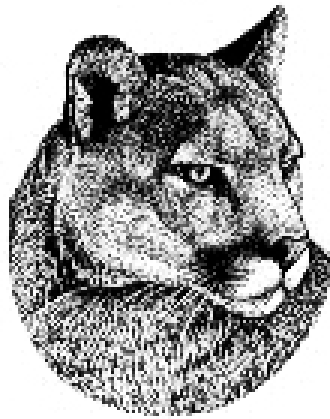


The Rock Terrace School Middle School Course Offerings

2011-2012



**Rock Terrace School
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Rockville, Maryland
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The Rock Terrace School Program

The Rock Terrace School prepares students for independent living, integrated employment, and participation in the community. Our educational program combines the Fundamental Life Skills (FLS) Curriculum with a modified set of courses from the MCPS program of studies, and functional learning experiences. Rock Terrace students meet the participation criteria for the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (Alt-MSA). The Rock Terrace program is dedicated to the education of students with a wide range of significant physical and cognitive disabilities. Students may attend for as long as nine years. Students graduate at twenty-one years of age with a Maryland Certificate of Program Completion.

Rock Terrace School is composed of three academic levels: Middle School (grades 6, 7, and 8; typically including students between the ages of 11-13); High School (grades 9, 10, 11, and 12; ages 15-17); and the Upper School (referred to at Rock Terrace as grades 13, 14, and 15; students are typically ages 18-21). Within each level classes may contain students from various grades. All students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) so that classroom instruction is aligned with each student's specific academic, social and behavioral goals. Classroom teachers differentiate instruction to address the individual skill levels of each student in the basic academic areas of reading, math, science, social studies, physical education and social skills. All students receive reading, math, science and social studies courses daily. Students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades have physical education on alternate days.

The primary objectives of Rock Terrace are continual achievement and maximum independence after graduation. Our program promotes the achievement of each student's highest potential to access and interact with the surrounding community, and obtain and retain employment.

Educational growth and curriculum continuity are maintained through a program which combines required, elective, vocational, and specials courses. Rock Terrace provides an environment rich in diverse learning experiences and opportunities for all students. *The Rock Terrace 2011-2012 Course Offerings* booklet contains a complete listing of required academic and vocational courses, as well as elective and special interest courses. Parents will receive a Middle School, High School, or Upper School packet based on the age/grade of their child.

The following course descriptions are provided to help you and your student understand and request the elective, vocational, and special interest courses most appropriate for your student. *Please be advised that although the Rock Terrace School makes every effort to place students in requested classes, we cannot guarantee that staffing and other factors always will permit us to do so.*

Introduction to the Middle School (typically grades 6 - 8)

Rock Terrace Middle School provides a safe and welcoming school environment in which students with a wide range of significant physical and cognitive disabilities can learn and grow, both as members of a learning community and as leaders in that community. The Middle School Program integrates intensive academic curriculum (math, reading, science, and social studies) with a highly structured approach to social skills development, specials classes, and exploration of vocational experiences and expectations.

The curriculum for academic areas is aligned each year with Alt-MSA learning objectives. Teachers differentiate their instructional approaches for each student's individual learning styles, previous knowledge, and current reading and math levels. All teaching is based on each student's individual IEP goals. Each student's progress is assessed by two measures. First, teachers make a quarterly report on progress on IEP goals; and second, mastery of curriculum areas is assessed by grade on the quarterly report card.

The Middle School Course Offerings

6th and 7th Grades

REQUIRED COURSES

Reading
Math
Science
Social Skills
Social Studies
Physical Education/Health
Life Skills
Community-Based Instruction

8th Grade

REQUIRED COURSES

Reading
Math
Science
Social Skills
Social Studies
Physical Education/Health
Life Skills
Community-Based Instruction

ELECTIVES

Chorus
Band
Visual Arts
Ready to Learn
Introduction to Computer Applications
Introduction to Culinary Arts
Introduction to Home Survival Skills
Introduction to Office Skills

ELECTIVES

Chorus
Band
Visual Arts
Ready to Learn
Introduction to Computer Applications
Introduction to Culinary Arts
Introduction to Home Survival Skills
Introduction to Office Skills

