

Solis Park  
Middle School  
**COURSE HANDBOOK**



**2023 – 2024**

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# LANGUAGE ARTS COURSES

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 6 (Embedded Honors):**

The language arts curriculum is a literature-based program designed to develop students' abilities to read critically and write confidently in all subject areas. Students will focus on reading comprehension of both literary and informational text, literary response and analysis, writing strategies and conventions, oral language, and research skills. Students encounter literature from many genres and receive a mixture of culturally diverse works. Reading instruction includes novel studies, anthologies, and expository texts. Writing instruction will follow the writing process and will take students from pre-writing through revision and ultimate publications. Spelling and language mechanics are taught through direct instruction. Students are accountable for spelling and mechanics in all written assignments. Student assessment will include written assignments, research-based projects, comprehension questions, and open-ended projects. Active learning and higher level thinking skills are incorporated through hands-on experiences, which include process writing pieces, cooperative learning, and project-based learning. English Learners will be provided instruction for English language and literacy skill development that is targeted to their English proficiency levels and aligned with state content standards and curriculum frameworks in Language Arts.

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 7 (Embedded Honors):**

The seventh grade language arts curriculum prepares students to master the Common Core Standards by building skills in reading comprehension, literary response and analysis, and vocabulary development. Etymology is an important component of vocabulary instruction. Students grow to understand how different structures are used to communicate meaning through the reading of culturally and historically significant literary works. Students read novels, short stories, essays, and poetry. Reading skills, literary analysis, and higher-level comprehension work are incorporated, using the Common Core Standards as a guide. The writing component of the language arts curriculum focuses on different kinds of writing, such as narration, informational, argument, persuasion, research, and response to literature. Students choose the form of writing best suited to the purpose, develop strategies for organizing support for their main ideas or theses, and learn strategies for evaluating, revising, and using word-processing programs to refine and publish their work. Spelling, grammar, and language mechanics are taught through direct instruction. English Learners will be provided instruction for English language and literacy skill development that is targeted to their English proficiency levels and aligned with state content standards and curriculum frameworks in Language Arts.

# HISTORY COURSES

## **WORLD CULTURES 6:**

Using the California Social Studies Framework and Common Core Standards, the Irvine School District History/Social Science Content Standards, we offer students the chance to begin to expand their understanding of history by studying ancient civilizations. Emphasis is placed on the geography, religion, achievements, political system, economy, and social structures of each unique culture. The goal is to learn the social, cultural, and technological changes that occurred around the world during this time period. Videos, art, symbolism, language, performance and simulations are incorporated at every turn to involve students more fully. Document Based Question and argumentative writing strategies are incorporated. Assignments are tailored to encourage the development of note-taking, organization, critical thinking skills, and expression and are designed to prepare the students for success in the next level of classes.

