

Making Choices for 8th Grade

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7th Grade Counselors



Agenda

- Courses for Next Year
- High School Graduation Requirements
- High School Option Programs
- Course Selection Process

8th Grade Course Information

- All core classes must be passed in order to promote to grade 9
- A grade of high C or higher is generally a good indicator that you are ready to move to the next level of math or a world language

High School Credit Courses:

- Count toward high school graduation requirements
- Appear on your high school transcript that is sent with your college applications
- Factored into your grade point average (GPA)

8th Grade Courses

7 Courses Total


- English (Regular/Intensified)
- Science (Regular/Intensified)
- World Geography*
(Regular/Intensified)
- Math
 - Pre-Algebra for 8th Graders
 - Algebra I*
 - Algebra I Intensified*
 - Geometry Intensified*

*Math recommendations made in the
spring*

- Health and P.E.
- 2 electives (choose one of the combinations below)
 - 2 full year courses
OR
 - 1 full year course + 2 semester courses
OR
 - 4 semester courses

* = high school credit

Comparing the Courses

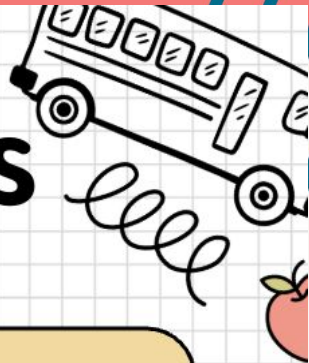


Cover the same content standards

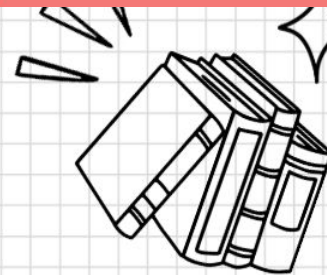
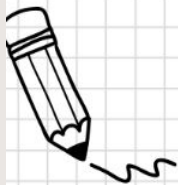
Take the same SOL assessments

Practice the same disciplinary skills

Provide the same opportunities looking toward high school



So, what is the difference?



Intensified delves deeper into the topics

Intensified use more critical thinking and analytical skills

General introduces topics and provides exploration into ideas.

General guides students to use critical thinking and analytical skills with structured support.

Intensified engages students to apply and investigate content to personal interests.

Intensified is for students who want to "nerd out" in a content area.

General provides students opportunities to investigate the content related to the real-world.

General is for students who enjoy a topic but it is not their passion.





Example Civics

Intensified

Do constitutional rights protect citizen while balancing individual freedoms with collective responsibilities? Explain

General

Explain how the Constitution addresses individual freedoms with collective responsibilities.

How to choose...

Talk with your student, do they want to delve deep into a content or do they want to learn the content?
What is their passion?

