

**Carrie Palmer Weber
Middle School
Acceleration
Information Meeting
April 2009**

Weber Middle School Mission Statement:

Weber Middle School is a partnership that achieves academic excellence and demonstrates a commitment to social action. Parents, staff, and students share the responsibility of creating a respectful and nurturing environment that promotes individuality and celebrates diversity.

The “7” Elements of an Effective Middle School:

- A philosophy and mission that reflect the intellectual and developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents
- An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards-based
- An organization and structure that support both academic excellence and personal development
- Classroom instruction appropriate to the needs and characteristics of young adolescents provided by skilled and knowledgeable teachers
- Strong educational leadership and a building administration that encourages, facilitates, and sustains involvement, participation, and leadership
- A network of academic and personal support available for all students
- Professional learning and staff development for all staff that are ongoing, planned, purposeful, and collaboratively developed

Intermediate Level Art, Math and Science Courses:

The Intermediate Level State Art, Math and Science Standards reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding all students are expected to master and be able to demonstrate by the end of grade eight.

Commencement Level Art, Math and Science Courses :

The Commencement Level NY State Art, Math and Science Standards reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding all students are expected to master and be able to demonstrate upon receiving a high school diploma.

Acceleration in the Middle School:

- Middle level students progress through developmental stages. Those who demonstrate progress beyond their peers will be given the opportunity to pursue accelerated coursework. Accelerated academic courses are intended for highly motivated students.
- Accelerated academic coursework provides instruction that is differentiated to provide increased rigor and challenge for highly motivated students while preserving and nurturing the joy of learning. Accelerated academic coursework moves at a faster pace and requires students to use higher level thinking skills. Accelerated coursework requires students to have a greater capacity to synthesize information, make generalizations, draw conclusions, understand abstract concepts, and learn at a rapid pace.

Students Enrolled In Accelerated Courses Are Expected To Meet The Following Criteria:

LEARN

- Abstract concepts
- Content beyond the essential outcomes
- At a faster and more detailed pace
- Independently and collaboratively
- Through questioning, problem solving, investigating, and exploring

Students Enrolled In Accelerated Courses Are Expected To Meet The Following Criteria:

MANAGE

- A more demanding workload
- Multiple tasks
- Above grade-level work

Students Enrolled In Accelerated Courses Are Expected To Meet The Following Criteria:

DEMONSTRATE

- Effective work and study habits
- Responsibility and organization
- Refined reading and writing abilities
- Higher level thinking skills
- The ability to apply learned content to new situations
- Initiative and motivation
- A high quality completion of assignments
- Above average achievement throughout the course

Awarding Credit for Commencement Level Courses in Art, Math and Science completed in the Middle School:

Commencement level courses completed in the middle school will become a part of the student's high school transcript. The courses that culminate in a New York State Regents exam at the middle school are not weighted on the student's high school transcript. The student's final year average - all four quarters of the course and the score earned on the Regents Exam - and the score earned on the Regents Exam will become a part of the student's permanent high school transcript.

Art Courses

Accelerated Art

- * Grade Level: 8
- * Students do not take Family Consumer Sciences 8
- * Meets everyday for a Semester
- * High School Credits: 0.5 of *The Electives Credit* for the Graduation Requirements

Foundations in Studio Art

- * Grade Level: 8
- * Students take neither Family Consumer Sciences 8 nor Technology 8
- * Meets everyday for the Year
- * High School Credits: 1.0 of *The Arts Credit* for the Graduation Requirements

Math Courses

Math 7 Accelerated

Prerequisite for Integrated Algebra 1

- * Grade Level: 7
- * Mixed Houses
- * Meets Everyday for a Year

Integrated Algebra 1

- * Grade Level: 8
- * May be Mixed Houses
- * Meets everyday for a Year
- * High School Credits: 1.0 of *The Math Credit* for the
Graduation Requirements
(passing grade on Regents Exam required)

Science Course

The Physical Setting: Earth Science

- * Grade Level: 8
- * May Be Mixed Houses
- * Meets Everyday for a Year
- * High School Credits: 1.0 of *The Science Credit* for the Graduation Requirements
(passing grade on Regents Exam required)

Art Acceleration in the Middle School

Entrance Criteria for Accelerated Art and Foundations in Studio Art:

Students will submit a portfolio including four (4) pieces of art work, only one (1) of which may have been done in Weber art classes. Students are encouraged to attend the art club should they need art supplies to prepare for the other three (3) artworks to be submitted. The criteria used for the portfolio evaluation is based on a rubric, which rates students' work on:

1. observational skills,
2. control of a variety of media,
3. composition: balanced varied organization of elements of art (line, shape, color, form, value, and texture),
4. individuality and use of imagination.

