Curriculum Overview

2019-2020/5780 School Year

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About Beit Rabban Day School

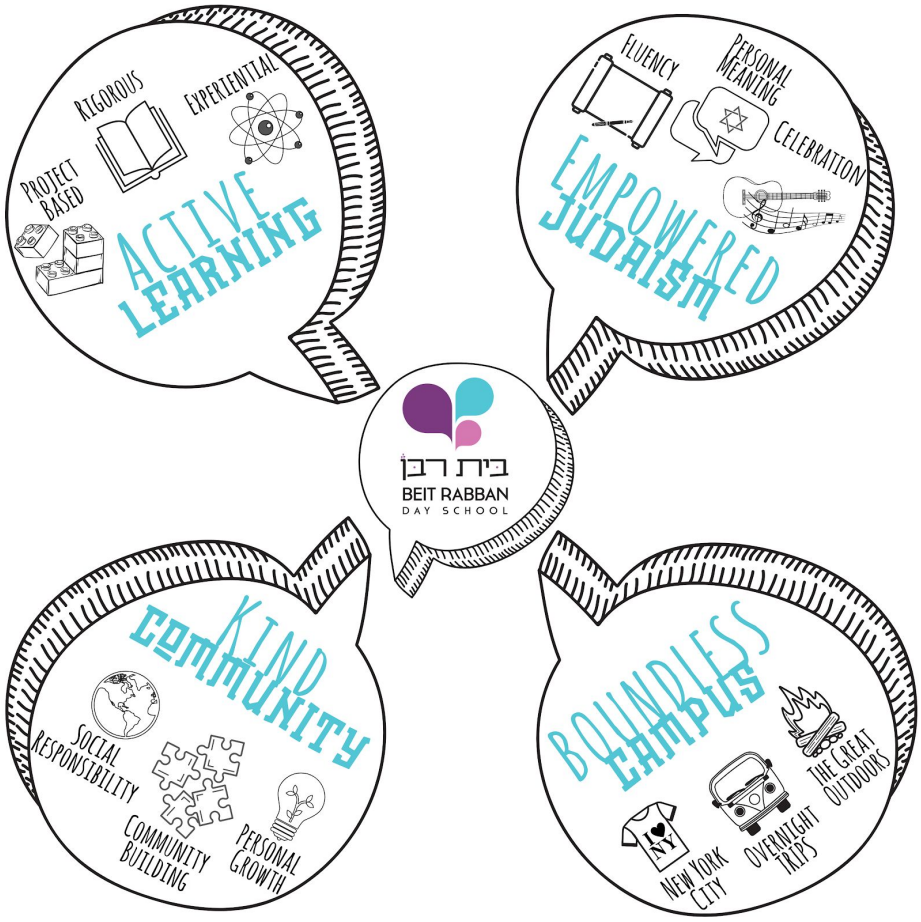
Beit Rabban is a place of rigorous and progressive education with an emphasis on nurturing the whole child. Judaic and secular studies are integrated throughout the day and through project-based units of learning. Our curriculum is designed to foster essential life skills: to cultivate a sense of wonder; a practice of critical thinking; an aptitude for effective teamwork; and a drive to exceed personal expectations.

Beit Rabban is a model of an open-minded Jewish learning community. As a non-denominational school, our families come from various Jewish backgrounds and practices and appreciate that students celebrate the multiplicity of views inherent in our tradition and are given the tools to access Jewish texts. Students grow a deep love and ownership of Judaism and a sense of responsibility to others as a Jewish imperative.

Based on a philosophy of small classes, Beit Rabban is uniquely capable of supporting the individual growth of each student while facilitating an intentional student community. Beit Rabban students develop individual passions, hone multiple skills, and will be well prepared to matriculate to Jewish, private, public, or specialized high schools. Students graduate with an understanding of their essential selves, ready to joyfully continue their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual journeys. Building on a Beit Rabban foundation, our graduates are equipped to become dynamic and responsible stewards of the Jewish future.

The Chativah: Beit Rabban's Middle School

Middle school is a preciously short period with the potential for expansive intellectual and emotional growth. At Beit Rabban, we embrace the opportunity to nurture, support, and challenge emerging adolescents, and we cultivate conditions that students need in order to thrive during adolescence. Middle school students require an authentic sense of belonging in their learning community; a curriculum that is relevant to them and of consequence to the greater society; and the opportunity to make personal meaning of their learning. Their teachers must demonstrate care for each child, be knowledgeable and passionate about their area of expertise, and bring joy and intentionality to the school environment. With these needs in mind, the core pillars of the Beit Rabban Middle School experience are:



Active Learning
using a progressive, experiential educational model that values both rigor and relevance in a balance of skills-based and project-based learning.

Empowered Judaism
that fosters students' fluency while helping them make personal meaning through deep and sophisticated study, joyful practice, and open-minded exchange.

Kind Community
that actively builds character and relationships in a culture of responsibility for ourselves and the many communities to which we belong.

Boundless Campus
that makes the best use of our city's expansive resources and opportunities, serving as a living lab for learning.

All of the infrastructure, curriculum, and programs at the Beit Rabban Middle School are designed to promote these four core pillars. This creates a ripe ecosystem for children to grow as learners, as Jews, and as compassionate and committed members of the various communities with which they identify. To achieve these outcomes, the middle school has a dual curriculum that blends longer blocks for project-based learning with shorter blocks for concrete skills-based learning.

Each grade has five core-subject teachers in Humanities, Judaics (inclusive of Tanakh, Mishna, Gemara, and Tefillah), Math, Science, and Hebrew. Students also have a PE coach, as well as music and arts teachers. Each grade is assigned a "Mentor Teacher" who also teaches that grade a core-subject area.

In addition to getting to know their students through significant teaching time, Mentor Teachers facilitate community meetings with their grade every other week and teach a weekly Mentorship period that includes both set curricula as well as emergent lessons. The set curricula include a series of Executive Functioning classes at the beginning of each year and a multi-week Healthy Living course later in the year. The 8th grade's Executive Functioning curriculum prepares students for different types of high schools, addressing test-taking, homework management skills, note-taking, learning from test performance, and more. Emergent learning during Mentorship addresses current events and related values, communal issues that arise, and student- or Mentor-initiated topics. While middle schoolers get to know each of their five teachers well, and each of their teachers get to know them and are fully aware of their progress in all classes, the Mentor Teacher is designated to be especially connected to the students in their grade. The Mentor Teacher is a team leader for each of their students, ensuring that each child is navigating their coursework effectively and being well-served by all adults who teach and support them. Parents are encouraged to reach out to any of their child's teachers, but they can rely on their child's Mentor Teacher as the primary partner in the child's academic, social, and emotional needs.

In order to facilitate effective interdisciplinary learning and to ensure that each student is known and supported in a way that is consistent with the Beit Rabban Middle School's whole-child educational philosophy, all Middle School teachers meet as a group twice a week to plan and reflect. In partnership with the Principal and the Director of Student Support, the Middle School teaching team is responsible for shaping the day-to-day experience and to engage in long-term strategic planning. A twice weekly Middle School team meeting ensures that Middle School teachers are empowered to act upon this mandate of collaborative leadership.

HUMANITIES

Humanities is the confluence of literature, writing, and social studies. The curriculum is heavily influenced by materials designed by Facing History and Ourselves, the goal of which is for students to turn their learning into action, to see themselves as engaged global citizens, and to know that their actions have consequences in shaping our shared futures.

I. Guiding Principles

- Students learn about themselves, the communities that they are a part of (Jewish communities, NYC, USA, and the world) through interdisciplinary learning with an emphasis on inquiry, relevance, and project based learning.
- The curriculum is heavily influenced by the Facing History and Ourselves materials and approach to history, which teaches that "People make choices. Choices make history." The goal is for students to turn their learning into action, to see themselves as engaged global citizens, to know that actions have consequences in shaping our shared futures.
- Historical events are viewed through multiple perspectives, with an emphasis on primary sources, using literature as companion texts.
- Students begin to develop the concept of a "Universe of Obligation," terminology used by Facing History and Ourselves to engage the question of "to whom are we obligated?" They are challenged to think critically about the consequences of our shared humanity and our responsibilities towards one another.
- The Humanities curriculum includes historical explorations as case studies to develop "enduring understandings."
- The curriculum takes full advantage of the incredible offerings of NYC: the people (experts) and places, including regular, and contextualized field trips.
- Each grade has a unique overnight field trip experience that enhances the curriculum.

