

Westlake Middle School

Mt. Pleasant Central School District

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February 2018

Dear 7th Grade Parents,

We are beginning to schedule our students for next school year. As part of the transition to 8th grade, we provide all students with the opportunity to take advantage of challenging academic courses and electives. In 2018-2019, 8th grade students and families will be able to choose their course of study in science, mathematics and the arts. We believe that this decision, made collaboratively with your child, is a valuable learning experience.

In the area of science we are offering *Regents Earth Science*, *Regents Living Environment* and *Grade 8 Science*. *Earth Science* and *Living Environment* are high school, credit-bearing courses that have mid-term exams and culminate in a Regents examination. Both the Regents examination score and the final course average are recorded on the student's high school transcript. Students enrolled in *Grade 8 Science* will be administered the Grade 8 New York State Science Exam.

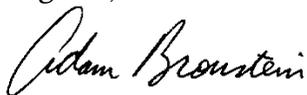
In the area of mathematics, students may choose between *Regents Algebra 1* or *Grade 8 Mathematics*. *Algebra 1*, similar to *Earth Science* and *Living Environment*, is a high school, credit-bearing course that has a mid-term exam and culminates in a Common Core Regents examination. Both the Regents examination score and the final course average are recorded on the student's high school transcript. Students enrolled in *Grade 8 Mathematics* will be administered the Grade 8 New York State Mathematics Exam.

In the area of electives, students will have a choice between *Band* or *Chorus*. These courses will last the entire school year and will meet two or three times per six-day cycle. Both our *Band* and *Chorus* ensembles will perform at a winter and spring concert.

We recognize that these are important decisions for you and your child, so we encourage you to discuss this with them. Our staff has compiled course descriptions (pg. 2) and possible high school pathways (pg. 3), which we hope will inform your choice. In addition, I suggest you reach out to your child's guidance counselor and classroom teachers for input about your child's performance, including their strengths and areas for growth.

Please complete the fourth page of this document and return it to our main office no later than Wednesday, March 14th.

Regards,



Dr. Adam Bronstein
Principal

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Grade 8 Academic Course Descriptions

Regents Earth Science

The Regents Earth Science course is devoted to the study of Earth's origin, history and processes (astronomy, meteorology, and geology), and utilizes the basic principles of physical science, mathematics, and some life science. Students are exposed to a rigorous learning environment in which they are expected to think critically, have strong reading, writing and math skills, and demonstrate a solid work ethic both inside and outside of class. Students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 30 lab reports (1200 minutes of laboratory work) in order to be eligible to take the New York State Regents final examination in June. The Regents exam grade and final course grade appear on the student's high school transcript.

Regents Living Environment

The Regents Living Environment course is focused on biology and ecology. It is the intent of this laboratory oriented course to provide the student with an awareness of the natural world, basic scientific concepts, stimulation of inductive reasoning, and a basic understanding of biological processes and generalizations. The laboratory component consists of a minimum of 30 lab reports (1200 minutes of laboratory work) which must be completed in order for a student to be eligible to take the New York State Regents final examination in June. The Regents exam grade and final course grade appear on the student's high school transcript.

Grade 8 Science

The General Science 8 course encompasses Chemistry, Earth Science, and Physics, and provides a foundation to study either Earth Science or Living Environment in 9th grade. Students explore topics such as the periodic table, the rock cycle and plate tectonics, astronomy, magnetism and electricity, Newton's Laws, and the electromagnetic spectrum. This course culminates in the New York State Science 8 Exam, which includes a written exam and a lab practical. The final course grade appears on the middle school report card, but not the high school transcript.

Regents Algebra 1

Algebra 1 is a high school level course that introduces students to advanced topics such as expressions and equations, functions, inequalities, quadratics, exponents, systems, and statistics. It targets highly motivated students with a strong work ethic and provides them with an in-depth level of instruction at an accelerated pace. The course encourages the development of algebraic problem solving skills, enhanced by the use of a graphing calculator. Students will take the Common Core Algebra 1 Regents exam in June. The Regents exam grade and the final course grade appear on the student's high school transcript.