In addition to the portfolio all students will need to take the Qualifying Art examination.

The Entrance Criteria Will Include The Following Three Components:

- Art work from the Art Exam
- The Portfolio Artwork
- Effort Grade Earned in 7th Grade Art

Qualification Score:

The portfolio rubric includes the following:

- Observation skills
- Control of a variety of media
- Composition: balanced, varied organization of the elements of art (line, shape, color, form, value, and texture)
- Individuality and use of imagination

This portfolio is worth a maximum of 5 pts. The point scale value is as follows:

5 pts = Distinguished

- Where applicable, student completes artwork depicting *all* details.
- Student shows control of the given medium *throughout* the artwork.
- Where applicable, student shows correct proportion of the subject.
- Student shows *no* evidence of copying or tracing another artwork.

4 pts = Proficient

- Where applicable, student completes artwork depicting *most* details.
- Student shows control of the given medium throughout *most* of the artwork
- Where applicable, student shows *most* of the correct proportions of the subject.
- Student shows *no* evidence of copying or tracing another artwork.

3 pts = Apprentice

- Where applicable, student completes artwork depicting *some* details.
- Student shows control of the given medium throughout *some* of the artwork.
- Where applicable, student shows *some* of the correct proportions of the subject.
- Student shows *no* evidence of copying or tracing another artwork.

2 pts = Novice

- Where applicable, student completes artwork depicting *minimal* details.
- Student shows *minimal* control of the given medium throughout the artwork.
- Where applicable, student shows *a minimal amount* of correct proportions of the subject.
- Student shows *no* evidence of copying or tracing another artwork.

1 pt = Deficient

- Student completes less than half of the required number of artworks.
- Student copied or traced another artwork.

The qualifying exam consists of three (3) tasks:

1. Task I - Observation: Contour drawing of shoe or hand (choose one).
2. Task II - Observation: Contour drawing of a seated model.
3. Task III - (color) Imagination: Select one of three choices – use color blending and light source.

Each task is worth a maximum of 5 pts. The point scale is as follows:

5 pts = Distinguished

- Where applicable, student completes descriptive contour line drawing of shoe or hand depicting *all* details.
- Student shows control of medium by varying line quality and/or color blending *throughout* the artwork.
- Where applicable, student shows correct proportion of the subject.

4 pts = Proficient

- Where applicable, student completes descriptive contour line drawing of shoe or hand depicting *most* details.
- Student shows control of medium by varying line quality and/or color blending throughout *most* of the artwork
- Where applicable, student shows *most* of the correct proportions of the subject.

3 pts = Apprentice

- Where applicable, student completes descriptive contour line drawing of shoe or hand depicting *some* details.
- Student shows control of medium by including *some* line variation and/or color blending throughout the artwork.
- Where applicable, student shows *some* of the correct proportions of the subject.

2 pts = Novice

- Where applicable, student completes drawing of shoe or hand depicting *minimal* details.
- Drawing shows *minimal* use of contour line technique and/or color blending throughout the artwork.
- Where applicable, student shows *a minimal amount* of correct proportions of the subject.

1 pt = Deficient

- Student does not complete the given task.

- The highest maximum score possible is 20 pts – 5 pts for each task (on the qualifying exam) and 5 pts for the student homework portfolio submission.
- Students are ranked in order of points earned during the evaluation process.
- Students earning the highest point totals will be offered an opportunity to be part of the Foundations in Studio Art class (22 seats are available).
- Students earning the next highest scores will be offered an opportunity to be part of the two (2) sections of Accelerated Art 8, one offered Semester I and the other offered Semester II (22 seats are available in each section).
- All other students will enjoy Art 8 and be encouraged to join the Art Club and experience its opportunities to further experiment with different media and develop their skill levels.

As is true each year, the criteria for admittance is based on the cohort's scores, not on previous years' scores or a set score.

Criteria to Remain in the Course:

Any student not maintaining a minimum of a “B” average in the course will be rescheduled for the 8th grade art program.

Appeals Framework and Process:

Parents who want their child to remain in this course must sign a form acknowledging that they are aware of the negative impact on the college admission process and of taking a low grade onto their high school transcript.

Math Acceleration in the Middle School

Entrance Criteria for 7th grade

Accelerated Math:

A student must take the qualifying exam to be considered for the course. A letter explaining the Accelerated Math 7/8 course as well as the entrance criteria will be sent to all parents during the third quarter of the 6th grade school year.