II. Skills and Content

- Develop critical thinking, research skills, and text comprehension and analysis through the reading fiction and non-fiction, primary and secondary sources.
- Grammar & vocabulary instruction to continue to develop their command of language.
- Write using a variety of styles such as; expository, narrative, persuasive, and research.
- Exposure to a wide range of literary genres including; historical fiction, science-fiction, fantasy, non-fiction, and poetry.
- Learn how to become careful consumers of information and to be critical of sources.
- Learn to practice academic honesty through the use of proper citation, exploring the implications taking personal responsibility for one's own work and giving credit to others for their work.
- For specific grade level benchmarks, please see the New York State, Next Generation English Language Arts (ELA) Standards, which the Beit Rabban Middle school follows. Grade 5 standards are available here. Grades 6-8 standards are available here.

FIFTH GRADE

Essential Question: Who am I and how did I get here?

Creation and Evolution. Immigration. Family History.

In 5th grade, students explore the big question of "who am I and how did I get here" in both broad and specific terms. They move from the broad sense of how did humans evolve into the specifics of how they themselves came to be, including an integrated unit on human reproduction & an exploration of personal family history.

Scope and sequence of units: ● Mini-unit on early humans and evolution. ● Unit on World Geography to develop map skills and a sense of relationship of place. ● Immigrant experience in America: factors that brought people here, the people who were brought here against their will, examples of waves of immigration in different time periods and common themes that emerge across groups. Meet with immigrants from different parts of the world who will share their stories about how and why they came to America. ● Explorations of own personal family histories through the lens of immigration. How did our families to come to the USA? Where did they come from? How did they get here? ● Heritage Fair - Living Museum culminating project: students engage in the creation of family trees and object based learning and use the story of a family artifact/heirloom to help tell the stories of their own past.	**Primary source documents include:** ● Immigrant/refugee memoirs and testimonials ● Government and institutional documents relating to immigration (e.g. census data, reports on tenement conditions) ● Contemporary media (including print and video) on migration and refugees **Secondary source documents include:** ● Historical fiction related to the American immigrant experience. ● Film than reflect the time. **Field Trips** ● Tenement Museum ● Lower East Side Walking Tour ● Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty ● Manny Cantor Center ● Museum of Jewish Heritage ● Museum of Chinese American Immigration

SIXTH GRADE

Essential Question: What do I believe?

Systems of Belief. Facts and Opinions. Nurture versus Nature.

In the 6th grade, students explore big questions about belief and will be thinking about their own personal beliefs as they learn about what other people believe and belief systems, they consider the questions "What is belief? How do people form their beliefs? What do I believe?" Throughout the 6th grade year students are challenged to think about the difference between fact vs. opinion, and how our beliefs are influenced by the people around us and the information to which they are exposed. Students engage with current events as a powerful lens to further explore what we believe.

SIXTH GRADE cont.

Scope and sequence of units: ● Introductory unit exploring the differences between fact, opinion, belief and myth, with an emphasis on recognizing biases. ● Historical units as case studies on how we use shared beliefs to organize ourselves in society, with a focus on periods/places that have had a significant influence on Judaism. Units include ○ Ancient Greece and Rome ○ The Golden Age of Spain ○ The British Empire ● Integrated unit with the Healthy Living on peer pressure to explore how we are influenced by others. ● Ani Ma'amin culmination: writing personal "Ani Ma'amin statement" shared in communal forum.	**Primary source documents include:** ● Excerpts from Greek and Roman philosophers. ● Abridged versions of classical theater. ● Historical speeches, proclamations and declarations ● National Archives (UK) documents relating to annexation of India ● World & regional maps from different time periods **Secondary source documents include:** ● Historical fiction related to historical case studies. ● Podcasts and Films **Field Trips** ● Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Jewish Museum; NYPL Map Collection; Auction Houses and Galleries

SEVENTH GRADE

Essential Question: What does it mean to be an American?

American Identity. Connection to Israel.

In 7th grade, students engage in an exploration of US History through the lens of multiple perspectives and different narratives. Students begin to grapple with questions about identity, and what it means to be American. They explore the history and current issues around majority and minority culture. Students also explore their relationship to Israel in the context of the history of Zionism and the history of American Jewry's relationship to Israel.

Scope and sequence of potential units: ● The Constitution as a primary source to understand US government and civic responsibilities. ● Populating America - Colonization, Slavery & Expansion (We and They in the USA) ● Civil War & the Reconstruction Era ● History of Zionism ● Historical and Current Relationship between American Jewry and Israel	**Primary source documents might include:** ● The US Constitution ● Excerpts from the writings of many historic figures such as Tribal Leaders, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Abraham Lincoln, Alice Stone Blackwell ● Slave narratives ● Newspaper articles and advertisements ● Photographs, maps and paintings	**Secondary source documents might include:** ● Age-appropriate texts about US history including Facing History and Ourselves resources on the Reconstruction Era ● *The Seeds of America Trilogy*, by Laurie Halse Anderson ● *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie ● *Sugar by Jewell Parker Rhodes* ● *How I Became A Ghost* by Tim Tingle ● *One Came Home* by Amy Timberlake ● *Jefferson's Sons* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

EIGHTH GRADE

Essential Question: How can I make a difference?

Structures and Institutions of Authority. Power and Privilege. Choosing to Participate.

In the 8th grade year, students engage in an exploration of power, the tensions between individual rights and responsibilities towards others and social activism as a catalyst for change. Students continue to explore aspects of US history and current issues around Race and Membership. Students will study the Holocaust and the lingering consequences today. Through the use of Facing History and Ourselves curriculum, students have opportunities to think about their own citizenship as they explore what it means to "choose to participate."

Scope and sequence of potential units: ● Race and Membership - Historic and current issues around race and belonging in the USA. ● Integrated unit on the Depression Era which explores 1930's America, using To Kill a Mockingbird as the focus. ● Holocaust and Human Behavior unit - history of the *Shoah*. Question of how could genocide occur in the heart of Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. Exploration of power, authority, resistance, bystanders, and the concept of Universe of Obligation. ● Civil RIghts Movement and other social change movements of the past and present. Culminating project in which students take on an issue that is important to them and engage in meaningful learning and action.	**Primary source documents might include:** ● Photographs, newspaper articles, poetry and artwork ● Songs from the Civil Rights era ● Videos and speeches from world leaders during WWII ● Holocaust survivor testimony ● *Night* by Elie Wiesel **Secondary source documents might include:** ● *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee ● *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse ● *Parallel Journeys* by Eleanor H. Ayer and Helen Waterford ● *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers ● The *57 Bus* by Dashka Slater ● *The Hate you Give* by Angie Thomas ● *Piecing me Together* by Renee Watson ● Variety of historical fiction about the Civil Rights era

MATH

The core math skills curriculum is designed to closely adhere to the **New York State Next Generation Learning Standards**, which will be fully implemented across New York State by 2020-2021. The Next Generation Learning Standards are intended to build on the strengths of the Common Core State Standards.

I. Guiding Principles

- Students are challenged to develop algebraic skills and thinking, as well as discrete topics such as geometry, probability, and statistics.
- Units emphasize real-world application of math, helping students to apply mathematical thinking and skills to relevant scenarios.
- Studentsare challenged to develop problem solving and critical thinking skills.

II. Skills and Content

The standards describe **ten domains for mathematics instruction** in grades five through eight (see table). As a 'spiraling' curriculum, students work within a domain (or, as is often the case, within a combination of domains) at increasing levels of depth and sophistication, over the course of a number of years. In some cases, a domain explored by older students reflects a natural extension, conceptually, of a domain explored in the younger grades, but domain names change because the procedures, structures, and methodologies warrant it. For example, *Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities* (a domain explored in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades) logically builds on the domain of *Algebraic Thinking* (a domain explored in 5th grade), and the *Measurement and Data* domain (also 5th grade) grows into the more sophisticated domain of *Probability and Statistics*.

Mathematics Domains in Grades 5-8	5th	6th	7th	8th
Number and Operations – Fractions	■			
Ratios and Proportional Relationships		■	■	
Number and Operations in Base Ten	■			
Number System		■	■	■
Operations and Algebraic Thinking	■			
Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities		■	■	■
Functions				■
Measurement and Data	■			
Probability and Statistics		■	■	■
Geometry	■	■		■

The **Next Generation Learning Standards** also identify eight critical areas of expertise (i.e. **skills**) that mathematics educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students.

