



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Middle School Education Guide 2019-2020



BODE



ROBIDOUX



SPRING GARDEN



TRUMAN

PAVING THE WAY TO COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

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Welcome to Middle School!

Middle school is an important transitional time that bridges the gap between the foundational years of elementary school and the increasing academic complexity of the high school level. The middle school experience has been designed to promote academic rigor in a safe and structured environment, while supporting the exploration of multiple academic disciplines and extracurricular activities.

The distinct nature of young adolescents guides the decision-making process about school organization, policies, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Our goal at the middle level is to ensure that every student learns and every member of the learning community is held to high expectations. Our teaching staff endeavors to provide all students with the knowledge and skills necessary to take responsibility for their lives, to address life's challenges, to function successfully at all levels of society, and to be creators of knowledge.

This educational guide shares important information about the district attendance policy, credit requirements, and the sequence of coursework at the middle school level. Middle school courses are designed to prepare students for advanced course sequences at the high school level. To better inform students as they develop a personal plan of study for high school, each middle school will tour Hillyard Technical Center during the 8th grade year.

Middle school is an exciting time of exploration and new adventures for students. Please use this course catalog as a resource to explore the variety of learning experiences at the middle level. We are excited that your student has joined us for middle school and look forward to partnering with you to support a smooth transition to their next level of learning.

Tips for a Successful Middle Level Transition

Make Attendance a Priority. Missouri requires students to attend school 90% of the school year. Students cannot learn if they are not in attendance. Levels of chronic absenteeism have been found to accurately predict whether students graduate from high school. The middle school years are essential to keep students on track for high school and post-secondary success.

Prepare for Change. Students are no longer in elementary. This is an inevitable and natural part of adolescent development. They will test boundaries and sometimes do things you never thought they would do. Sometimes they act one way around parents and another around their friends. They all have the ability to make bad choices. We just need to be there to help them recover and experience the natural consequences.

Get Involved. Middle school is a transitional time for adolescents, which can prove exciting and scary for students and parents. Getting involved in a club or athletic activity is a great way for your student to make friends and discover previously unknown talents. Everyone learns by doing and the middle years are all about jumping in, trying new things, and collaborating with others. Together we are better, encourage your student to move beyond their comfort zone and get involved with school activities!

How Attendance Supports Learning

Research shows a direct relationship between regular school attendance and student learning outcomes (Gottfried, 2010; Lamdin, 1996; London, Sanchez & Castrechini, 2016; Roby, 2004). There is no substitute for a missed instructional opportunity due to chronic absence. Students can't learn if they aren't present. The early years of elementary school are essential to develop literacy, numeracy and social skills (Applied Survey Research, 2011). According to Sparks (2011), "a student who can't read on grade level by 3rd grade is four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than a child who does read proficiently by that time." If poverty is added as a factor then the below grade level student is 13 times less likely to graduate on time than their his/her proficient or wealthier peer (Sparks, 2011).

Poor attendance during the elementary years widens skill gaps that may prove difficult to impossible to overcome through remedial efforts (Attendance Works, 2014). Research indicates that absenteeism in middle and high school can accurately predict high school dropout rates (Balfanz & Chang, 2016; Ginsburg, Jordan & Chang, 2014). Habits such as regular school attendance become lifelong habits that inform workforce readiness in later years. Regular school attendance is critical for our children's future economic well-being. Statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics suggest a strong correlation between educational attainment, employment, and weekly earnings.

District Attendance Policies

Regular school attendance is [compulsory by law](#) (Section 167.11) and by the Board of Education policy for every child between ages 7 and 17, unless the child is excepted by law and unless situations should arise over which the child or his or her parents or legal guardians have no control. The Missouri requirement for school attendance is for 90% of students to be in attendance 90% of the time. Continued absences of those under 17 years of age will be handled in accordance with the law.