A student with a minimum average of 'B+' in 6th grade math quarters 1 and 2 is automatically eligible to take the qualifying exam.

Any student who has earned below the minimum average of a 'B+' in 6th grade math quarters 1 and 2 can waiver into the entrance process. The waiver process is outlined below. If the parents choose to waive the student into the entrance process, then the student will take the qualifying exam.

a) **If a student is a new entrant:**

The student will have his/her transcript evaluated by a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school guidance counselor, and the department chairperson/leader. The student is eligible to take the qualifying exam and follow the process outlined above.

b) **If a student is a new entrant without a transcript:**

The student is eligible to take the qualifying exam and will be evaluated on a case by case basis by a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school guidance counselor, and the department chairperson/leader.

Waiver Process:

Parents of students with less than a 'B+' average in 6th grade math quarters 1 and 2 that wish to have their student take the qualifying exam need to file the waiver form prior to the deadline. Information regarding the waiver form and deadlines will be included in the letter that goes out to parents in the third quarter.

The Entrance Criteria Will Include **The Following Five Components:**

Five factors are used to evaluate the placement of a student into the Accelerated Math 7/8 course.

- 1) 6th grade math average quarter 1 – 100 points
- 2) 6th grade math average quarter 2 – 200 points
- 3) 6th grade math average quarter 3 – 200 points
- 4) Qualifying Exam – 400 points
 - a) Part A: General Math Knowledge
 - b) Part B: Problem Solving
 - c) Part C: Independent Learning
 - d) Part D: Part II Assessment
- 5) 6th grade NYS Math Assessment Raw Score – 100 points

Qualification Score:

A minimum score of 800 points is required for placement in the Accelerated Math 7/8 course in the middle school.

Appeals Framework and Process:

Middle level placement decisions should be based on an individual student's academic, social, and emotional well being. Factors such as maturity, anxiety level, sports and music commitments, membership in co-curricular activities, and outside obligations greatly impact the level of success attainable by middle school students in the Accelerated Math 7/8 program. Parents and students should carefully consider these factors in their decision to pursue this accelerated course.

Appeals Framework and Process:

However, if a student does not meet the minimum requirement of 800 points as stated above, a formal appeals process can be initiated by taking the following steps:

1. Contact the student's guidance counselor.
2. Guidance counselor will provide the individual(s) initiating the appeal with a form (Appeals Form A). The purpose of this form is to provide the Appeals Committee with any extenuating circumstances involving the student. Appeals Form A should be sent back to the guidance counselor.
3. Appeals Form B will be filled out by the student's guidance counselor. Appeals Form B will contain all entrance criteria.
4. Appeals Form A and Appeals Form B will be submitted to the building principal.

Appeals Framework and Process:

An appeals committee consisting of a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school guidance counselor, the department chairperson/leader, and the committee chairperson will hear the student's case. The student's identity will be kept anonymous. The members of the committee will come to a decision based upon the documentation that has been presented. The student's parent(s) will be informed in writing in a timely manner by the committee chairperson.

Students who are unable to keep up with the challenge and rigor of the course may need to be rescheduled to the grade level math course. Changes in a student's schedule are disruptive to his/her educational process. This schedule change would result in the change of a math teacher.

Criteria to Remain in the Course:

- Parents, teachers, and students share in the responsibility of maintaining an accurate record of academic progress throughout each quarter.
- A student must maintain a minimum average of a 'C+' in his/her Accelerated Math 7/8 coursework first quarter. Thereafter, a student must maintain a minimum average of "B" in his/her Accelerated Math 7/8 coursework by the end of each quarter.
- If a student is in danger of falling below the minimum average, the following steps will be taken in the order listed below:
 1. The teacher will contact the student's parent/guardian.
 2. The teacher will contact the student's guidance counselor.
 3. A mid-quarter progress report will be sent home.
 4. Articulation will take place among parent, team and guidance.
 5. A student who does not meet the above stated requirements will be notified that he/she will be rescheduled into Math 7.

Appeals Framework and Process:

If a student does not meet the above stated requirements to remain in Accelerated Math 7/8, a formal appeals process can be initiated by the parent/guardian.

1. The parent/guardian must contact the student's guidance counselor.
2. The guidance counselor will provide the parent/guardian with Appeal Form A. The purpose of this form is to provide the Appeals Committee with any extenuating circumstances involving the student. Appeal Form A must be returned to the guidance counselor.
3. Appeal Form B will be filled out by the student's guidance counselor.
4. Appeal Form B will contain all entrance criteria in addition to current report card grades.
5. All documentation will be submitted to the building principal.