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them (i.e. explain the meaning of a problem and look for entry points to the solution; plan possible approaches and solutions; consider analogous problems; understand the approaches of others).
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively (i.e. make sense of quantities and their relationships in problem situations; create a coherent representation of the problem at hand; attend to the meaning of quantities and not just how to compute them).
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others (i.e. listen or read the arguments of others, decide whether they make sense and ask useful questions to clarify or improve the arguments; understand and use stated assumptions, definitions, and previously established results in constructing arguments; make conjectures and build a logical progression of statements to explore the truth of their conjectures; justify their conclusions, communicate them to others, and respond to the arguments of others).
4. Model with mathematics (i.e. apply the mathematics they know to solve problems arising in everyday life; identify important quantities in a practical situation and map their relationships using such tools as diagrams, two-way tables, graphs, flowcharts and formulas; analyze those relationships mathematically to draw conclusions).
5. Use appropriate tools strategically (i.e. consider the available tools when solving a mathematical problem; make sound decisions about when these tools might be helpful).
6. Attend to precision (i.e. communicate precisely to others; state the meanings of symbols; calculate accurately and efficiently).
7. Look for and make use of structure (i.e. discern a pattern or structure).
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning (i.e. notice if calculations are repeated; look for methods and shortcuts; maintain oversight of the process, while attending to the details; evaluate the reasonableness of their intermediate results).

FIFTH GRADE

Unit	Domains	Benchmarks (students will be able to:)
Fractions	Number and Operations – Fractions Operations and Algebraic Thinking	● Apply understanding of fractions and fraction models to represent the addition and subtraction of fractions with unlike denominators as equivalent calculations with like denominators. ● Develop fluency in calculating sums and differences of fractions, and make reasonable estimates of them. ● Use the meaning of fractions, multiplication, division, and the relationship between multiplication and division, to understand and explain why the procedures for multiplying and dividing fractions make sense.
Decimals	Operations and Algebraic Thinking Number and Operations in Base Ten	● Extend division to 2-digit divisors. ● Demonstrate understanding of why division procedures work based on the meaning of base-ten numerals and properties of operations. ● Apply understandings of models for decimals, decimal notation, & properties of operations to add/subtract decimals to hundredths. ● Develop fluency with decimal computations to hundredths, and make reasonable estimates of their results. ● Use the relationship between decimals and fractions, as well as the relationship between finite decimals and whole numbers (i.e., a finite decimal multiplied by an appropriate power of 10 is a whole number), to understand and explain why the procedures for multiplying and dividing finite decimals make sense.
Volume	Measurement and Data Geometry	● Recognize volume as an attribute of three-dimensional space. ● Understand that volume can be measured by finding the total number of same-size units of volume required to fill the space without gaps or overlaps. ● Understand that a 1-unit by 1-unit by 1-unit cube is the standard unit for measuring volume. ● Select appropriate units, strategies, and tools for solving problems that involve estimating and measuring volume. ● Decompose three-dimensional shapes and find volumes of right rectangular prisms by viewing them as decomposed into layers of arrays of cubes. ● Measure necessary attributes of shapes in order to determine volumes to solve real world and mathematical problems.

SIXTH GRADE

Unit	Domains	Benchmarks (students will be able to:)
Ratio & Rate	Ratios and Proportional Relationships	• Use reasoning about multiplication and division to solve ratio and rate problems about quantities. • Connect understanding of multiplication and division with ratios and rates by viewing equivalent ratios and rates as deriving from, and extending, pairs of rows (or columns) in the multiplication table, and by analyzing simple drawings that indicate the relative size of quantities. • Expand the scope of problems for which they can use multiplication and division to solve problems, and they connect ratios and fractions.
Intro to Negative Numbers	Number System	• Extend their previous understandings of number and the ordering of numbers to the full system of rational numbers, which includes negative rational numbers, particularly negative integers. • Reason about the order and absolute value of rational numbers and about the location of points on a coordinate plane.
One-Step Equations	Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities	• Write expressions and equations that correspond to given situations, using variables to represent an unknown and describe relationships between quantities. • Understand that expressions in different forms can be equivalent, and use the properties of operations to rewrite and evaluate expressions in equivalent forms. • Use properties of operations and the idea of maintaining the equality of both sides of an equation to solve simple one-step equations.
Polygons	Geometry	• Find areas of polygons, surface areas of prisms, and use area models to understand perfect squares. • Extend formulas for the volume of a right rectangular prism to fractional side lengths and use volume models to understand perfect cubes.
Intro to Data	Probability and Statistics	• Describe and summarize numerical data sets, identifying clusters, peaks, gaps, and symmetry; consider the context of data collected. • Understand the probability of a chance event and develop probability models for simple events.

SEVENTH GRADE

Unit	Domains	Benchmarks (students will be able to:)
Percent	Ratios and Proportional Relationships	• Extend their understanding of ratios and develop understanding of proportionality to solve single- and multi-step problems. • Use their understanding of ratios and proportionality to solve a wide variety of percent problems. • Solve problems about scale drawings by relating corresponding lengths between the objects or by using the fact that relationships of lengths within an object are preserved in similar objects. • Graph proportional relationships and understand the unit rate informally as a measure of the steepness of the related line. • Distinguish proportional relationships from other relationships.
Rational Numbers	Number System Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities	• Develop a unified understanding of number, recognizing fractions, decimals (that have a finite or a repeating decimal representation), and percents as different representations of rational numbers. • Extend addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to all rational numbers, maintaining the properties of operations and the relationships between addition and subtraction, and multiplication and division. • Explain and interpret the rules for adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing with negative numbers by applying properties of operations, & view negative numbers in terms of everyday contexts. • Use the arithmetic of rational numbers as they formulate expressions and equations in one variable and use these equations to solve problems.
Comparing Data Sets	Probability and Statistics	• Build on their previous work with single data distributions to compare two data distributions and address questions about differences between populations. • Begin informal work with random sampling to generate data sets and learn about the importance of representative samples for drawing inferences. • Extend previous understandings of simple probabilities in grade 6 to calculate probabilities of compound events.

EIGHTH GRADE

Unit	Domains	Benchmarks (students will be able to:)
Linear Equations	Number System Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities Probability and Statistics	• Recognize equations for proportions (y/x = m or y = mx) as special linear equations (y = mx + b), understand that the constant of proportionality (m) is the slope, & graphs are lines through origin. • Understand that the slope (m) of a line is a constant rate of change, as well as how the input and output change as a result of the constant rate of change. • Interpret a model in the context of the data by expressing a linear relationship between the two quantities in question. Interpret components of the relationship (such as slope and y-intercept) in terms of the situation. • Solve systems of two linear equations in two variables and relate the systems to pairs of lines in the plane; these intersect, are parallel, or are the same line. • Use linear equations, systems of linear equations, linear functions, and their understanding of slope of a line to represent, analyze, and solve a variety of problems.
Functions	Functions Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities	• Grasp the concept of a function as a rule that assigns to each input exactly one output. • Understand that functions describe situations where one quantity determines another. • Translate among representations and partial representations of functions and describe how aspects of the function are reflected in the different representations.
Angles and Theorems	Geometry	• Use ideas about distance and angles, how they behave under translations, rotations, reflections, and dilations, and ideas about congruence and similarity to describe and analyze two-dimensional figures and to solve problems. • Show that the sum of the angles in a triangle is the angle formed by a straight line, and that various configurations of lines give rise to similar triangles because of the angles created when a transversal cuts parallel lines. • Understand the statement of the Pythagorean Theorem and its converse, and why the Pythagorean Theorem holds. • Apply the Pythagorean Theorem to find distances between points on the coordinate plane, to find lengths, and to analyze polygons.

SCIENCE and ENGINEERING

Science and Engineering is taught in an interdisciplinary way where rigorous academic concepts are coupled with real-world lessons as students apply Science and Engineering in contexts that make connections between school, community and the world.

I. Guiding Principles

- The curriculum is designed to meet the **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)**, a set of rigorous and internationally benchmarked standards developed in 2013 by a consortium of 26 states in collaboration with the National Science Teachers Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the National Research Council (NRC).
- Core disciplinary topics in the curriculum (i.e Properties of Matter) are **spiraled** (intentionally revisited over multiple grades at increasing levels of depth and sophistication).
- Middle school students have opportunities for learning in the **three main branches of science** (Physical, Life, and Earth/Space) during *each* of their four middle school years.
- Each middle school year features a distinct engineering and design element, often in conjunction with the exploration of a relevant modern-day question or problem (such as global warming or the use of fossil fuels). **Laptop computers** are always available for classroom use (at teacher's discretion).
- Students in Fifth Grade have periods a week of Science and Engineering, and four periods a week in Sixth-Eighth Grades. These periods are divided between single and double block periods, the latter allow for deeper research and experimentation.
- The Science and Engineering program takes advantage of the incredible array of resources available to us in New York, and each grade has an annual **Science and Engineering field trip**. Science and Engineering activities are also be integrated into the **P.A.R.D.E.S. program**.