Once a student has missed two (2) class periods in a semester their teacher will contact the parent via phone call, email or letter. The teacher will document the date of the communication. Once a student has missed four (4) class periods in a semester a letter will be mailed home from the school principal. This notification will be documented in student records and a copy of the letter will be placed in the student's permanent file. Once a student has missed six (6) class periods in a semester a letter will be mailed home from the school principal. A phone call will be made to request a parent meeting. This notification and parent meeting will be documented in student records and a copy of the letter will be placed in the student's permanent file. When a student reaches eight (8) days, the school will send an informational letter to the parents, regardless of prior contact by phone or conference. Students in grades K-8 shall be allowed no more than ten (10) absences per school year. On the eleventh (11) absence, the student will be required to attend summer school as a condition of promotion and an informational letter will be mailed home to parents.

Grading Scales, Grade Point Averages, and Late Work

Academic Achievement

The evaluation of the academic achievement of students in the school district is based on the premise that students have diverse capabilities, interests and individual patterns of growth and learning. In accordance with [Board Policy IK](#), a five-letter scale is used to assign grades and report progress. Special symbols and terms appropriate to non graded programs may also be used to indicate student progress. The following grading scale is used at the middle school level in the St. Joseph School District.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>GPA Points</i>
A	94-100%	4.00
A-	93-90%	3.75
B+	87-89%	3.25
B	83-86%	3.00
B-	80-82%	2.75
C+	77-79%	2.25
C	73-76%	2.00
C-	70-72%	1.75
D+	67-69%	1.25
D	63-66%	1.00
D-	60-62%	0.75
F	0-59%	0.00

Parents will be alerted and conferred with as soon as possible when a student's performance or attitude becomes unsatisfactory or shows marked or sudden deterioration (Policy IK).

Grade Point Averages

All full-credit courses which carry one-half unit of the credit for one semester's work will count in the GPA computation. Under the middle school grading scale, a student's semester GPA will be derived by dividing total points earned in classes by the total number of full-credit courses in which the student was enrolled during the semester.

Make-Up Work Due to Absence

Students have one day to make up missed assignments for each day absent.

Academic Recognitions

Our schools are excited to celebrate the accomplishments of your student throughout the year. Please note that specific recognitions vary according to school. Information about academic recognitions at your student's school can be found in their student handbook.

Understanding the Importance of Academic Credits

What is a Credit?

Students earn academic credit upon completion of the board approved criteria for coursework. Academic credit is based upon the length of time a course meets throughout a semester or year. Courses that meet daily throughout the year are worth one (1) credit. Courses that meet every other day throughout the year, or daily for one semester are worth a half (0.5) credit.

Why do Credits Matter?

- High school students are required to earn 24.5 credits to graduate.
- The number of credits a student earns impacts their eligibility for athletic or extracurricular activities in grades 7-12 that are sanctioned by MSHSAA, or the Missouri State High School Activities Association.
- Selective post-secondary programs at Hillyard Technical Center along with colleges and universities require students to earn specific credits (e.g., math, science) in addition to the general credit requirements.

Promotion, Placement, and Retention Procedures

Promotion

Middle school students will earn promotion to the next grade by earning at least 6 credits of the total curriculum, and earning at least 4 credits from the core academic subjects (Mathematics, Reading, Writing, Science and Social Studies). Credits are earned in a given subject when a student achieves a four-quarter grade average of A, B, C, or D on the district grading scale.

Placement

At the discretion of the principal, students whose academic work for the school year does not meet the specified minimum requirement for promotion may be placed if: (a) in the judgment of the teacher(s), the student is working to capacity; (b) the student has two prior retentions; (c) the retention may cause more adjustment difficulties; and (d) the student's physical, emotional, or social growth significantly exceeds the academic growth.

Retention

The student does not meet requirements for promotion, lack of schooling due to poor attendance, and whether the social, emotional, or physical development is such that progress in the next grade is questionable.

Timeline for Promotion and Retention Decisions

Teachers will review with their principal by March 1 all students who may fail a course. Advisement/first period teachers will inform parents of the possible failure before and during the third quarter conference. Written evidence of this contact will be placed in the student's records. Teachers will submit to the principal a list of all students expected to fail their courses two weeks before school is out. The principal or designee will review the lists and inform the students and their parents of the possible course failures before school is out. Parents shall be given the opportunity to express their opinion concerning the proposed action.

Principals will make the final binding decision before the end of the school year. Students who have earned 5 total credits can be promoted upon the successful completion of summer school. A retention review committee at the building level will be convened if a student is required to attend summer school and fails to successfully complete summer school. As part of the review process, Light's Retention Scale will be used by the team to inform decision-making about retention in the current grade. Before a third retention can be assigned, a principal must obtain prior approval of the Director of Secondary Education.