Appeals Framework and Process:

An appeals committee consisting of a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school guidance counselor, the department chairperson/leader, and the committee chairperson will hear the student's case. The student's identity will be kept anonymous. The members of the committee will come to a decision based upon the documentation that has been presented. The student's parent(s) will be informed in writing in a timely manner by the committee chairperson.

Entrance Criteria for 8th grade

Integrated Algebra 1:

To be enrolled in the Commencement Level Math course, *Integrated Algebra*, offered at the middle school a student must have completed Accelerated Math 7/8 or the student must meet the following criteria:

1. The student must have shown mastery of the 7th grade curriculum. Mastery is defined as an average of A+ in quarters 1, 2, and 3 in Math 7.
2. The student must show mastery of the 7th grade math content by earning a 90% raw score on the NYS 7th grade Math Assessment.

Entrance Criteria for 8th grade Integrated Algebra 1:

If both of the previous criteria are met, the process will continue as outlined below:

1. An articulation meeting will be held with the student, parent/guardian, student's guidance counselor, 7th grade math teacher, and 8th grade math teacher.
2. A copy of the 8th grade NYS Math Curriculum will be distributed to the student. It will become the responsibility of the student to review/learn the content independently.
3. Since the student will be skipping this curriculum entirely, he/she must demonstrate high mastery of these important foundational mathematical concepts. The 8th Grade Commencement Level Math course operates under the premise that all students have successfully completed the 8th grade NYS math curriculum. The student will be administered an 8th grade assessment on which he/she must earn a score of 85% (mastery level).

Entrance Criteria for 8th grade Integrated Algebra 1:

If a student is a new entrant:

The student will have his/her transcript evaluated by a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school guidance counselor, and the department chairperson/leader. The student may then opt to take the qualifying exam and follow the process outlined above.

Entrance Criteria for 8th grade Integrated Algebra 1:

- Middle level placement decisions should be based on an individual student's academic, social, and emotional well being. Factors such as maturity, anxiety level, effect of double acceleration, sports and music commitments, membership in co-curricular activities, and outside obligations greatly impact the level of success attainable by middle school students in the commencement level math program. Parents and students should carefully consider these factors in their decision to pursue a commencement level course.
- Students who are unable to keep up with the challenge and rigor of the course may need to be rescheduled to the grade level math course. Changes in a student's schedule can be disruptive to his/her educational process. It is very likely that if a student is scheduled out of the 8th grade Commencement Level math course that other changes to his/her schedule may be made as well. These schedule changes could result in the following: change of science teacher, change of math teacher, and/or change in core class grouping, including off house placement.

Criteria to Remain in the Course:

- It is strongly suggested that a student maintains a minimum quarterly average of a 'B' in his/her Commencement Level coursework. Parents, teachers, and students share in the responsibility of maintaining an accurate record of academic progress throughout each quarter. If a student's quarterly grade falls below the minimum recommended average, and the decision is made to remain in the course, then the student and parent must sign a form acknowledging that the student's average will be a part of his/her **permanent high school transcript**.
- If the decision is made to reschedule a student into the grade level course, such a request must be made in writing and presented to the student's guidance counselor by the last Tuesday in February. After that date no student will be rescheduled.

Double Skip

In rare instances, entering 6th graders who have been identified by the elementary math resource teacher, the PEP teacher or by their current 6th grade teacher as possessing a unique depth of mathematical knowledge and maturity will be given the opportunity to be screened for the 7th grade accelerated math program. New entrants to the district will also be eligible for this screening. Upon completion of the testing and discussion with the parents, a committee of math teachers, school counselors, administrators and the department leader will review all the student's credentials. Parents will be informed of the decision. Explanation of the future ramifications of the possible move will clearly be explained to the parents before any move is made.

Science Acceleration in the Middle School

Entrance Criteria for **Commencement Level Science in** **Middle School:**

- A student must take the qualifying exam to be considered for the course. A letter explaining the Commencement Level Science course as well as the entrance criteria will be sent to all parents during the third quarter of the 7th grade school year.
- A student with a minimum average of 'B+' in 7th grade science quarters 1 and 2 is automatically eligible to take the qualifying exam.
- Any student who has earned below the minimum average of a 'B+' in 7th grade science quarters 1 and 2 can waive into the entrance process. The waiver process is outlined below. If the parents choose to waive their child into the entrance process, then the student will take the qualifying exam.

