

# Making Choices for 8th Grade

Ms. Goodwyn, Ms. Armston, Ms. Ortiz  
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 8<sup>th</sup> 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

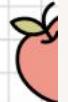
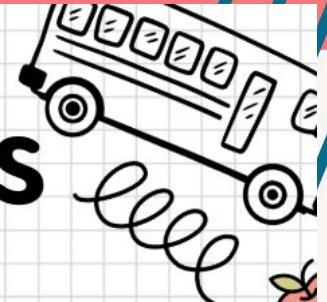
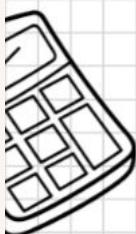
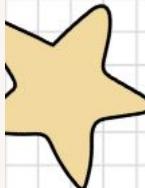
# Comparing the Courses

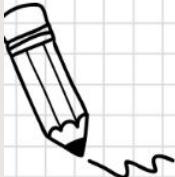
Cover the same content standards

Take the same SOL assessments

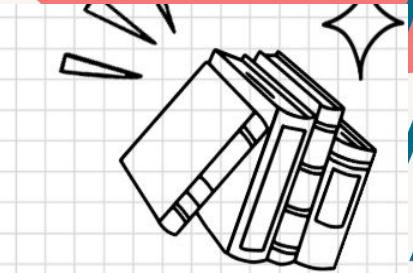
Practice the same disciplinary skills

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.

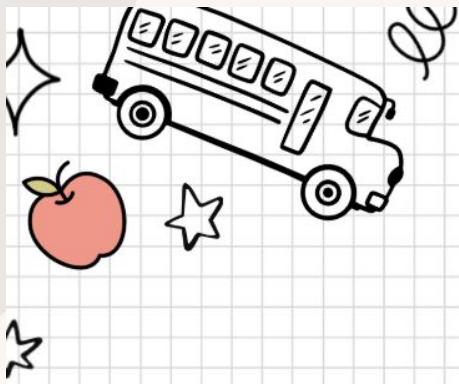
• General guides students to use critical thinking and analytical skills with structured support.

• 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.



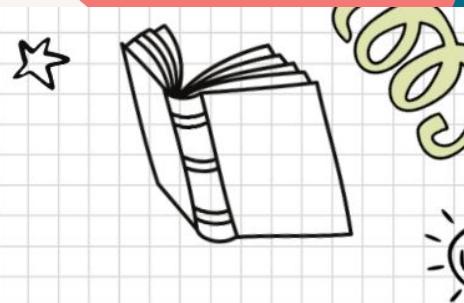
# Example Civics

## 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?

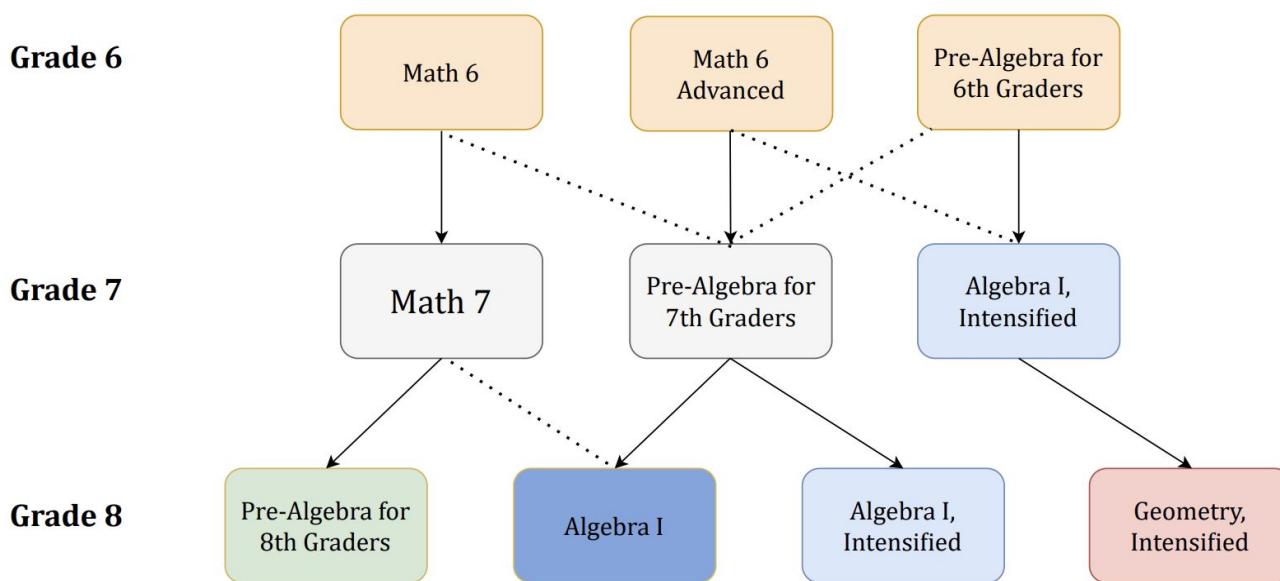
Follow rabbit trails  
Nerd out  
Passion

Enjoys the learning  
Does well

**Intensified**

**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](mailto: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"><li>• Band (full-year)</li><li>• Spanish II (full-year)</li></ul>	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French I (full-year)</li><li>• Visual Art (semester)</li><li>• Drama (semester)</li></ul>	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visual Art (semester)</li><li>• Drama (semester)</li><li>• Life Management (semester)</li><li>• Technological Systems (semester)</li></ul>

# 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
- Two years of two languages
  - Spanish 1 & 2 and ASL 1 & 2

**OR**

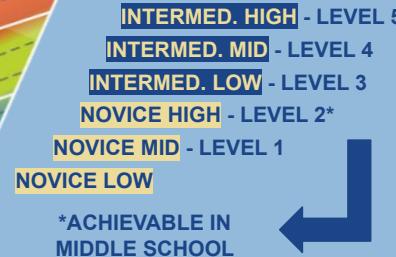


\* All full-year language courses are high school credit-bearing courses.

## 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

<b>Discipline Area</b>	<b>Standard Unit of Credit Required</b>	<b>Verified Credits Required</b>
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	
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>

# 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	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>5</b>

# 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?