II. Skills and Content

In each year of the middle school, students learn how to:

- Correctly use safety equipment while conducting an experiment
- Identify testable scientific questions
- Create a prediction or hypothesis for a scientific investigation
- Explain how hypotheses are revised and tested to eventually produce scientific theories
- Identify and take metric measurements for length, temperature, mass, and time
- Safely use appropriate tools to make measurements, including meter sticks, thermometers, balances, and stopwatches
- Distinguish between observations and other information (including inferences)
- Make observations and collect data in a table or chart
- Describe the characteristics of a scientific experiment and identify situations in which experiments are useful
- Identify independent and dependent variables, and factors which should be controlled in an experiment
- Design an experiment to investigate a scientific problem
- Describe the importance of conducting multiple trials in an experiment and having results verified by other scientists
- Understand how to identify patterns in data using statistical methods such as mean, median, mode, and range
- Describe the accuracy and precision of experimental data
- Create and interpret graphs

- Identify the advantages and limitations of different scientific models
- Conduct research about a topic in science
- Draw conclusions and predict trends based on scientific data
- Present experimental results to others in written reports and oral presentations
- Evaluate scientific evidence (how to distinguish valid sources of information and samples of data, identify flaws in reasoning, and recognize alternate interpretations of data)

FIFTH GRADE

Branch of Science	**Unit**	**Unit Question**
Physical & Life Science	Modeling Matter	What happens when two substances are mixed together?
Student Performance Expectations:		
• Develop a model to describe that matter is made of particles too small to be seen. • Measure and graph quantities to provide evidence that regardless of the type of change that occurs when heating, cooling, or mixing substances, the total weight of matter is conserved. • Make observations and measurements to identify materials based on their properties.		

Physical & Life Science	Ecosystem Restoration	How do organisms in an ecosystem get the matter and energy they need to grow and thrive?
Student Performance Expectations:		
• Support an argument that plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air and water. • Support an argument that plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air & water. • Develop a model to describe that matter is made of particles too small to be seen. • Use models to describe that energy in animals' food (used for body repair, growth, motion, and to maintain body warmth) was once energy from the sun. • Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment.		

Physical & Earth Science	The Earth System	What can determine how much water is available for human use?
Student Performance Expectations:		
• Support an argument that differences in the apparent brightness of the sun compared to other stars is due to their relative distances from Earth. • Represent data in graphical displays to reveal patterns of daily changes in length and direction of shadows, day and night, and the seasonal appearance of some stars in the night sky. • Support an argument that the gravitational force exerted by Earth on objects is directed down.		

FIFTH GRADE cont.

Branch of Science	Unit	Unit Question
Earth/Space Science	Pattern of Earth and Sky	Why do we see different stars at different times?

Student Performance Expectations:

- Develop a model using an example to describe ways the geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and/or atmosphere interact.
- Describe and graph the amounts and percentages of water and fresh water in various reservoirs to provide evidence about the distribution of water on Earth.
- Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment.
- Develop a model to describe that matter is made of particles too small to be seen.
- Measure and graph quantities to provide evidence that regardless of the type of change that occurs when heating, cooling, or mixing substances, the total weight of matter is conserved.
- Conduct an investigation to determine whether the mixing of two or more substances results in new substances.
- Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want that includes specified criteria for success and constraints on materials, time, or cost.
- Generate and compare multiple possible solutions to a problem based on how well each is likely to meet the criteria and constraints of the problem.
- Plan and carry out fair tests in which variables are controlled and failure points are considered to identify aspects of a model or prototype that can be improved.

SIXTH GRADE

Branch of Science	Unit	Unit Question
Life Science	Microbiome	How can having 100 trillion microorganisms on and in the human body keep us healthy?
Life Science	Metabolism	How do the trillions of cells in the human body get what they need to function, and what do the cells do with the things they absorb?

Student Performance Expectations:

- Conduct an investigation to provide evidence that living things are made of cells; either one cell or many different numbers and types of cells
- Develop and use a model to describe the function of a cell as a whole and ways the parts of cells contribute to the function.
- Use argument supported by evidence for how the body is a system of interacting subsystems composed of groups of cells

SIXTH GRADE cont.

Branch of Science	Unit	Unit Question
Engineering	Metabolism	Design Challenge

Student Performance Expectations:

- Define the criteria and constraints of a design problem with sufficient precision to ensure a successful solution, taking into account relevant scientific principles and potential impacts on people and the natural environment that may limit possible solutions.
- Evaluate competing design solutions using a systematic process to determine how well they meet the criteria and constraints of the problem.
- Evaluate competing design solutions using a systematic process to determine how well they meet the criteria and constraints of the problem.
- Develop a model to generate data for iterative testing and modification of a proposed object, tool, or process such that an optimal design can be achieved.

Life Science	Traits and Reproduction	Why do traits vary, and why do they vary even between parents and offspring and among siblings?

Student Performance Expectations:

- Develop and use a model to describe the function of a cell as a whole and ways parts of cells contribute to the function.
- Use argument based on empirical evidence and scientific reasoning to support an explanation for how characteristic animal behaviors and specialized plant structures affect the probability of successful reproduction of animals and plants respectively.
- Construct a scientific explanation based on evidence for how environmental and genetic factors influence the growth of organisms.
- Develop and use a model to describe why structural changes to genes (mutations) located on chromosomes may affect proteins and may result in harmful, beneficial, or neutral effects to the structure and function of the organism.
- Develop and use a model to describe why asexual reproduction results in offspring with identical genetic information and sexual reproduction results in offspring with genetic variation.
- Gather and synthesize information about the technologies that have changed the way humans influence the inheritance of desired traits in organisms.

Physical Science	Thermal Energy	What is happening when the air in the school gets warmer?

Student Performance Expectations:

- Apply scientific principles to design, construct, and test a device that either minimizes or maximizes thermal energy transfer.
- Plan an investigation to determine the relationships among the energy transferred, the type of matter, the mass, and the change in the average kinetic energy of the particles as measured by the temperature of the sample.
- Construct, use, and present arguments to support the claim that when the kinetic energy of an object changes, energy is transferred to or from the object.

SIXTH GRADE cont.

Branch of Science	Unit	Unit Question
Physical & Earth Science	Ocean Atmosphere and Climate	What determines the air temperature of a location on Earth?
Student Performance Expectations:		
• Develop and use a model to describe how unequal heating and rotation of the Earth cause patterns of atmospheric and oceanic circulation that determine regional climates.		

Physical & Earth Science	Weather Patterns	Why do some rain storms have more rain than others?
Student Performance Expectations:		
• Develop a model to describe the cycling of water through Earth's systems driven by energy from the sun and the force of gravity. • Collect data to provide evidence for how the motions and complex interactions of air masses results in changes in weather conditions.		

Physical & Earth Science	Earth's Changing Climate	Why is the ice on Earth's surface melting?
Student Performance Expectations:		
• Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing a human impact on the environment. • Construct an argument supported by evidence for how increases in human population and per-capita consumption of natural resources impact Earth's systems. • Ask questions to clarify evidence of the factors that have caused the rise in global temperatures over the past century.		

Engineering	Earth's Changing Climate	Design Challenge
Student Performance Expectations:		
• Evaluate competing design solutions using a systematic process to determine how well they meet the criteria and constraints of the problem. • Analyze data from tests to determine similarities and differences among several design solutions to identify the best characteristics of each that can be combined into a new solution to better meet the criteria for success. • Develop a model to generate data for iterative testing and modification of a proposed object, tool, or process such that an optimal design can be achieved. • Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing a human impact on the environment.		

SEVENTH GRADE

Expected Units to be covered:

Branch of Science	Unit	Unit Question
Earth & Space Science	Geology on Mars	How can we search for evidence that other planets were once habitable?

Earth & Space Science	Plate Motion	Why are Mesosaurus fossils separated by thousands of kilometers of ocean when the species once lived all together?

Engineering	Plate Motion	Design Challenge
• How can we design an effective tsunami warning system?		

Earth & Space Science	Rock Transformations	Why are rock samples from the Great Plains and from the Rocky Mountains composed of such similar minerals, when they look so different and come from different areas?

Physical Science	Phase Change	Why did the methane lake on Titan disappear?

Engineering	Phase Change	Design Challenge
• How can we design portable baby incubators that use phase change to keep babies at a healthy temperature?		

Physical Science	Chemical Reactions	Why is there a mysterious brown substance in the tap water of Westfield?

Life Science	Populations and Resources	What caused the size of the moon jelly population in Glacier Sea to increase?

Life Science	Matter and Energy in Ecosystems	Why did the biodome ecosystem collapse?