## **WORLD HISTORY 7:**

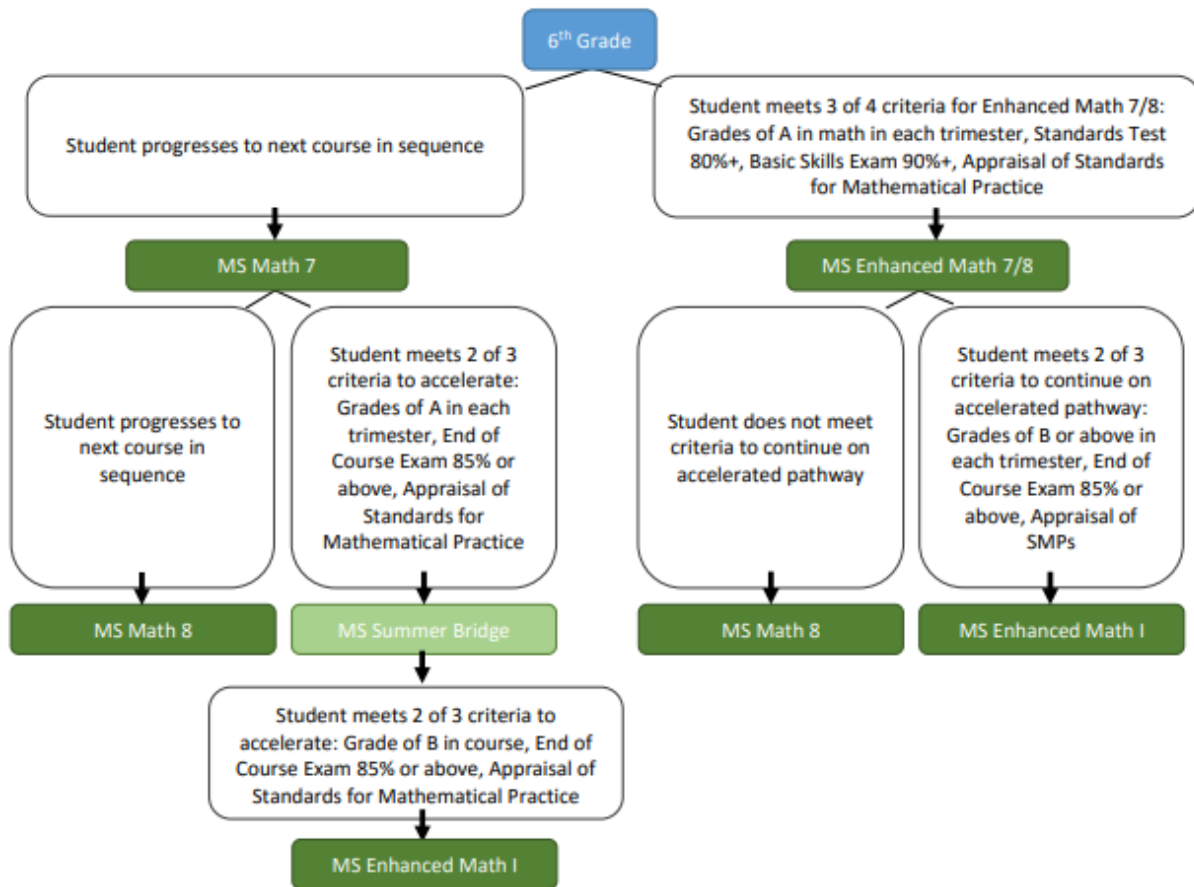
Using Common Core State Standards and the Irvine School District History/Social Science Content Standards, our program offers students opportunities to expand their understanding of history by studying the cultural universals that ushered in the dawn of the major western and non-western ancient civilizations. Continued emphasis is placed on the circumstances that influenced events, on the problems and achievements of people, on the development of social, economic, and political structures, and on the spreading ideas that transformed the world. Students develop higher levels of thinking by considering why civilizations developed and declined, by analyzing the interactions between peoples and cultures, and by recognizing the enduring contributions of the past to the present.

## **U.S. HISTORY 8:**

Students study U.S. History and Geography as they learn about growth and conflict, the goal being for students to learn about democracy, achieving cultural understanding, social participation, content knowledge, and civic values. Units include Colonial Heritage, the American Revolution, the Constitution, the divergent paths of the American people (1800-1850), the Civil War, and Industrial America.

# MATHEMATICS COURSES

## Middle School Student Math Placement (Grades 6-8)



IUSD Rev 2/9/18

### **MATH 6:**

In grade six, instructional time focuses on six critical areas: (1) number concepts; (2) integers and the coordinate plane; (3) expressions and equations; (4) ratios; (5) geometry; and (6) statistical analysis. Students in grade six also build on a strong foundation of basic math skills to prepare for higher mathematics.

In grade six, instructional time focuses on six critical areas: (1) applying the four arithmetic operations to whole numbers, fractions, and decimals; (2) ordering and comparing integers and rational numbers; (3) creating and evaluating expressions and solving single-variable equations; (4) solving problems involving ratios; (5) finding the area of polygons and the surface area and volume of three-dimensional figures; and (6) collecting and analyzing data. Students in grade six also build on a strong foundation of basic math skills to prepare for higher mathematics.

### **MATH 7 (Grade 7 ONLY):**

In grade seven, instructional time will focus on four critical areas: (1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships, including percentages; (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. Students also work towards fluently solving multi-step equations with rational coefficients.