Mandatory Summer School

If a student does not meet the credit requirement of 6 total credits and a minimum of 4 credits from the core academic subjects (Mathematics, Reading, Writing, Science and Social Studies), they will be required to successfully complete the Secondary Summer School Program, per Board Policy IKE. Parents and guardians will be contacted by their student's school at the end of the first semester and during the third quarter if their student is likely to be required to attend summer school.

A retention review committee at the building level will be convened if a student is required to attend summer school and fails to successfully complete summer school. As part of the review, the Light's Retention Scale will be used by the team to inform decision-making.

MSHSAA Eligibility

If a student does not meet the aforementioned credit requirement by the end of the second semester, they may lose eligibility per the MSHSAA guidelines and the St. Joseph School District guidelines for middle school or high school activities.

Overview of Course Offerings by Department

Course Name	Grades	Terms Offered	^ Locations
English Language Arts	6	Year	R S
Reading	7-8	Year	B R S T
Writing	7-8	Year	B R S T
Science	6	Year	R S
Science	7-8	Year	B R S T
Social Studies	6	Year	R S
Social Studies	7-8	Year	B R S T
Math	6	Year	R S
Math	7	Year	B R S T
Advanced Math	7	Year	B R S T
Math	8	Year	B R S T
Algebra I	8	Year	B R S T
*Geometry	*8	Year	B
Careers	7-8	Semester	R S T
Computer Apps	7-8	Semester	R S T
Business Technology	7-8	Semester	B R S T
Entrepreneurship	7-8	Semester	B R S T
Physical Education	6-8	Year	B R S T
Health	7-8	Semester	B R S T
French	7-8	Semester	T
Spanish	7-8	Semester	B R S T
Art	7-8	Semester	B R S T
Art Advanced	8	Semester	B S T
Band	6-8	Year	B R S T
Choir	8	Year	B R S T
Music	6-7	Semester	B R S T
Strings	6-8	Year	B R S T
PLTW - Automation & Robotics	7-8	Semester	B R S T
PLTW - Computer Science for Innovators and Makers	7-8	Semester	T
PLTW - Design & Modeling	7-8	Semester	B R S T
PLTW - Apps Creator	8	Semester	T
PLTW - Medical Detectives	8	Semester	B
Gifted and Talented Education	6-8	Year	B R S T

^ Bode (B), Robidoux (R), Spring Garden (S), and Truman (T).

* Geometry is offered as an online, high school level course.

Advanced Math **1** **Full Year** **7** **B R S T**

This course is a compacted version of priority concepts taken from both the 7th and 8th grade Missouri Learning Standards which include the following seven critical areas: (1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; (3) 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 (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples; (5) 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; (6) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (7) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

Math **1** **Full Year** **8** **B R S T**

In this course, student learning will focus on three critical areas of the Missouri Learning Standards: (1) 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; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

Algebra I **1** **Full Year** **8** **B R S T**

This is a full-year honors course developed with the fundamental purpose to formalize and extend mathematics that students learned in the middle grades. Because it is built on the middle grades Missouri Learning Standards this is a more ambitious version of Algebra I than has generally been offered. The priority standards deepen and extend understanding of linear and exponential relationships by contrasting them with each other and by applying linear models to data that exhibit a linear trend, and students engage in methods for analyzing, solving, and using quadratics functions. This course includes some additional Core Academic Standards typically in a fourth year class to prepare students for taking upper level math sooner.

Geometry **1** **Full Year** ***8** **B**

This is a full-year, online high school course developed with the fundamental purpose to formalize and extend student's geometric experiences from the middle grades. Students explore more complex geometric situations and deepen their explanations of geometric relationships, moving towards more formal mathematical arguments. Transformations are emphasized along with introductory content toward the conceptual category found in the high school Missouri Learning Standards.