EIGHTH GRADE

Expected Units to be covered:

Branch of Science	Unit	Unit Question
Physical Science	Harnessing Human Energy	How can rescue workers get energy for their equipment during rescue missions?
Physical Science	Force and Motion	What happened in the missing seconds when the space pod should have docked with the space station?
Engineering	Force and Motion	Design Challenge
• How can we design delivery pods that are damaged as little as possible when dropped?		
Physical Science	Magnetic Fields	Why did the tests of a magnetic spacecraft launcher not go as planned?
Physical Science	Light Waves	Why is there a higher rate of skin cancer in Australia than in other parts of the world ?
Earth and Space Science	Earth, Moon, and Sun	How can an astrophotographer plan for the best times to take photos of specific features on the moon?
Life Science	Natural Selection	What caused the newt population in Oregon State Park to become more poisonous?
Engineering	Natural Selection	Design Challenge
• How can we design treatments for malaria that don't lead to drug resistance?		
Life Science	Evolutionary History	Is this mystery fossil more closely related to wolves or whales?

HEBREW

The Hebrew program is designed to provide compelling and challenging Hebrew language instruction so students develop the oral and written communication skills needed to meaningfully engage with contemporary Israeli life and culture and navigate Jewish texts in Hebrew. The program is designed in accordance with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Guidelines, with specific goals, vocabulary, and abilities being refined from class to class.

I. Guiding Principles

- Use of a Proficiency Approach, emphasizing the immediate surroundings of the students and their functional ability in the language.
- Hebrew periods are conducted exclusively in Hebrew.
- Small group instruction, leveled based upon a continuum of language learning.
- Organic opportunities to delve into the topics of the interdisciplinary units in Hebrew, giving students the opportunity to discuss these new content areas in their second language.

II. Skills

Units of study are designed and implemented within the framework of the ACTFL standards and these standards provide performance benchmarks for assessment of the four skills of language learning.

These four skills include:

- Reading: Ability to fluently and accurately decode words and comprehend leveled written texts.
- Listening Comprehension: Ability to understand teacher instruction, classroom conversation, and leveled multi-media sources.
- Speaking: Ability to respond verbally to teacher prompts and questions, to engage in classroom conversation, to make presentations.
- Writing: Ability to respond in writing to questions and prompts, to express opinions in writing, to craft narratives using grammatical conventions and leveled vocabulary.

Grouping by proficiency allows students to participate in classes geared toward their language level.

Students are divided into groups that are designed to either:

- Develop their proficiency in conversation, reading and writing skills.
- Provide extra support to strengthen basic reading and writing skills.
- Build deeper sophistication in fluent conversation, reading and writing.

III. Content

The content of Hebrew learning focuses on three core areas of learning. These core areas provide dynamic and relevant subjects from which to build language skills and opportunities for interdisciplinary integration related to essential questions and whole school projects and programs.

The three focus areas are:

- תרבות ישראלית (Tarbut Yisraelit) – Israeli culture and society.
- חגי ישראל (Chaggei Yisrael) – Jewish and Israeli holidays.
- אני ועולמי (Ani V'Olami) – Students' lived experience.

IV. Source Material

In teaching at all levels and across content areas, teachers draw from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including written and audio-visual material such as:

- Curricula:
    - חברים בערית
    - מילה טובה
    - עברית לדרך
    - חגים בעברית
- Newspapers/Magazines
    - ינשוף
    - עיניים (Einayyim) Magazine
    - אדם צעיר (Adam Tza'ir) magazines
- Short Stories
- Novels
- Poetry
- Modern and Classic Israeli Songs
- Modern Israeli Television and Film

TANAKH (CHUMASH & NAVI)

Developed in accordance with the Standards for Fluency in Jewish Text and Practice, the Tanakh curriculum leads students toward developing the skills and dispositions to have an autonomous relationship with the biblical text, independently navigating its breadth, delving into its depth and expressing its relevance and meaning in their own lives.

I. Guiding Principles

- Tanakh is divided into three components of study: b'iyun (in-depth), bekiut (breadth) and parashat hashavua (weekly Torah portion).
- The b'iyun component includes selected texts from Chumash and Navi that integrate with and support the humanities curriculum. Students engage in a close reading of these texts, focusing on precise translation and sophisticated interpretation. This study also includes classical rabbinic commentaries from the medieval period & related midrashim.
- The bekiut component focuses on exposure to the breadth of the canon. By the conclusion of eighth grade, students have learned the entire Chumash and much of Nevi'im Rishonim. Students engage in this study independently and convene weekly to summarize content, put events on a timeline, analyze characters and discuss student-generated questions. A siyum at the end of the year demonstrates students' learning and celebrate their completion of two whole books of the Tanakh.
- The parashat hashavua component can either take the form of b'iyun or bekiut study. In a b'iyun model, students engage in a deep analysis of a selected portion of the parashah, researching different commentaries, drawing their own conclusions and applying their learning to their own lives. In a bekiut model, students read the entire parashah, tracking main events, characters and identifying big picture themes.
- Through these different components, students engage in independent learning, chavruta study & full group discussion & learn to navigate resources in a beit midrash.
- Using the Pedagogy of Partnership model of chavruta learning, students build relationships with each other and the text as they develop their abilities to articulate, listen, wonder, focus, challenge and support.

II. Skills and Content

FIFTH GRADE

Skills	Content
• Read pesukim accurately and with speed • Employ a variety of strategies to attempt to translate biblical narrative and non-narrative texts independently • Construct an argument or offer an interpretation based on proof from the biblical text • Identify textual difficulties and offer solutions • Decode Rashi script • Read and translate select classical commentaries accurately • Name parshiyot of Bereishit and Shemot in order • Describe the broad arc of the narrative found within the Chumash, placing characters and events on a timeline • Describe concepts, institutions and mitzvot (Shabbat, mishkan, korbanot, kashrut, holidays) from the Torah	B'iyun: Who Am I and How Did I Get Here? Shemot 1-17 (Slavery, Exodus, Revelation) Bekiut: Shemot 18-40 (23 chapters - Revelation, laws, Mishkan, Golden Calf) and Shmuel Aleph (31 chapters)

SIXTH GRADE

Skills	Content
• Read pesukim accurately, with speed and with ta'amei hamikra • Translate unseen pesukim accurately using a variety of strategies • Compare and contrast biblical texts • Develop a sustained analysis or interpretation based on proof from the biblical text • Distinguish between peshat and derash textual interpretations • Summarize & explain the interpretations of classical commentaries • Name parshiyot of Vayikra in order	B'iyun: What do I believe? How do people form their beliefs? • Shemot 19-20 (Revelation) • Midrashim about Avraham discovering God • Numbers 13-14 (spies) Bekiut: Vayikra (27 chapters) and Shmuel Bet (24 chapters)

SEVENTH GRADE

Skills	Content
• Develop a sustained analysis or interpretation based on the biblical text being studied, other biblical texts & commentaries • Describe different methodologies in parshanut and identify when a particular methodology is being used • Analyze the interpretations of different commentaries • Articulate themes and values implicit in biblical text • Compose and deliver a dvar Torah that demonstrates textual understanding and practical application • Name parshiyot of Bamidbar in order	B'iyun: TBD Bekiut: Bamidbar (36 chapters) and Melachim Aleph (22 chapters)

EIGHTH GRADE

Skills	Content
• Use dictionary and concordance independently to deepen understanding of biblical text • Develop multiple analyses or interpretations based on the biblical text being studied, other biblical texts & commentaries • Compare & evaluate the interpretations of different commentaries • Compare the values expressed in the biblical text to contemporary society's values • Name parshiyot of Devarim in order • Name the books of Chumash, Nevi'im Rishonim and 5 Megillot • Give a one-sentence summary of each book of Tanakh learned • Explain concepts, institutions, and mitzvot from the Torah, including Shabbat, mishkan, korbanot, kashrut and holidays	B'Iyun: Who holds authority? How do we balance our individual rights with our responsibilities towards others? What actions can we take to protest inequality and injustice? • Exodus 21-22 (laws) • Leviticus 19 (laws) • Numbers 16 (Korach) • Numbers 27 (Daughters of Tzelofchad) Bekiut: Devarim (34 chapters) and Melachim Bet (25 chapters)

TORAH SHE-BE-AL PEH ("TOSHBA")

The TOSHBA curriculum is designed in accordance with the Standards for Fluency in Jewish Text and Practice to expose students to a wide variety of rabbinic texts and to ensure that they develop the skills and dispositions necessary to understand the relationships between them and appreciate the multiple facets of rabbinic literature.