### **ENHANCED MATH 7/8 (Grade 7 ONLY):**

**Placement Criteria (must meet 3 of 4 criteria) for Enhanced Math 7/8: Grades of A in math in each trimester, Standards Test 80%+, Basic Skills Exam 90%+, Appraisal of Standards for Mathematical Practice**

This course differs from the standard Math 7 and Math 8 courses in that it contains content from both courses. This course is intended for the student who is able to move through the mathematics quickly and still master the full range of mathematical practices, content, and skills. Instructional time in the Math 7/8 course focuses on the following grade 7 critical areas: (1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships, including percentages; (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. In addition, the following critical areas from Grade 8 will be included: (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations; (2) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence.

### **MATH 8 (Grade 8 ONLY):**

In grade eight, instructional time will focus on three critical areas: (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. Students also work towards fluency with solving simple sets of two equations with two unknowns by inspection.

### **ENHANCED MATH I:**

**Placement criteria (student must have successfully completed Enhanced Math 7/8 and meet two of three) to enroll in MS Enhanced Math 1: Grades of B or above in each trimester of Enhanced Math 7/8, End of Course Exam score 85% or above in Enhanced Math 7/8, Appraisal of Standards for Mathematical Practice.**

In Enhanced Math I, students continue their work with expressions and modeling and analyzing situations at an accelerated pace. Students will informally define, evaluate, and compare functions, and use them to model relationships between quantities (critical area from Grade 8 Math). Students will learn function notation and develop the concepts of domain and range. They move beyond viewing functions as processes that take inputs and yield outputs and start viewing functions as objects that can be combined with operations (e.g., finding  $(f + g)(x) = f(x) + g(x)$ ). They explore many examples of functions, including sequences. They interpret functions represented graphically, numerically, symbolically, and verbally, translate between representations, and understand the limitations of various representations. They work with functions given by graphs and tables, keeping in mind that, depending upon the context these representations are likely to be approximate and incomplete. Their work includes functions that can be described or approximated by formulas as well as those that cannot. When functions describe relationships between quantities arising from a context, students reason with the units in which those quantities are measured. Students build on and informally extend their understanding of integer exponents to consider exponential functions. They compare and contrast linear and exponential functions, distinguishing between additive and multiplicative change. They interpret arithmetic sequences as linear functions and geometric sequences as exponential functions. In Enhanced Math I, students build on their prior experiences with data, developing a more formal means of assessing how a model fits data. Students use regression techniques to describe approximately linear relationships between quantities. They use graphical representations and knowledge of the context to make judgments about the appropriateness of linear models. With linear models, they look at residuals to analyze the goodness of fit. In Enhanced Math I, students will understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem and will establish triangle congruence criteria, based on analyses of rigid motions and formal constructions. They solve problems about triangles, quadrilaterals, and other polygons. They apply reasoning to complete geometric constructions and explain why they work. Finally, building on their work with the Pythagorean Theorem in the grade eight standards to find distances, students use a rectangular coordinate system to verify geometric relationships, including properties of special triangles and quadrilaterals and slopes of parallel and perpendicular lines.

	<h1>SCIENCE COURSES</h1>
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**SCIENCE 6:**

The science course consists of an integrated model of life, earth and physical science that align with the Next Generation Science Standards as it relates to real world connections and applications. The instructional emphasis is on science and engineering practices, making connections, and seeing the relationships between concepts and ideas. Teachers stress scientific and engineering thinking processes and strive to help students develop critical thinking skills by engaging in inquiry, argumentation, and evidence based explanations. Technology and scientific investigation are used as a tool to support student discovery and learning.

**SCIENCE 7:**

The science course consists of an integrated model of life, earth and physical science that align with the Next Generation Science Standards as it relates to real world connections and applications. The instructional emphasis is on science and engineering practices, making connections, and seeing the relationships between concepts and ideas. Teachers stress scientific and engineering thinking processes and strive to help students develop critical thinking skills by engaging in inquiry, argumentation, and evidence based explanations. Technology and scientific investigation are used as a tool to support student discovery and learning.