** This is an online course at the high school level.*

Social Studies

COURSE	CREDITS	TERM	GRADES	SCHOOLS
Social Studies	1	Full Year	6	R S
<p>Sixth grade social studies will focus on the principles expressed in the documents shaping constitutional democracy in the United States, the continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States and the world, the principles and processes of governance systems, economic concepts and principles, the major elements of geographical study and analysis and their relationships to change in society and environment, relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions, and the use of tools of social science inquiry.</p>				
Social Studies	1	Full Year	7	B R S T
<p>Seventh grade social studies is a survey course that has an emphasis on Ancient and Medieval history. Students study the important geographical, cultural, political, and economic features that will set the foundation for modern society. Students will develop and employ specific thinking and problem solving skills.</p>				
Social Studies	1	Full Year	8	B R S T
<p>Eighth grade Early United States History is a course that will focus on the development of the United States up to and through the Civil War. Students will specifically study colonization, the formation of the United States' government, westward expansion, and the Civil War. Students will develop and employ critical thinking and problem solving skills.</p>				

Health & Physical Education

COURSE	CREDITS	TERM	GRADES	SCHOOLS
Health	0.5	Semester	6	R S
<p>This course is designed to provide high quality learning experiences so that students may lead a healthier life. Healthy behaviors, the most important predictors of current and future health status, are influenced by a variety of factors that include awareness and knowledge of health issues, skills necessary to develop healthy behaviors, and opportunities to practice these behaviors. The 6th grade curriculum is comprised of 10 content areas: Body System; Social and Emotional and Mental Health; Health and Wellness; Nutrition; Consumer Health and Safety; Life Management Skills; Diseases; Injury Prevention and Safety; Alcohol and Tobacco and other Drugs; Environmental Health. This course will provide students with opportunities to explore concepts in depth, analyze and solve real life-problems, work cooperatively on tasks that develop and enhance their conceptual understanding, and develop physical and social skills necessary for a healthy, active lifestyle now and in the future.</p>				

Business & Marketing

COURSE	CREDITS	TERM	GRADES	SCHOOLS
Careers	0.5	Semester	7-8	B R S T
<p>Careers assists students in developing a general knowledge of career opportunities available in each of the six career pathways. Students will analyze the connection between school and the workplace and identify the skills necessary for success. Tomorrow's jobs will require more knowledge, better skills, and more flexible workers than ever before. This course links what students learn in school with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life.</p>				
Computer Apps	0.5	Semester	7-8	B R S T
<p>The course will provide students with the appropriate skills to use word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Work will emphasize understanding of proper keyboarding techniques. This course provides a foundation of skills used in both personal and classroom computer-based activities.</p>				
Business Technology	0.5	Semester	7-8	B R S
<p>Students will explore technology as it is used in business. Students will learn information technology basics, cloud based computing, how social media is used in business, importance of domain names, as well begin learning web design.</p>				
Entrepreneurship	0.5	Semester	7-8	B R S T
<p>In this course students will learn what makes a business successful. They will learn the basic fundamentals of running and managing a business.</p>				

World Languages

COURSE	CREDITS	TERM	GRADES	SCHOOLS
French 1A	0.5	Semester	7-8	T
During one semester of French, students will learn basic expressions, vocabulary, grammar concepts, geography, and culture from the target language.				
French 1B	0.5	Semester	7-8	T
In one semester of French 1B, students will review basic expressions and concepts learned during Semester 1A, in addition to expanding their study of vocabulary, grammar concepts, geography, and culture from the target language.				
Spanish 1A	0.5	Semester	7-8	B R S T
During one semester of Spanish, students will learn basic expressions, vocabulary, grammar concepts, geography, and culture from the target language.				
Spanish 1B	0.5	Semester	7-8	B R S T
In one semester of Spanish 1B, students will review basic expressions and concepts learned during Spanish 1A, in addition to expanding their study of vocabulary, grammar concepts, geography, and culture from the target language.				