I. Guiding Principles

- Students will independently read and understand rabbinic texts in simple Hebrew (like the Mishnah, Shulchan Aruch, Mishneh Torah, aggadot and midrashim) and will be able to identify key words and structures of the Talmud.
- In 5th-7th grades, the TOSHBA curriculum focuses on exposing students to a broad array of mishnayot and midrashim as well as some halakhic texts. It exposes students to Talmud as part of introducing them to the process through which halakhah develops in text and history.
- In 8th grade, the TOSHBA curriculum will immerse students in the study of Talmud.
- A dual emphasis is be placed on b'iyun (in-depth) and bekiut (breadth) study. The b'iyun component is thematic, integrated with other areas of the curriculum and expose students to a range of rabbinic texts on a single topic. Frequently it involves project-based learning. The bekiut component focuses on exposure to the breadth of Mishnah by covering entire chapters of the Mishnah from different orders.
- Topics that are covered in TOSHBA include Jewish holidays, tefillah and brachot, interpersonal ethics, Shabbat, and kashrut.

II. Skills and Content

FIFTH GRADE

Benchmarks (Skills)	Content/Potential Units
• Describe Torah She-Be-Al Peh as a source of our normative decision-making as rabbinic Jews and as the record of the project of interpreting Torah She-Bi-Khtav • Name orders of the Mishnah • Name rabbinic figures frequently mentioned in the Mishnah • Navigate book of Mishnah, identifying seder, massekhet, perek, mishnah, commentaries • Read mishnayot accurately • Employ a variety of strategies to attempt to translate the Mishnah (including context, identifying parts of speech, identifying shorashim, identifying key structural terms and referring to a dictionary) • Break individual mishnayot into cases, different rulings and reasons for those rulings • Begin to analyze & interpret Mishnah using textual and logical proofs	B'iyun: • Introduction to Mishnah - Pirkei Avot 1 • Hashavat Aveidah - Bava Metzia 2 • Kiddush HaChodesh - Rosh HaShanah 2 • Brachot on Food - Brachot 6 • Kashrut - Chullin 3 and 8 (selections) plus later rabbinic texts & contemporary approaches

SIXTH GRADE

Benchmarks (Skills)	Content/Potential Units
● Read mishnayot accurately and fluently ● Read short Hebrew excerpts from rabbinic literature (including halakhah and aggadah) accurately and fluently ● Translate unseen mishnayot using a variety of strategies (including context, identifying parts of speech, identifying shorashim, identifying key structural terms and referring to a dictionary) ● Analyze and interpret rabbinic texts using textual and logical proofs ● Explain how individual rabbinic texts respond to the biblical text ● Compare and contrast rabbinic texts on the same topic ● Develop beginning familiarity with post-Mishnaic rabbinic sources such as Gemara, Rambam, Shulchan Arukh	B'iyun: What do I believe? How do people form their beliefs? ● Tefillah - beliefs about prayer, what do I pray for, laws of prayer, creation of personalized siddur (see tefillah curriculum) ● Rambam - Ani Ma'amin ● Texts on rabbinic authority Bekiut: ● Ta'anit 1 and 3 (when to pray for rain, when to declare a fast) - 16 mishnayot ● Megillah (selections related to reading Megillah and reading Torah) ● Zevachim 5 (Where in the Temple different sacrifices were offered) ● Tahorot 5:1-6 (Uncertainty about one's status as pure or impure) ● Keilim 1:6-9 (Hierarchy of holy places)

SEVENTH GRADE

Benchmarks (Skills)	Content/Potential Units
● Navigate reference dictionaries and commentaries effectively to aid in the translation of select rabbinic texts ● Analyze and evaluate how individual rabbinic texts respond to the biblical text ● Evaluate rabbinic texts learned using textual and logical proof ● Place post-Mishnaic rabbinic sources such as Gemara, Rambam and Shulchan Arukh in geographical and historical contexts ● Consult, with support, post-Mishnaic rabbinic sources to further understanding of topics studied	B'iyun: ● Shabbat ● Tefillin Bekiut: ● Bava Kamma 3 (damages in public domain) ● Sanhedrin 3 and 4 (workings of a Beit Din) ● Makkot 2 (cities of refuge) ● Sukkah 1-2 (building a Sukkah) or Yoma 8 (abstaining on Yom Kippur) ● Pesachim 10 (the seder) ● Bikkurim 3 (ritual of first fruits in the Temple)

EIGHTH GRADE

Benchmarks (Skills)	Content/Potential Units
● Articulate the role/value of Torah She-Be-Al Peh in their own lives ● Describe relationship of Mishnah and Gemara ● Identify different parts of a page of Vilna Shas ● Read, punctuate, and translate sugya in Vilna Shas, provided the sugya is mostly in Hebrew and deals with a familiar topic ● Translate and explain the function of key structural terms in the Gemara (tanu rabbanan, t'nan, meitivei, etc.) ● Begin to identify structural components of sugyot in the Gemara ● Name at least ten major Tannaim and Amoraim	● Gemara: Sanhedrin or Bava Kama ● B'Iyun: Who holds authority? How do we balance our individual rights with our responsibilities towards others? What actions can we take to protest inequality and injustice? ● Exploration of Rabbinic criminal justice system

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Students learn social skills and engage in conversations about their own social-emotional development throughout the day with an in depth focus on SEL during their weekly Mentorship period, twice-weekly community meetings by grade, and weekly whole Middle School Community Meeting that is facilitated by the students themselves. SEL is integrated Humanities and Judaic Studies. Students study the following SEL topics:

- Self Awareness
- Self-Concept
- Communication
- Relationships
- Peer Pressure
- Respect and Kindness
- Coping and Self-Regulation
- Happiness
- Resilience
- Motivation
- Responsibility and Decision Making
- Digital Safety and Citizenship
- Social Justice

In addition to the integration of SEL through various subject areas, specific periods of SEL include:

SEL Period	Frequency	Content & Methodology	Participants	Facilitator
Mentorship	Weekly 45 minute period	• Executive Functioning • SEL Curriculum • Emergent Topics	By Grade	Mentor Teacher (either Humanities or Judaics teacher depending on year)
Community Meeting	Bi-weekly 45 minute period	SEL Curriculum and emergent conversations, using Positive Discipline community meeting structure.	By Grade	Mentor Teacher
Middle School Community Meeting	Bi-Weekly 45 minute period	Emergent topics, using Positive Discipline community meeting structure.	Whole Middle School	Student facilitated with supervision of Director of Student Support

HEALTHY LIVING

Each year of the Middle School, students take an eight week class in Healthy Living that includes units on Physical Health, Mental Health and Sex Education. Students engage these topics in an age-appropriate context, each grade learning the spiraling curriculum through the context of different essential questions that often, but not always, parallel the essential questions students are studying in Humanities.

FIFTH GRADE

My Body, My Self:

Who am I? What do I love about myself? How do I define happiness and why is it so important in my life? What does it mean to be "healthy"? How do I deal with conflict and challenge?

In 5th Grade, students reflect on who they are and develop skills to better understand their physical, emotional, mental and sexual selves. They explore topics such as nutrition, exercise, self-regulation, dealing with conflict, stress management and self-esteem. This focus also allows for students to deepen their understanding about their changing bodies as they approach puberty.

Physical Health	Mental Health	Sex Education
• Exercise • Hygiene • Lifestyle Choices • Nutrition	• Self Esteem • Anxiety • Self Care and Mindfulness • Body Image	• Consent • Puberty • Reproduction

SIXTH GRADE

Relationships:

How am I different/ the same as others? How do I fit in and how do I stand out? Why are relationships important to me? What are the elements that build a strong friendship? How does being healthy affect our relationships with others?

In 6th Grade, students explore themselves in relation to others and delve deep into discussions around the different relationships we have (peer, school, family, community, sexual). Students this age are beginning to develop a sense of identity, differentiating themselves from others, while also tackling a strong desire to be part of a group. Students therefore explore peer pressure in great depth this year and how our peer groups shape who we are.

Physical Health	Mental Health	Sex Education
• Exercise • Hygiene • Lifestyle Choices • Nutrition	• Self Esteem • Anxiety • Self Care & Mindfulness • Body Image • Stress	• Consent • Puberty • Reproduction • Sexual & Gender Identity • Sexual Relations & Intimacy

SEVENTH GRADE

My Community, My Values, My Identity:

How does my culture and community influence my sexual and gender identity? What are the individual's and the community's responsibilities to each other? What social constructs can be learned from my community? How does my community influence my mental health?

7th graders will begin thinking about their own beliefs and values, where they come from and how this shapes their identity. Students will explore and question community--which will closely integrate with Jewish identity--and how this has shaped us, socially, emotionally, physically and sexually. For example: what does Judaism teach us about sexuality and how does growing up in a Jewish community help us to understand gender roles? Further, students will begin to learn about mental health problems and prevention.

Physical Health	**Mental Health**	**Sex Education**
● Exercise ● Hygiene ● Lifestyle Choices ● Nutrition	● Self Esteem ● Anxiety ● Self Care and Mindfulness ● Body Image ● Stress ● Addiction/Substance Abuse ● Depression ● Self Harm and Suicide	● Consent ● Puberty ● Reproduction ● Sexual and Gender Identity ● Sexual Relations and Intimacy

EIGHTH GRADE

My World and How I Can Make Change:

What is social justice? To what extent does culture/society shape our understanding of happiness and how we achieve it? What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility? How does the media shape our view of the world and impact our physical and mental health?