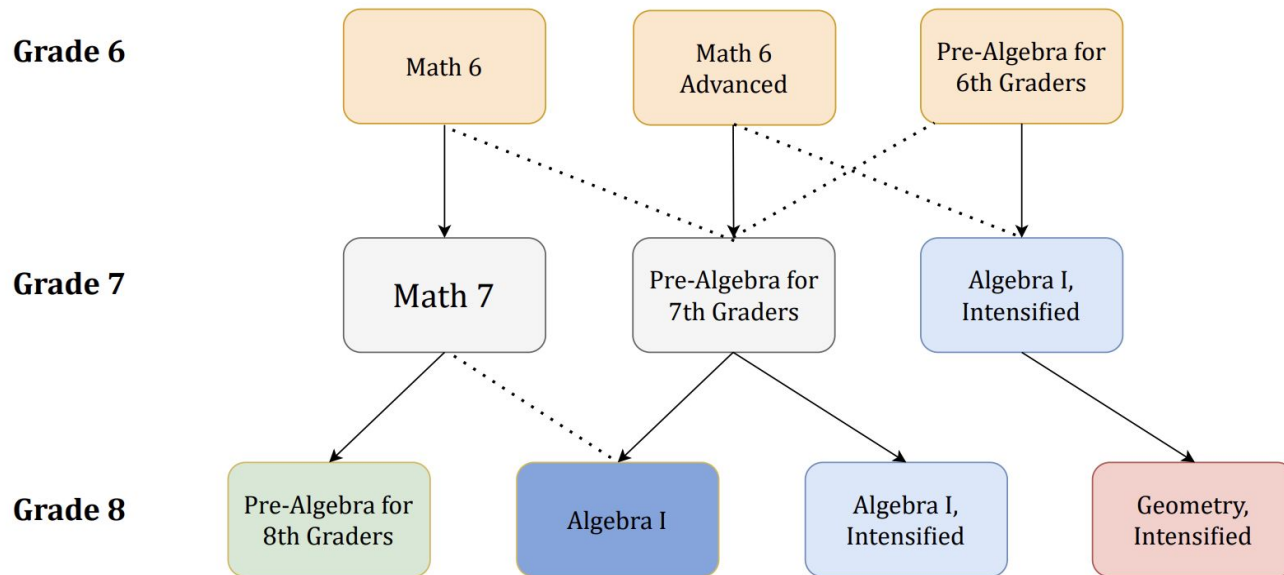
Follow rabbit trails
Nerd out
Passion

Intensified

Enjoys the learning
Does well

General

Arlington Public Schools Middle School Mathematics Progression, SY 2026 - 2027



- Students needing additional support may be concurrently enrolled in Math 6, Math 7, or Pre-Algebra 8 along with an associated Math Strategies course, where available.

Math recommendations will be sent in the summer

County Math Recommendations

- Recommendations are determined from multiple data points and communicated in the summer.
- When you receive your recommendation, if you have questions/concerns about your child's recommendation, you will be directed to contact Laura Partridge (Laura.Partridge@apsva.us), Swanson's math coach.
- IMPORTANT: If your child is currently enrolled in math 7 and you are considering algebra for them in 8th grade, please contact Laura Partridge now to discuss.

Electives

You will have 2 elective periods

You can choose a combination of full-year and semester (half-year) electives

Option A: 2 Full-Year Electives	Option B: 1 Full-Year Elective AND 2 Semester Electives	Option C: 4 Semester Electives
Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Band (full-year)● Spanish II (full-year)	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● French I (full-year)● Visual Art (semester)● Drama (semester)	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Visual Art (semester)● Drama (semester)● Life Management (semester)● Technological Systems (semester)

Full Year Electives

World Languages - Level I or II

**All full-year language courses are high school credit classes.*

- Spanish
- Spanish for Fluent Speakers
- French
- Latin
- Chinese
- Arabic

WORLD LANGUAGE ELECTIVE OPTIONS

Languages Offered:

Arabic

Chinese

French

Latin

Spanish

Spanish for Fluent Speakers (SFS)

Advanced Studies Diploma

Minimum World Language requirements for students to be eligible to earn an *Advanced Studies Diploma* upon graduation:

- Three years of one language
 - *Arabic 1, 2, & 3*
- OR**
- Two years of two languages
 - *Spanish 1 & 2 and ASL 1 & 2*

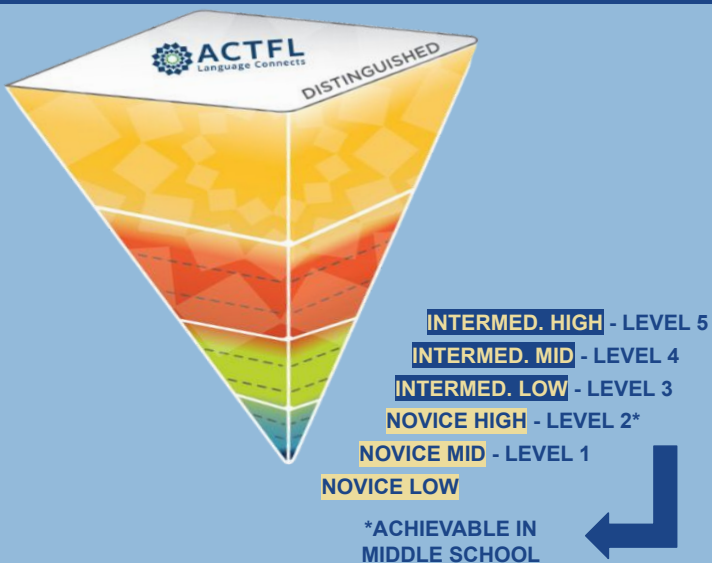


* All full-year language courses are high school credit-bearing courses.