Waiver Process:

Parents of students with less than a 'B+' average in 7th grade science quarters 1 and 2 who wish to have their student take the qualifying exam need to file the waiver form prior to the deadline. Information regarding the waiver form and deadlines will be included in the letter that goes out to parents in the third quarter.

The Entrance Criteria Will Include **The Following Six Components:**

Six factors are used to evaluate the placement of a student into the Commencement Level Science course at the Middle School.

1. Qualifying Exam – 40%

The qualifying exam is designed to assess a student's science aptitude such as his/her ability to analyze and critically evaluate data, interpret graphs, and perform basic science and math skills. The exam is divided into three parts:

- a. Analytical Science Skills
- b. Mathematical Competency
- c. Written Scientific Expression

The qualifying exam is administered during the third quarter of the school year.

- 2. 7th grade Science 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarter grades – 20%
- 3. 7th grade English 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarter grade average – 10%
- 4. 7th grade Social Studies 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarter grade average – 10%
- 5. 7th grade Foreign Language 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarter grade – 10%
- 6. 7th grade N.Y. State Math Assessment Raw Score – 10%

Qualification Score:

A minimum average of 85% on the above criteria is required for placement in the Commencement Level Science Course in the middle school.

a) If a student is Foreign Language exempt:

The student will not be penalized. His/her entrance criteria will be based on the remaining components.

b) If a student is a new entrant:

The student will have his/her transcript evaluated by a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school guidance counselor, and the department chairperson/leader. The student is eligible to take the qualifying exam and follow the process outlined above.

c) If a student is a new entrant without a transcript:

The student is eligible to take the qualifying exam and will be evaluated on a case by case basis by a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school guidance counselor, and the department chairperson/leader.

Appeals Framework and Process:

1. Middle level placement decisions should be based on an individual student's academic, social, and emotional well being. Factors such as maturity, anxiety level, the effect of double acceleration, sports and music commitments, membership in co-curricular activities, and outside obligations greatly impact the level of success attainable by middle school students in the Commencement Level Science program. Parents and students should carefully consider these factors in their decision to pursue a commencement level course.
2. Students who are unable to keep up with the challenge and rigor of the course may need to be rescheduled to the grade level science course. Changes in a student's schedule can be disruptive to his/her educational process. It is very likely that if a student is scheduled out of the 8th grade Commencement Level Science course that other changes to his/her schedule may be made as well. These schedule changes could result in the following: change of science teacher, change of math teacher, and/or change in core class grouping, including off house placement.

Appeals Framework and Process:

3. If a student does not meet the minimum matrix score of 85%, should they choose to appeal the process, the following steps must be followed in the order listed:
 - a) parent contacts the student's 7th grade science teacher
 - b) the student's teacher then contacts the student's guidance counselor
 - c) guidance counselor contacts the science lead teacher/department chairperson
4. After the parent has contacted the student's 7th grade science teacher, a written appeals document must be submitted to the building principal explaining the student's extenuating circumstances. This document should contain the reasons an appeal is requested on behalf of the parent(s) as well as the student.

Appeals Framework and Process:

5. Once the appeals document has been submitted, the student will be scheduled for an Intermediate Level Competency Test. Students will be given up to two hours to complete this test which is administered in May. A minimum average of 85% (mastery level) is necessary for the student to be admitted into the Commencement Level Course: *The Physical Setting/Earth Science*. This raw score shows competency of the Intermediate Level Standards which is a prerequisite for Commencement Level coursework.
6. Students who score a minimum of 80% on the Intermediate Level Competency Test will be eligible to file an additional appeal.

Appeals Framework and Process:

An appeals committee consisting of a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school guidance counselor, the department chairperson/leader, and the committee chairperson will hear the student's case. The student's identity will be kept anonymous. The members of the committee will come to a decision based upon the documentation that has been presented. The student's parent(s) will be informed in writing in a timely manner by the committee chairperson.

Criteria to Remain in the Course:

- It is strongly suggested that a student maintains a minimum quarterly average of a 'B' in his/her Commencement Level coursework. Parents, teachers, and students share in the responsibility of maintaining an accurate record of academic progress throughout each quarter. If a student's quarterly grade falls below the minimum recommended average, and the decision is made to remain in the course, then the student and parent must sign a form acknowledging that the student's average will be a part of his/her **permanent high school transcript**.
- If the decision is made to reschedule a student into the grade level course, such a request must be made in writing and presented to the student's guidance counselor by the last Tuesday in February. After that date no student will be rescheduled.