C

Mini-Courses *

Helping Our Habitat: The Gardening Club
Interpretive Dance & Movement Club
The Compost & Ecology Club
The Reading Games Club
The Movement & Exercise Club

**Mini-course titles and content may be subject to change.*

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS by GRADE

The middle school years of the Fundamental Life Skills (FLS) program provide students with the opportunity to learn age-appropriate, functional applications of reading, mathematics, social studies, and science to life situations. Academic and Specials courses follow the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills curriculum which addresses the five FLS domains of learning: personal management, community, career/vocational, recreation/leisure, and communication, decision-making, and interpersonal skills.

Below you will find descriptions of units of study in the different curriculum areas listed by grade and academic quarter. Academic, social, and vocational essential questions and enduring understandings are applied to the development of independent living skills through the course of the school year. While every student may not attain the highest expression of all skills, all students are expected to exhibit increasing competence in all areas as they move from grade to grade, and school level to school level, to graduation.

Each student at Rock Terrace School has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in which areas of strength and need are identified, and upon which academic, vocational, social and behavioral goals are written. Progress toward goals is assessed quarterly.

Students in the Middle School engage in many in-school instructional work opportunities designed to develop the skills and attitudes that lead to gainful employment in adulthood. While some specific occupational skills are learned in the middle school years, the emphasis at this level is on general world-of-work expectations and behaviors. These classes are built into a student's daily schedule, and progress is graded.

Required Courses for Grades 6 and 7

Reading

First Quarter- Students experience different types of literature. They continue to acquire new vocabulary through the Edmark Functional Word Program.

Second Quarter: Students focus on punctuation and capitalization in writing and reading. They make use of illustrations to predict the plotline of a book or story.

Third Quarter: Students retell the important events in a story. Students learn to identify story elements. Emphasis is placed on recognition of functional vocabulary words.

Fourth Quarter: Students learn to identify the main idea of a story or text.

Math

First Quarter: Students count coins to "purchase" items in a classroom store, and add and subtract numbers without regrouping.

Second Quarter: Students identify and label geometric shapes. Students learn how to tell time and apply the information to their daily lives.

Third Quarter: Students identify daily activities by time of day. Students practice identifying time to nearest hour and half-hour.

Fourth Quarter: Students collect, organize and display data.

Social Studies

First Quarter: Students learn about the school: the school location and the phone number. They learn about the locations of important rooms; the names of the teachers and the school rules. They learn about school and class schedules, routines and rules.

Second Quarter: The students learn about using the calendar the important dates on the calendar such as Halloween Day; Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. They learn about using the map. They use the map to find their way in shopping malls, parks and within the school area..

Third Quarter: Students learn about “connectedness” and investigate how “everyone and everything is connected to someone or something else.” Students study various kinds of safety measures in different environments. Students learn about emergencies and other situations in which people may need help. Students learn about how to ask for help.

Fourth Quarter: Students learn about decision-making processes, and participate in group decision-making. Students investigate different aspects of school life about which they must make decisions, such as what is needed for them to learn and be successful.

Science

First Quarter: Students use hands-on experiments to learn the steps in the scientific method. They identify, describe and list steps, and apply knowledge to their experiments. Students observe and describe cause-and-effect relationships during experiments.

Second Quarter: Students identify and list similarities and differences between living and non-living matter.

Third Quarter: Students learn to collect and record data in different formats such as charts and graphs.

Fourth Quarter: Students investigate experiment results and practice making predictions based on observations and data.

Required Courses for Grade 8

Reading

First Quarter: Students are exposed to novels, poetry and stories which share a theme of self-exploration. Students list and define words that express feelings.

Second Quarter: Students explore, identify and define tools that writers use to convey information, meaning, and feeling.

Third Quarter: Students identify the elements of a story, and explain and list details of plot and character. Students continue to expand their banks of functional word recognition.

Fourth Quarter: Students choose examples from different types of literature and identify main ideas, plot and character details, and list some techniques the writers use to convey meaning, information and feeling.

Math

First Quarter: Students add and subtract two-digit numbers and use coins to purchase items and make change.