8th Graders will continue to explore previous topics but will move to a focus of the world around us and how we fit into that world. 8th graders will work on skills related to preparedness for life outside of middle school and will also think deeply about social justice and how we as individuals can make change. 8th graders will learn how to make responsible decisions upon entering high school that positively impact their social well-being, and their physical, mental and sexual health.

Physical Health	**Mental Health**	**Sex Education**
● Exercise ● Healthcare ● Hygiene ● Lifestyle Choices ● Nutrition	● Self Esteem ● Anxiety ● Self Care & Mindfulness ● Body Image ● Stress ● Addiction/Substance Abuse ● Depression ● Self Harm; Suicide	● Consent ● Puberty ● Reproduction ● Sexual & Gender Identity ● Sexual Relations & Intimacy ● Sexually Transmitted Diseases

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Executive Functioning skills are taught through a spiraling curriculum beginning in Grade 5, with skills deepening and continuously developing through Grade 8.

FIFTH & SIXTH GRADES

Students get an introduction to executive functioning skills and develop a preliminary understanding of their own strengths and challenges as learners through discussion about metacognition. The focus is on attending and maintaining focus during class assignments and homework assignments, developing systems of organization for materials, building skills in calendaring and planning daily schedules as well as planning for short term assignments and projects.

SEVENTH & EIGHTH GRADES

Students will focus on deepening their understanding about themselves as learners including what strategies do and don't work for them and what learning abilities and challenges they relate to. 7th and 8th graders will delve deep into study skills, learning how to organize information, take notes, differentiate between important and trivial information, break down very large tasks, and manage time effectively. 7th and 8th graders will plan and carry out long-term projects with timelines. 8th graders will focus on test-taking skills, including practice and actual tests of various forms throughout the year, in preparation for exmission to high school. As part of test-prep instruction, students will be personalizing their own study methods based on their own learning strengths and challenges and what kind of "learner" they are. Students will study the following executive functioning skills:

- Metacognition
- Learning Abilities and Disabilities
- Goal Setting
- Flexible Thinking
- Materials Management
- Planning and Organizing
- Prioritizing
- Note Taking
- Study Skills
- Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Accessing Working Memory
- Self-Monitoring and Checking
- Task Initiation and Completion
- Self-Regulation
- Test Prep (8th Grade)

TEFILLAH (Prayer)

Tefillah at the Beit Rabban Middle School is designed to align with the Standards for Fluency in Jewish Text and Practice (pp. 56-65) to ensure students can fluently recite the words of the tefillot, navigate the siddur, explain the main themes of each tefillah and meaningfully connect the words of the tefillot to their own lives.

I. Guiding Principles

- The Tefillah curriculum supports students' spiritual growth, helping them to cultivate the dispositions of awe, gratitude, yearning and compassion.
- When relevant, practice and/or study of Tefillot is integrated into Healthy Living and other elements of the Social Emotional Learning curriculum.
- The Tefillah program consists of practical prayer as well as Iyun Tefillah (learning about tefillah).
- The iyun tefillah program focuses on deepening students' understanding of the siddur and relationship with tefillot.
- When relevant, the Tefillah curriculum exposes students to the diversity of Jewish prayer practices through relationships and partnerships with communal institutions like local synagogues.

II. Essential Questions

- Why do I pray?
- What is my responsibility to the people with whom I pray in community?
- What do I like about Tefillah? What is hard for me about Tefillah? How can I work on that?
- What do I think about God?
- What is amazing about our world?
- What am I thankful for?
- What do I want to ask for?

III. Skills & Dispositions

- Demonstrate respect for Tefillah
- Reflect on feelings about *tefillot* and the prayer experience
- Develop and employ strategies for increasing *kavannah* in Tefillah
- Connect experiences of awe, gratitude, yearning, and compassion to individual *tefillot*
- Set goals for Tefillah experience and spiritual growth
- Self-assess prayer experience in order to work towards goals for spiritual growth

Skills & Dispositions cont.

FIFTH GRADE

Benchmarks (Performance Skills)	Benchmarks (Content Knowledge)
• Recite weekday Shacharit (from Yotzer Or through the Amidah, as well as Birkot Ha-Shachar and selections of Pesukei De-Zimra) and Hallel accurately and fluently • Lead portions of a service	• Identify structural components of Shacharit and Mincha services • Navigate within *siddur* to find the following services: weekday Shacharit and Minchah, Hallel, *amidot* for Yom Tov • Navigate within *siddur* to find key *tefillot* in weekday Shacharit • Be aware of changes to the liturgy for special days (Hallel, Ya'aleh ve-Yavo, insertions for Aseret Yemei Teshuvah) • Employ a variety of strategies to translate *tefillot* • Engage in respectful dialogue about Tefillah, including interpretations of *tefillot*, the experience of Tefillah, and theology

SIXTH GRADE

Benchmarks (Performance Skills)	Benchmarks (Content Knowledge)
• Recite weekday Shacharit and Mincha accurately and fluently • Recite full Hallel accurately and fluently • Participate appropriately in communal prayer (responding during Kedushah, Kaddish, Torah service) • Lead portions of a service • Take an *aliyah*, reciting *berakhot* accurately and fluently, and demonstrating familiarity with the choreography of an *aliyah*	• Develop personal interpretation of individual *tefillot* based on the meaning of the words, place in structure of the *siddur*, and knowledge of biblical or rabbinic sources quoted • Demonstrate familiarity with key rabbinic texts that relate to the origins of Tefillah and its purpose (Mishnah Berakhot 1-5; Talmud Bavli Berakhot 26b—origin of *tefillot* in sacrifices or ancestors) • Demonstrate awareness of the *siddur* as a compiled text that evolved over time and in different places

SEVENTH GRADE

Benchmarks (Performance Skills)
• *Leyn* an average-sized *aliyah* accurately and fluently

EIGHTH GRADE

Benchmarks (Performance Skills)	Benchmarks (Content Knowledge)
• Lead complete service (Shacharit or Minchah)	• Main themes, translation, and key vocabulary of each *tefillah* that is recited as part of daily Tefillah

IV. Structure of Daily Prayer

There are two formal tefillah periods during the day, a time for Shacharit in the morning and a time Mincha in the afternoon. The structure of our daily prayer balances a number of communal values:

- Appreciation of the diversity of denominational affiliation and ritual practice within the Beit Rabban community.
- Respect for tefillah as an authentic experience based in obligation that many define within the parameters of the halachic system to which they subscribe.
- The power of a communal prayer experience to impact a student's spiritual development and to strengthen the bonds among community members.
- Importance of knowing how to pray as an essential component of Jewish fluency.
- Importance of sustaining & advancing students' Torah reading skills, begun in 2nd Grade.
- The belief that fluency in prayer necessitates regular practice that is scaffolded with intermittent and intentional instruction.

With these values in mind, the daily tefillah practice at Beit Rabban includes a combination of (1) whole middle school prayer without counting a Minyan of students and teachers; (2) whole middle school prayer that includes the Torah service and does depend on a Minyan of participants; (3) prayer by class without a Minyan; and (4) prayer in an existing, likely denominationally based, off-site Minyan. The Shacharit schedule (once we have B'nai Mitzvah, approx. 7th grade) is as follows:

- Monday: Prayer at an existing Minyan of a family's choice before the start of school at 8:45AM. Families will share their plan with our Director of Judaic Studies in advance of each semester. Please note that there is a daily Orthodox Minyan in the Jewish Center, the site of our Middle School, and a daily Traditional Egalitarian Minyan at BJ, 3 blocks away from our Middle School location. Parents who may be interested in establishing and facilitating an alternative Minyan on Monday mornings, such as a Partnership Minyan, may coordinate with our Director of Judaic Studies to meet at the Beit Rabban East Campus, 15 W. 86 Street.
- Tuesday and Wednesday: Whole Middle School communal prayer without counting a Minyan, facilitated by our Director of Judaic Studies and with opportunities for different students to lead various prayers.
- Thursday: Whole Middle School musical tefillah similar to the style of Tuesday and Wednesday prayers but with a full Torah Service at which students over the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah will read Torah. This service will include a tri-chitzah set up, with a section for people who choose to sit exclusively with people who identify as boys/men, a section for people who choose to sit exclusively with people who identify as girls/women, and a section where people choose to sit together with others who identify with either or neither gender. Students' family members are invited to join Thursday tefillah.
- Friday: Tefillah by grade, with an emphasis on learning and practicing new tefillot.
- Rosh Chodesh: Whole school musical tefillah without counting a Minyan, at which Middle School students over the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah read from the Torah.
- B'nai Mitzvah: Families who would like their child to read from the Torah and/or have a Hanachat Tefillin ceremony at school, may do so during tefillah period on a Thursday in the context of the structure of Thursday tefillot in the Middle School as described above.