**SCIENCE 8:**

The science program consists of an integrated model of life, earth, and physical science aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards as it relates to real world connections and applications. The instructional emphasis is on science and engineering practices, making connections, and seeing the relationships between concepts and ideas. Teachers stress scientific and engineering thinking processes and strive to help students develop critical thinking skills by engaging in inquiry, argumentation, and evidence based explanations. Technology is used as a tool to support student discovery and learning.

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION COURSES

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION/FITNESS:**

The Physical Education program provides students an opportunity to participate in a variety of challenging activities in a structured, positive environment in which every student can experience success. Instruction in individual sports and team sports assist students to develop character, sportsmanship, leadership, and individual skills. Physical fitness and life-long fitness is emphasized, and the physical education program also incorporates health, wellness, and nutrition.

## **INDEPENDENT STUDY PHYSICAL EDUCATION:** (P.E. for Private Instruction)

A student is eligible for a maximum of 20 units (two years) of Physical Education via Private Instruction, on a pass/fail basis, under the following conditions: If a middle school student is nationally ranked in an individual sport. This eligibility does not include members of a nationally ranked team. For a list of approved nationally ranked individual sports and access to the application, visit the following website linked [here](#). Click on **PE for Private Instruction** and review Step 1 and complete Step 2. Submit completed application to the assistant principal.



# EXPLORATORY COURSES

Exploratory Courses provide students with an opportunity to participate in a wide variety of enjoyable and challenging activities in a structured and positive environment. Students experience an assortment of intellectual, creative, artistic, and physical forms. Please note that not all of these classes are offered every year.

## YEAR-LONG EXPLORATORY:

### **CHORUS:** (Grades 6-8)

Chorus is designed for students who have a desire to sing and participate in choral performance. Choir students will learn to sing in a choral ensemble while improving competence in sight-singing, musicianship, and vocal skills. A great deal of class time is spent on vocal/musical techniques and performance standards. These skills will be demonstrated in several mandatory performances throughout the school year. Students will learn and perform a wide variety of high quality choral literature that is appropriate for middle school performers and that adheres to the California Visual and Performing Arts Standards. **Recommended Donation\*: \$30**

### **MUSICAL THEATER:** (Grades 6-8)

This course is designed for students interested in developing or strengthening skills in Musical Theater. This class covers a wide range of topics and activities in order to give students a big-picture view of all things musical theater. Students will have the opportunity to explore acting exercises, movement, vocal music, scene writing, improvisation, tech theater, and more. There will be at least one mandatory performance during the trimester. Curriculum is based on California Arts Standards for both Music and Theater. **Recommended Donation\*: \$30 (for props, costumes, makeup, etc.)**

### **CONCERT BAND:** (Grades 6-8)

*Concert Band* is a full-year exploratory that offers instruction on piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, trumpet, horn, trombone, and percussion. This class is open to any student who wishes to better their skills or begin a new instrument. The class includes at least three evening performances throughout the year. Concepts and curriculum are aligned with the California Visual and Performing Arts Framework. **Recommended donation: \$30**

### **CONCERT ORCHESTRA:** (Grades 6-8)

\*There will be two orchestras: *Concert* and *Symphonic*. (Note: Concert Orchestra only for 2023/24 school year)

*Concert Orchestra* is a full-year exploratory composed of students who have played their instrument for 2 or more years. The section consists of the following instruments: violin, viola, cello, and double bass. In Concert Orchestra, students will continue to work towards mastering string skills such as tuning and playing in 4 part harmony. Students will also be introduced to shifting, vibrato and more advanced bowing articulations and rhythmic patterns. In addition, this section also covers, but is not limited to 2 octave scales in all major keys, intro to minor keys, ear training that includes interval recognition and rhythmic dictation. A wide variety of repertoire and concepts will be learned and performed in accordance with the California Visual and Performing Arts Frameworks. This ensemble performs 3 times per year. **Recommended donation: \$30**

### **ASB/LEADERSHIP:** (Grades 6-8)

**\*\*Prerequisite: Must have all "3's or 4's" in citizenship and work habits along with strong Teacher recommendations. Must attend ALL school activity functions.**

**\*\*Leadership is a yearlong commitment for officers.**

Leadership is a course designed to empower students to be good role models in their communities and serve their school. Students learn various team building and leadership skills and how to apply them, including public speaking, teamwork, creativity, goal setting, planning, kindness, productivity, and problem solving. Students in the Leadership exploratory will also be responsible for organizing and planning the school dance parties, lunchtime activities, and spirit days to practice the leadership skills about which they learn in the class. Students who participate in Leadership will help draft a constitution that outlines their role and responsibilities as a leader on campus.