Second Quarter: Students use geometric shapes to practice measurement, improve mastery of one-to-one correspondence, and define geometric terms including perimeter and area.

Third Quarter: Students increase time recognition to the next unit, define elements, and identify and express amounts of time for activities, daily events, and life events. Students use time to describe past and future events, and use addition and subtraction to calculate passage of time.

Fourth Quarter: Students use surveys to gather data. Students make charts to organize their results. Students use calculators to solve basic math operations; add and subtract 2 and 3 digit numbers.

Social Studies

First Quarter: Students focus on learning their school location and phone number. They learn how to ask for help, and how to respond when someone else asks for help.

Second Quarter: The students learn about using the calendar the important dates on the calendar such as Halloween Day; Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. They learn about using the map. They use the map to find their way in shopping malls, parks and within the school area..

Third Quarter: Students learn about “connectedness” and investigate how “everyone and everything is connected to someone or something else.” Students study various kinds of safety measures in different environments. Students learn about emergencies and other situations in which people may need help. Students learn about how to ask for help.

Fourth Quarter: Students learn about decision-making processes, and participate in group decision-making. Students investigate different aspects of school life about which they must make decisions, such as what is needed for them to learn and be successful.

Science

First Quarter: Students observe, discuss and read about land and water ecosystems. Throughout the unit, students explore concepts of living things, their basic needs, how organisms are classified, the relatedness of living organisms, the features that make organisms well-suited to their environment, the flow of energy and matter, and how organisms interact with one another and the environment. Students construct knowledge through reading, writing and hands-on investigations using a model ecosystem.

Second Quarter: Students examine, explore and observe differences and similarities between living and non-living matter. Students list and define characteristics. Students participate in a variety of hands-on investigations with matter. They observe liquids, solids, and gases and experiment with the effects of temperature on the states of matter. These investigations will lead students to an understanding of how matter changes states. Students examine the most common examples of changes of state by observing the weather and specifically the water cycle. Students construct their own experiments to develop their abilities to question, observe, conclude, and infer critical information from an investigation.

Third Quarter: Students explore the characteristics of organisms which help them to survive and reproduce in specific habitats and how organisms interact with their environment. Students investigate the natural or

human-made factors that can disrupt a stable environment and consider how human decisions and actions can be both beneficial and harmful to the environment. Students construct and conduct their own investigations to observe, conclude, and infer about the effects of pollution and/or pollution by-products on the environment.

Fourth Quarter: Students investigate experiment results and practice making predictions based on observations and data.

Fourth Quarter: Students learn about decision-making processes, and participate in group decision-making. Students investigate different aspects of school life about which they must make decisions, such as what is needed for them to learn and be successful.

Science

First Quarter: Students perform hands-on experiments to explore the nature of different kinds of forces which are involved in cause and effect relationships. Students list and define these forces, and manipulate the degree of force in different experiments. Students describe their results.

Second Quarter: Students observe interactions between living and non-living matter. Students manipulate environmental factors to identify and measure different effects.

Third Quarter: Students use hands-on experiments to learn the steps in the scientific method. They identify, describe and list steps, and apply knowledge to their experiments. Students observe and describe cause-and-effect relationships during experiments.

Fourth Quarter: Students investigate experiment results and practice making predictions based on observations and data using cause-and-effect analysis.

General, Elective and Pre-Vocational Training

Students in the Middle School engage in many in-school instructional work opportunities designed to target skills and attitudes that lead to gainful employment. Whereas some specific occupational skills are learned, the emphasis at this level is on general work behaviors. These programs are built into a student's daily schedule.

Ready to Learn (RTL)

This program is unique to Rock Terrace. It is based on the research-based programs Brain Gym and Focus Moves. Students learn self-calming and attention-focusing techniques to prepare their brains and bodies to engage in learning behaviors. The curriculum includes simple body movements, self-massage, and breath control techniques. Students practice the experiences of self-calming, stimulating their brain's focus and attention, and stimulating their processing centers. Simpler exercises are mastered before progressively more challenging exercises are introduced.

