission*

*The mission of the Wayland Middle School Library Media Center is to provide current, highly reviewed, curriculum-related materials and a variety of free reading options for its students. The Center also contributes resources that support information in new, growing areas of knowledge. The Center strives to open up avenues of research to all of its students by providing opportunities for instruction in research skills, information literacy, and media competency, while offering flexible scheduling for full class, small group, or individual research needs.*

In the sixth grade, students participate in the library research/technology class during one of the Specials rotations. This unit is team-taught by the Library Media Specialist and Technology Integration Specialist. Its focus is on locating and evaluating materials to create an annotated resource guide on a student-selected topic. Students develop an on-going list of keywords and substantiate their selection of resources (books, encyclopedias, subscribed database printouts, websites) as part of the research process. Intellectual property is discussed in the context of citation and in the process of locating Creative Commons images related to the topic.

Library faculty is closely attuned to the classroom curriculum and selects materials to support classroom activities and student interests. Together with the classroom teacher, we expose students to developmentally appropriate materials to foster an appreciation for all genres of literature. As students move through the Middle and Upper School, the Library Media Center provides a continuum of fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, CDs and DVDs on curriculum topics and of general interest. Students are able to check out materials during breaks, full class visits or from class with teacher permission. In each grade, the Library Media Specialist aids students in their development of the literacy skills necessary to being an independent learner and effective consumer of information across disciplines and learning styles.

In addition to our physical resources and those available via relationships with other libraries, the Center also provides access to a variety of electronic resources for the community's use from home or school. Many of these resources are available through our membership in the Massachusetts Library System. Both these, and our collection can be searched online via the school and library websites.

The Library's goal is to foster independent use of resources. Students should always feel comfortable to ask questions on where to find things, what procedures to follow, recommendations for good books to read, and more. Contests celebrating and promoting love of reading and development of research skills are held throughout the year. Students, parents and guardians are all welcome to volunteer in the Library. The Yearbook Photography Club continues to be a popular after school activity offered by the Center.

## GENERAL MUSIC

All students play instruments as they study melody, harmony, rhythm, musical form, improvisation, and composition. Each class is a hands-on music learning 'lab,' and may include reading music, practicing a song, playing by ear, improvising, singing, and listening.

In sixth grade music class, students learn to pluck melodies and strum harmonies on the Appalachian Mountain Dulcimer. They reinforce their rhythmic coordination and practice their reading skills by composing, and then playing, rhythm patterns with drumsticks. Students have the opportunity to expand their composing by adding melody and playing on xylophone, or by notating the piece using music notation software.

In grades seven and eight, students review the dulcimer then spend a portion of the term playing electronic keyboards. The piano unit for beginners includes the study of whole and half steps, scales, and beginning fingering. Experienced student pianists are encouraged to use their skills with MIDI keyboards and sequencing software, allowing them to mimic the sounds of other instruments and even entire ensembles.

Later in the term, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students are introduced to guitar. Students learn to read tablature, chord diagrams, and how to play simple chord sequences. Experienced student guitarists are encouraged to extend their repertoire and explore various online databases of guitar music.

Within each class there are students who have had little or no experience playing an instrument playing alongside students who are experienced in the playing, reading, and writing of music. Differentiated instruction is employed to assure that each student, regardless of ability or experience, is able to choose tasks that are challenging without being overwhelming. Students often work together in teams and help each other complete performance projects. The class is letter graded with the grade being based on effort and the completion of performance projects.

Students may request extra help from Mr. Murray and Ms. Muffitt during lunch or after school.

## MUSIC PERFORMANCE ENSEMBLES

Wayland Middle School proudly offers a full range of musical performance opportunities for students. As a member of these musical groups, a students can learn artistic expression and performance techniques, and see firsthand how personal responsibility, dedication and teamwork can result in a performance of which we can all be proud.

The large group ensembles rehearse two periods per week. In addition, members of the orchestras and bands have one sectional or workshop a few times per term. All three music areas also have a special ensemble that rehearses before and/or after school. (Select Chorus, Honors Chamber Orchestra, Jazz Band, and Stage Band).

Other opportunities for advanced musicians occur throughout the year; for example, advanced musicians in the seventh and eighth grades may audition for the Eastern Massachusetts Junior District ensembles. These auditions are very competitive. See the group's conductor if you have questions about eligibility.

The music ensembles are letter graded. Grades are based on attendance, quality of participation, responsibility, and individual improvement. The student is not graded according to his or her talent, but according to how he or she puts that talent to use. Practice, of course, is important to the grade and to the quality of the performance. The other extremely important responsibility is participation. Everyone must take part; everyone must make a personal contribution to the musical expression of the ensemble. Because attendance and participation are so crucial to the success of the group, all three teachers use it as a large part of the grade. If you or your child do not understand the grading policy, please speak to the conductor.

Please consult memos, newsletters, emails and websites regularly and put the concert dates on your calendar. Feel free to contact us at any time if you have questions.