### **TRIMESTER LONG EXPLORATORY:**

\*Not all courses may be offered each year or each trimester\*

#### **STRATEGIC GAMES:** (Grades 6-8)

This trimester course will take a look at the strategies behind classic and modern games. Strategic games require logical thinking, patience, and the ability to plan ahead. Students will learn how to identify what kind of games you can always win, and learn strategies that will allow them to beat their opponents every time. In addition to playing popular games such as rock, paper, scissors, students will learn plenty of new games, including Finger Chess and Chomp.

#### **EXPLORE CULINARY:** (Grades 6-8)

This trimester course is for students who would like to learn food preparation, cooking, and baking skills and as a result, will often receive tasty treats from the good work they have completed. **Recommended donation\*: \$25**

#### **INTRO TO CONCERT BAND:** (Grades 6-8)

Intro to Concert Band is a 1<sup>st</sup>-trimester mini-elective, designed to support students who are new to band, switching to a new band instrument, and or want extra help on their current instrument. Join us for one trimester of extra music knowledge basics and basic instrument skills support to jumpstart the year and to be ready for a great, successful year of music making in Concert Band! Enrollment in Concert Band is not required, but strongly encouraged, since we will study the same music and skills as Concert Band.

#### **INTRO TO CONCERT ORCHESTRA:** (Grades 6-8)

This is a first trimester course designed for students who want to learn to play the Violin, Viola or Cello as a beginner because you did not have the opportunity to learn a string instrument last year. This class provides additional support for students who would be new to Orchestra or switching to a new instrument and want extra help during the transition. Or, maybe you already play a string instrument but need additional help with note reading, music theory and basic playing fundamentals. Enrollment in Concert Orchestra is not required, but strongly encouraged, since we will study the same music and skillsets as Concert Orchestra. Join us for one trimester of extra beginner and instrument transition support to get up to speed and ready for a great year of music making in Concert Orchestra!

#### **MUSICAL THEATER:** (Grades 6-8)

This course is designed for students interested in developing or strengthening skills in Musical Theater. This class covers a wide range of topics and activities in order to give students a big-picture view of all things musical theater. Students will have the opportunity to explore acting exercises, movement, vocal music, scene writing, improvisation, tech theater, and more. There will be at least one mandatory performance during the trimester. Curriculum is based on California Arts Standards for both Music and Theater. **Recommended Donation\*: \$15 (for props, costumes, makeup, etc.)**

### **INTRO TO ART:** (Grades 6-8)

Students learn the elements and principles of art and the basic skills and knowledge necessary to communicate in each art form. By experiencing various art activities, students will exercise their powers of observation, test their problem-solving skills, and use their creative imagination. Students work with varied mediums and explore the history of art and various artists. NO PREVIOUS ART EXPERIENCE REQUIRED. **Recommended donation\*:** \$25 for supplies for student projects which students will take home.

### **EXPLORING ART:** (Grades 7-8)

This trimester course will continue to develop the elements of art from the Intro to Art exploratory. Students are introduced to new concepts and different activities to showcase their skills. This course is intended for students who enjoy art and wish to expand their artistic horizons. ONE TRIMESTER OF MIDDLE SCHOOL ART REQUIRED. **Recommended donation\*:** \$25 for supplies for student projects which students will take home.

### **STUDENT AIDE:** (Grades 7/8)

**\*\*Prerequisite:** All "S's" or "O's" in citizenship, work habits, & effort in grade 7.

This class gives students the opportunity to build their interpersonal skills and experience working in an office environment. Students handle incoming calls, perform office duties, run other errands for classroom teachers. Students will be under the guidance and supervision of one teacher.