Grade 8 Mathematics

The primary focus of the Mathematics 8 course is to build the foundation necessary for success in Algebra. Topics covered will concentrate on the skills and applications of the following: The Number System, Expressions & Equations, Functions, Geometry and Statistics. In addition, students will be introduced to operations with polynomials, which they will then study in more depth in their high school math courses. Students will take the Grade 8 New York State Mathematics Assessment in the spring and a final assessment in June. The final course grade appears on the middle school report card, but not the high school transcript.

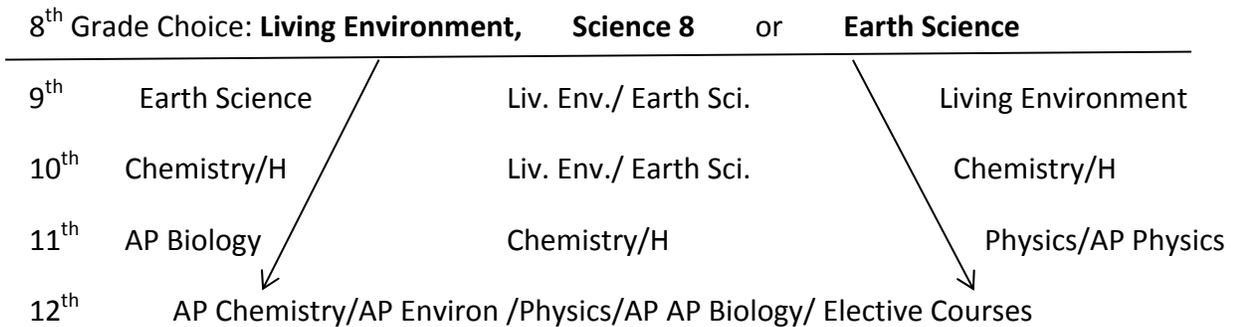
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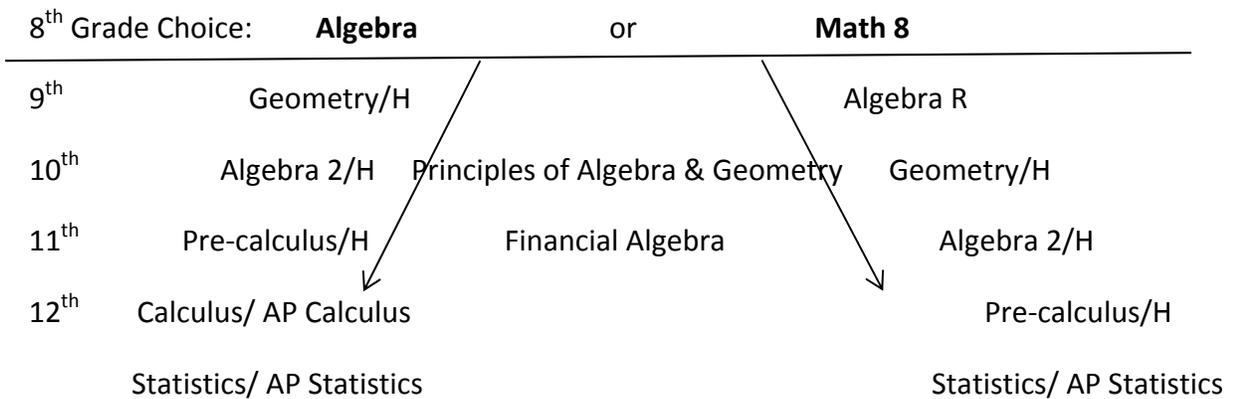
WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL

2018-2019

Possible Science Pathways:



Possible Math Pathways:



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Students Entering Grade 8
September 2018 ~ Course Selection Sheet

STUDENT NAME: _____

SCIENCE*

Please initial by your choice:

- ___ Regents Earth Science
- ___ Regents Living Environment
- ___ Grade 8 Science

MATHEMATICS*

Please initial by your choice:

- ___ Regents Algebra 1
- ___ Grade 8 Mathematics

MUSIC

Please initial by your choice:

- ___ Band
- ___ Chorus

Parent's Signature

Student's Signature

*Return this form to the
Westlake Middle School Main Office
by Wednesday, March 14th*

* While every attempt is made to honor academic course selections, course offerings are always based upon total student enrollment.