SAMPLE WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRESSION

(Intro, Wheel, & Exploratory courses may be offered in 6th Grade)

	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Start in 7th	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5/DE/IB 1	AP/IB 2
Start in 8th	-	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5/DE
Start in 9th	-	-	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4



WORLD LANGUAGE EXPECTATIONS & SUPPORTS

- Students should take a language in middle school with the **intent of reaching the highest level/most rigorous coursework** offered in high school
(Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate)
- Students have an opportunity to test for and earn eligibility for the **Seal of Biliteracy** embedded in their upper-level coursework
- Aside from Virginia Advanced Studies Diploma requirements, many universities are looking to see **four years of language learning in high school**
(Building on work done in middle school; committing to the 2nd language if switching after two years)

BENEFITS OF LEARNING ANOTHER LANGUAGE

- Enhanced problem-solving & self-confidence
- Improved verbal and spatial abilities
- Improved memory function
- Increased standardized test scores
- Increased flexible and creative thinking
- Expanded vocabulary in native language
- Expanded perspective of associated culture

Full Year Electives

**high school credit course*

- Band
- Orchestra
- Chorus
- Yearbook (*application required*)
- Technology of Robotic Design (*high school credit class*)

Semester Electives

- Visual Arts
- Theater
- Computer & Internet Tech (computer skills)
- Life Management (budgeting, cooking, sewing, etc.)
- Tech Systems (designing, building, evaluating engineering systems)

Support Electives Offered by Staff Recommendation

- Structured Literacy
- Reading
- Math Strategies
- Instructional Studies
- Social Skills

Program of Studies

The APS Program of Studies contains all course descriptions
for your reference:

<https://catalog.apsva.us/middle-school-program-of-studies>

Virginia High School Graduation Requirements

Vocabulary

Credit : You receive 1 credit for passing a high school level class

Verified credit : You receive a verified credit when you pass the high school class AND the SOL for that class

Transcript : record of your grades, attendance, and test scores

Diploma Options

Standard Diploma:

- 22 credits total
- 5 must be “verified”

Advanced Diploma:

- 26 credits total
- 5 must be “verified”
- Must take 3 years of a language or 2 years of one language, and 2 of another.

Standard Diploma

Discipline Area	Standard Unit of Credit Required	Verified Credits Required
English (reading and writing)	4	2
Mathematics	3	1
Science	3	1
History & Social Sciences	3	1
Health & Physical Education	2	
World Languages Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education	2	
Economics & Personal Finance	1	
Electives	4	
Total	22	5

Advanced Diploma

Discipline Area	Standard Unit of Credit Required	Verified Credits Required
English (reading & writing)	4	2
Mathematics	4	1
Science	4	1
History & Social Sciences	4	1
World Languages	3	
Health & Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education	1	
Economics & Personal Finance	1	
Electives	3	
Total	26	5

High School Option Programs

International Baccalaureate (IB)

- Internationally recognized program of studies available at W-L with a focus on the global perspective
- Students who want to transfer submit a pre-IB application during the fall of 8th grade year; no application necessary if your neighborhood school is W-L.
- Lottery system

Important when considering language and math courses for next year:

- **Students must have 2 consecutive years of world language in middle school (starting in 7th grade) and be enrolled in Algebra I or higher in 8th grade**

More info: <https://wl.apsva.us/international-baccalaureate-program/>



High School Option Programs

Arlington Tech

- Rigorous, project based learning: Students collaborate on open-ended projects and apply classroom content to real-world problems and relevant questions.
- Collaborative problem solving
- Prepares students for college courses and workplace
- *Students must pass the math SOL they take in 7th grade*



High School Option Programs

Thomas Jefferson

Fairfax County high school that emphasizes science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

- Interested students apply in **8th grade**
- In order to be eligible to apply, students must:
 - a. End 7th grade with a final GPA of 3.5 or higher
 - b. Must take Algebra I Intensified or higher and Intensified Science
 - c. Intensified English OR Intensified World Geography
 - d. Eligibility requirements and admissions can change each year - to learn more, visit:
<https://www.fcps.edu/tjadmissions>



Course Selection Process

- Students will select their courses using the online platform School Links
- This is a program students also use to explore careers and college options



Course Selection Timeline

- **Today:** Students participated in a lesson previewing their course options
- **Thursday (2/12) and Friday (2/13) of this week:** Students will participate in lessons with counselors to select courses. They will come home with a worksheet to share with parents, along with their School Links choices.
- **By Feb 19:** students need to consult with family and submit their plan on School Links.
- Counselors approve the plan within 2 school day of submission
- **By Feb 27:** parents approve the plan in School Links

Families will receive a Parent Square message this week with all the information for course selection.



Questions?