### **ASB/LEADERSHIP:** (Grade 6-8)

**\*\*Prerequisite:** Must have all "S's" or "O's" in citizenship, work habits, and maintain 3.0 GPA (members) and 3.5 GPA (officers); and teacher recommendation. Must attend ALL school activity functions.

**\*\*ASB/Leadership is a yearlong commitment for Officers.**

Leadership is a course where students act as role models and serve the school. As leaders of the school, they aim to promote and advance a positive school environment. Students learn various team building and leadership skills and how to apply them, including public speaking, teamwork, creativity, goal setting, planning, kindness, productivity, and problem solving. Students in the Leadership exploratory will also be responsible for organizing and planning the school dance parties, talent show, lunchtime activities, and spirit days to practice the leadership skills about which they learn in the class. This course is required for all elected student government members.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: (Grade 6-8)**

This course is designed for English Language Learners so they have an additional support section in their schedule that will help guide them further in acquiring English Language skills. Students enrolled in this course will practice reading, writing, and speaking regularly so they gain the skills necessary to succeed. Students have been placed in this course based on their EL entrance exams, ELPAC, and/or teacher recommendation.

### **MATH LAB:** (Grade 6-8)

**\*\*Prerequisite:** Teacher Recommendation

The Math Lab course is an intervention course designed to help students fill gaps and enhance the understanding of mathematics, preview and review content related to their current math course, and prepare students for success in high school. Students are recommended for this course based on math teacher appraisal, grades, and/or STAR Renaissance test results. Students identified for this course are strongly required to participate, and will also be allowed to engage in an exploratory of their choice during the academic day. Additional focuses of this course include: reviewing material from previous math courses, developing a growth mindset, improving organization skills/strategies, time management, and developing study skills.

**READING LAB/READ 180:** (Grade 6-8)

***\*\*Prerequisite: Teacher Recommendation***

Reading Lab is a course that utilizes Read 180 © software and curriculum to increase student reading fluency and comprehension. Using both fiction and nonfiction texts that tie to all curricular areas, students are able to work at their own pace to raise their Lexile and reading fluency. The curriculum is engaging and high interest to keep students reading, which thus leads to higher Lexile scores and increased comprehension over time. The more students access the software, the faster they can grow in their reading and graduate from the course. The instructor guides the students by tracking their progress over time as well as doing group work and activities.

**DIRECTED STUDIES:** (Grades 6-8)

***\*\*Staff referral only***

This course consists of specialized academic instruction, offered to support general education curriculum. In this class, students review daily assignments, organize and prioritize assignments, clarify directions, study for tests, retake or finish tests, learn study skills and receive assistance with long term projects. This class is designed to support IEP goals in the areas of organization, study skills, homework completion, classwork completion or overall executive functioning deficits. Enrollment in this class is based on a student's IEP team decision that this class is appropriate.

	<h2>OTHER PROGRAMS</h2>
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### **TUTORIAL:**

Solis Park's Tutorial program is part of our middle school academic interventions program. Four days a week, teachers reserve a portion of the instructional day for a thirty-minute "tutorial" period. Teachers create tutorial class content based on current assessment data and post tutorial topics on a calendar available to students and parents. Students may choose which tutorial to attend based on need, or if students have not demonstrated proficiency on recent assessments, teachers may require them to attend a tutorial for specific remediation. Other tutorial options include Homework Hall staffed by administration where students work in a silent, distraction-free environment, as well as a more casual Study Hall in the media center. Students who are currently failing any core academic course must attend Homework Hall or a class that a teacher has "stamped" them to attend. Tutorial allows for a focused intervention program that has an increased focus on data, the monitoring of student progress, and identifying students in need of additional support.

### **ADVISEMENT:**

Advisement is a full year experience for all our middle school students. Advisement meets four days per week. The program is designed to assist students in all aspects of life during the middle school years. The emphasis of the Advisement Program is developing a one-to-one relationship between advisor and student. The goal of the program is to develop skills for social interaction, personal assessment, educational planning, life skill awareness, study skills and time management, universal values/ethics, and decision-making. Advisement meetings foster a sense of belonging to a particular group, and also serve as a source of intra-school spirit competitions. The advisor's goal is to maintain strong communication between home and school regarding all aspects of the child's experience at school.