Daily Mincha is held starting in Sixth Grade.

CO-CURRICULARS

Co-curricular classes are offered each semester, include physical education, fine arts, music and other subjects selected by the Middle School student body. Students participate in two 45-minute blocks of physical education each week. Chugim (clubs) are offered twice a week, with at least one fine arts and one music offering each semester taught by Beit Rabban music and art educators. Each student is required to participate in at least one chug that qualifies as a fine arts or music class.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

It is especially important during middle school years for students to engage in concrete, real-world experiences outdoors or outside of the classroom. These experiences provides higher level thinking opportunities as well as the context to build skills such as cooperation, collaboration, independence and responsibility. Some of the ways the Beit Rabban middle school incorporates experiential education include the following signature programs:

- **Sherut Kehillati: Community Service**
  The Beit Rabban Sherut Kehillati is designed to foster a sense of responsibility toward community, beginning in the school community and then radiating out into the local/Jewish community, through a rotation of job-like volunteer work. Beginning in 6th Grade, students participate in a 12-week minimester program in which each student rotate through responsibilities that support our school community; examples include working as an assistant in Gan classroom or helping with facilities needs. In 8th Grade students will have the opportunity to take on a more significant role in our larger community of the Upper West Side, volunteering with a local nonprofit organization or community group of their choice, such as the Central Park Conservancy or Meals on Wheels.

- **P.A.R.D.E.S (Place, Adventure, Responsibility, Discovery, Environmental Stewardship): Learning in and from Nature**
  The Beit Rabban Middle School P.A.R.D.E.S. program, directed by our Science & Engineering Teacher, is designed for students to learn in and from the natural world. The program involves monthly outings into nature, including hikes, explorations. In Fifth and Sixth grades, students also take a P.A.R.D.E.S. multi-day trip to the TEVA program in Fifth Grade and on a multi-day camping trip in Sixth Grade.

- **Darkon Rabban, An Educational Travel Program**
  Shabbatonim and overnights are an annual component of the middle school through our educational travel program, Darkon Rabban. In each year of middle school, students participate in an overnight trip. Overnights in Fifth and Sixth Grades are incorporated into their P.A.R.D.E.S. program, while overnight trips in Seventh and Eight Grades are Humanities focused. Seventh and Eighth Grade trips will likely include a civil rights trip to the South when students study the Civil Rights Movement; a trip to Washington DC when students study institutions and structures of authority.

- **Beit Midrash L'Itzuv v'Chadshanut: The Middle School Innovation Lab**
  Starting in Sixth Grade, Middle School students engage in a Design Thinking trimester each year, during which they learn and enhance their facility with the Design Thinking methodology and apply their learning to a particular design challenge than culminates in a communal experience where they showcase their designs.

THE B'NAI MITZVAH EXPERIENCE

Typically, students have their b'nai mitzvah in either 6th or 7th grade, or sometimes 8th grade. We embrace the opportunity to celebrate each student as they officially enter Jewish adulthood. In addition to whatever a family plans for their child's bat/r mitzvah outside of school, we also mark the child's bar/t mitzvah in a way that is intended to (a) make the student feel loved and cared for by their Beit Rabban classmates and larger community; (b) focus the experience on a commitment to Torah, Avodah (service), Gemilut Chasadim (loving kindness); and (c) ensure that the in-school celebration is not onerous on students, parents or faculty.

In-School B'nai Mitzvah Celebrations: Each student will have an in-school celebration during a Thursday morning tefillah (or Monday morning or Rosh Chodesh, depending on what works for the family) to which the student's family, Middle Schools peers and teachers and administrators are invited. The student will choose one or two of the following options to mark this simcha in school:

- Lead tefillah
- Read Torah (ideally the same Torah reading they are already preparing)
- Give a Dvar Torah

The minyan and tefillah in which we celebrate a student's in-school bar/t mitzvah will be determined according to family preferences (e.g. Orthodox, Partnership, Egalitarian, Ashkenazic, Sephardic), and the Director of Jewish Studies is available to support families who do not have a family tradition in these areas. The school will support the family's endeavors in this realm by sending an email to all parents and grandparents asking for volunteers to join the specific minyan style selected by the family.

Families are not expected to give gifts to individual students in honor of their b'nai mitzvah. Rather, parents in 6th and 7th grades will make a contribution of up to $180 at the beginning of the year. Of the collective amount raised, 33% will be used to by class parents to purchase a gift for each bar/t mitzvah child; 34% will be allocated to the class as a whole to donate to a tzedakah of their collective choice; and 33% will get divided among the b'nai mitzvah students that year, for each student to contribute to a tzedakah of their choice. This communal tzedakah allocation process will be facilitated in Mentorship using an American Jewish World Service curriculum called Where Do You Give?

ASSESSMENTS & HOMEWORK

Regular and thoughtful assessments are critical to ensure that teachers and students themselves are aware of what they have and have yet to master. For the greatest impact on student performance, assessments must be followed by reflection and, if needed, action plans. Assessments come in many forms and different disciplines are better suited to different forms of assessment. Assessing math skills may be best done through an exam or quiz; assessing understanding in Humanities or Science and Engineering may be best assessed through a long or short term project or presentation; and assessing Hebrew fluency may be best assessed through a one-on-one conversation with the teacher.

While exams and quizzes are the most common assessment tools in many middle schools, they do not always advance student learning or provide a trustworthy assessment of students' learning. Beit Rabban Middle School uses exams and quizzes as two assessment tools among many others, as opposed to at the end of every unit of study across disciplines or at midterm and finals intervals. Other assessment tools include: essays, projects, discussions, presentations, research papers and the like.

Beit Rabban Middle School educators design both formative and summative assessments in each unit of study that:

- Provide information about how students learn and to determine what knowledge and skills they have acquired and understood.
- Ascertain that learning outcomes are in alignment with curriculum objectives and goals.
- Act as a feedback mechanism for curriculum development.
- Diagnose learning issues and student needs.

From the perspective of Beit Rabban Middle School students, assessments allow them:

- Have criteria that are known and understood in advance.
- Analyze their learning and understand what needs to be improved.
- Synthesize and apply their learning in addition to recalling facts.
- Highlight their strengths and demonstrate mastery.
- Learn in ways that the teacher did not foresee.
- Be reflective and partake in self and/or peer evaluation.
- Express different points of view and interpretations.
- Be encouraged to be responsible for their learning.
- Experience successful learning.
- Perform at a higher level when challenged.

Recognizing that the vast majority of our students are likely to attend high schools that adhere to a more traditional model of education, students will have exposure to various types of exams (multiple choice, short answer, long answer, timed and untimed) throughout their years of middle school at Beit Rabban. 8th grade students will also take a minimester course of 12 weeks to prepare them for test-taking. This course will cover skills and strategies including taking notes in class that can be used to study for tests; test preparation strategies and timelines; test-taking skills; and incorporating learnings from your performance on a test into your ongoing school work.

Similarly, the Beit Rabban Middle School treats homework as a tool rather than having inherent value. Given the strong research rejecting the academic benefits of homework for homework's sake, coupled with the equally strong research praising the academic benefits of free time for exploration and play, Beit Rabban Middle School students have less consistent homework than many of their peers in other dual-curriculum school. Those classes that require more individual practice work than time allows during a dual curriculum school day, such as math, have daily homework assignments that students can do at home or during their midday break. There is also ongoing work associated with the various research and other projects students are engaged in, including research, writing and presentation preparation that needs to be worked on outside of school hours. There are times during the year, like before a culmination, presentation, or exam that students will need to spend more time on homework.

STANDARDS

Beit Rabban is fully committed to following best practices in education and to determining the most enriching educational content for our students while aligning with grade-appropriate levels and benchmarks. These are some of the standards referenced in the Curriculum Overview.

- ELA Grade 5 standards are available at http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/35elastandardsglance.pdf
- ELA Grades 6-8 standards are available at http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/68elastandardsglance.pdf
- The New York State Next Generation Learning Standards for mathematics are available at http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/68elastandardsglance.pdf
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are available at http://www.nextgenscience.org/search-standards?keys=&tid%5B%5D=106
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Guidelines are available at https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012
- Standards for Fluency in Jewish Text and Practice are available at https://www.hadar.org/fluency-standards


בית רבן
The Chativah
BEIT RABBAN's
MIDDLE SCHOOL
CHATIVAT BEIT RABBAN