Project Lead the Way Gateway

COURSE	CREDITS	TERM	GRADES	SCHOOLS
Automation & Robotics	0.5	Semester	8	B R S T
Students trace the history, development, and influence of automation and robotics as they learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Students use the VEX Robotics® platform to design, build, and program real-world objects such as traffic lights, toll booths, and robotic arms.				
Design & Modeling	0.5	Semester	7-8	B R S T
Students discover the design process and develop an understanding of the influence of creativity and innovation in their lives. They are then challenged and empowered to use and apply what they've learned throughout the unit to design a therapeutic toy for a child who has cerebral palsy.				
App Creators	0.5	Semester	8	T
This unit will expose students to computer science by computationally analyzing and developing solutions to authentic problems through mobile app development, and will convey the positive impact of the application of computer science to other disciplines and to society.				
Computer Science for Innovators and Makers	0.5	Semester	7-8	T
Throughout the unit, students will learn about programming for the physical world by blending hardware design and software development, allowing students to discover computer science concepts and skills by creating personally relevant, tangible, and shareable projects.				
Medical Detectives	0.5	Semester	8	B
Students play the role of real-life medical detectives as they collect and analyze medical data to diagnose disease. They solve medical mysteries through hands-on projects and labs, measure and interpret vital signs, dissect a sheep brain, investigate disease outbreaks, and explore how a breakdown within the human body can lead to dysfunction.				

Performing Arts

COURSE	CREDITS	TERM	GRADES	SCHOOLS
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Beginning Band **1** **Year** **6** **R S**

This course will focus on teaching the basic fundamentals necessary to play a wind or percussion instrument. In this course, students will play one of the following instruments; flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone, or percussion (mallets & drums). At the beginning of the year, students will be tested on various instruments and then assigned a specific instrument. After an instrument is assigned, the student should acquire the instrument through purchase or rental. This course is designed to meet for a minimum of thirty minutes, twice each week. As students learn basic fundamentals, opportunities for performance will be made available.

Band **1** **Year** **7-8** **B R S T**

This course continues the development of basic fundamentals necessary to play a wind or percussion instrument. Emphasis will be placed on developing the Eleven Elements of Ensemble Musicianship (1. Right Notes, 2. Right Rhythms, 3. Dynamics, 4. Tempo, 5. Style, 6. Articulation, 7. Intonation, 8. Balance/Blend, 9. Phrasing, 10. Precision, 11. Appearance) Further emphasis is placed on the physical characteristics for playing a wind or percussion instrument. Students will be exposed to a variety of appropriate band literature through performance. This course is designed to meet for a minimum of 42 minutes, daily. Opportunities for Evaluative Festivals and Honor Bands are available to students in this course.

Choir **1** **Year** **8** **B R S T**

Concert choir is a performance class that focuses on the joy of singing within a large ensemble. We will learn how to do this by studying the voice as an instrument, through sight-reading and theory, and of course by singing amazing choral literature!

Music **0.5** **Semester** **6** **R S**

General Music emphasizes the tools with which to make music happen. Along with perfecting the use of "every ones' natural instrument," - the voice, students gain thorough knowledge of reading, writing and creating at his or her age-appropriate level using both vocal and instrumental genres. In addition, the studies of styles of music, composers of music, art in music, and the pure love of music are all stressed.

Music **0.5** **Semester** **7** **B R S T**

Students will learn the fundamentals of singing, basic musicianship, and start learning to sight-read music while performing a variety of musical selections. Students will also be introduced to the anatomy of the voice and how vocal music fits into musical history. This is a semester class, but students may participate in an extra-curricular singing club if they desire to participate in vocal music all year.

Gifted and Talented Education

COURSE	CREDITS	TERM	GRADES	SCHOOLS
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GATE	-	Year	6	R S
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The GATE program is held one day a week at Carden Park Elementary School. The overall design of the units developed in this coursework is centered in real-world, authentic experiences—having students work as a professional would. Learning experiences are rich with problem solving, critical thinking, communication, and responsibility. Students are able to explore loosely framed problems issues, which are interdisciplinary in nature, with open-ended products. In addition, students engaged in the SJSD gifted curriculum will engage in collaboration and utilize technology to facilitate 21st century learning.

Pre-AP Courses	-	Year	7-8	B R S T
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The Pre-AP model offers ELA, Science, and Math options for gifted students. This approach maintains access to advanced coursework at the secondary level while providing instruction at each students home school. Learn more about the Pre-AP Course approach at the following link: <https://pre-ap.collegeboard.org/about/overview>.



Middle School is just one step on the journey toward college and career readiness. Visit the link below to learn about the specialized career pathways in the St. Joseph School District.

<https://www.sjsd.k12.mo.us/Page/26635>