Physical Education/Health

Students participate in activities to develop fundamental fitness, teamwork (cooperation, supportiveness, and other sports-related social skills) and motor (sports and exercise) skills. Emphasis is on knowledge, movement and cognitive-emotional abilities ranging from functional life skills to those needed for successful participation in self-selected leisure and other health-promoting activities. Class activities allow for individualized challenges at a level appropriate to each student, and are based on activities supported in individual and community recreation contexts.

Chorus

Students develop singing fundamentals. A variety of choral music is used to match the developmental level of the students' voices. There will be several recitals during the school year. Students are exposed to various woodwind, keyboard, string and percussion instruments. Students are instructed on introductory playing techniques. Students perform solo and ensemble pieces.

Visual Arts

Middle School visual arts classes continue the exploration of art begun during Elementary School. Students build their knowledge and experiences of the foundation of art: line, shape, form, texture, value, color and space. Students manipulate materials with art concepts, project directions and instructed procedures to form compositions in paper, paint, wood, cardboard, Styrofoam, recycled scraps, plasticine and earthenware (wet clay). They will also make pictures using basic stitchery techniques on fabric or burlap. Art journals, constructed by students, will be maintained throughout the year to document learning and progress through the art elements and principles (pattern, unity, balance, contrast, movement, emphasis and rhythm.) A combined Middle and High School art exhibit will culminate the year's work showing outstanding student art for all to enjoy.

Social Skills Instruction

Rock Terrace provides a school-wide social skills program taught for thirty-minutes daily. Rock Terrace students learn to recognize, identify and express their feelings appropriately. Students practice appropriate social behaviors in school and in public. Appropriate behavior includes expression of need, anger, opinion, and conflict resolution. The basis of our program is "Stop, think, make a good choice."

Life Skills

Students will prepare themselves for future independence. Students will work on accessing the public library for resources (including applying for, using and maintaining a library card), filling out practice applications, reading signs for comprehension, using a directory (to find a store in a mall, etc.), reading a flyer/newsletter/newspaper article/order form for understanding, locating and using a resource's table of contents or index to find information, reading a public transportation schedule, reading a map and identifying its features, accessing websites for information and practicing appropriate use of technology. The Life Skills curriculum prepares middle school students for their weekly community based instructional trip (CBI). Middle school students practice in the classroom the skills that they will be using in the community.

Community-Based Instruction

Students in the middle school learn to travel safely in groups to various cultural and commercial destinations. Destinations are selected to reinforce classroom learning experiences and individual IEP goals. Students practice listening to staff members and following instructions, demonstrating appropriate social behaviors while on public transportation and in public places. Students practice reading, math and language arts skills in public settings. Community-Based Instruction is closely aligned with the Life Skills curriculum.

Middle School Special Interest Opportunities

Student Government Association (SGA)

The Rock Terrace Student Government Association is an opportunity for students to campaign for elected office, and, if elected, serve the school as part of the SGA. Students elected to the SGA meet weekly with an assigned staff member to plan and implement social events, charitable fund-raising activities, survey and discuss school improvement opportunities, and work with the administration and staff to negotiate and implement ideas.

Mini-Courses *

Each day, students participate in a 30-minute “club” to experience different forms of recreation, build competencies, and learn about a variety of ways to enjoy leisure time. Club offerings may differ as quarters change during the school year. Some examples of mini-courses are:

Crafts Club

Students explore their skills in working with various materials easily found at home to make decoration and useful items for the home and school.

Helping Our Habitat - The Gardening Club

Students explore hands-on outdoor experiences and classroom projects to observe natural growth cycles and how people can work together to help nature. Classroom instruction and outdoor gardening activities support individual understanding, and group planning and cooperation. This curriculum is tied to the Rock Terrace National Wildlife Federation Natural Habitat Project.

Exercise Club

Students practice healthful movement and strength building and track data on their improvement.

Compost and Ecology Club

Students support the National Wildlife Habitat garden behind the school through recycling and helping our compost supply. Students practice weighing and measuring, and improve familiarity with numbers, sizes and weights.

I love to Read Club

Working in small groups, students use games formats to improve their word recognition and comprehension skills, increase their self-confidence, and enhance their enjoyment of reading.

*Due to changes in staffing and other scheduling demands, clubs offered are subject to change.