

# *Introduction / Mission Statement*

## **Introduction**

Dear OMS Parents & Guardians:

This curriculum guide is designed to provide you with an overview of the academic program at Oak Middle School. We hope it is a useful resource for you throughout the year.

The 7th and 8th grade years can be challenging ones for students, given the enormous changes they are going through during early adolescence. Please don't hesitate to contact the school if you have a question or concern (or compliment!). It is important that we support one another in helping your child meet the high expectations we have here at OMS.

Respectfully,

*Ann M. Jones, Ed.D., Principal 508-841-1210*

*Anne B. Koertge, Grade 8 Assistant Principal 508-841-1205*

*Scott M. Yonker, Grade 7 Assistant Principal 508-841-1213*

## **The Mission of the Shrewsbury Public Schools**

The Shrewsbury Public Schools, in partnership with the community, will provide students with the skills and knowledge for the 21st century, an appreciation of our democratic tradition, and the desire to continue to learn throughout life.

### **Grouping Practices in the Shrewsbury Public Schools**

The Shrewsbury Public Schools recognize that the purpose of grouping is to create learning environments that best meet the needs of students. As a result, the school district supports flexible grouping practices at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

In order to deal effectively with mixed ability groups and students with special needs, teachers must be classroom managers, using a variety of instructional practices. These may include pretest and post-test evaluations, small group lessons, learning stations, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, independent study, and the use of technology.

At the elementary level, students are grouped heterogeneously in self-contained classrooms, with opportunities for team structures in grade 4. Within elementary classrooms, teachers use a variety of strategies such as whole class, small group, and individualized instruction.

Middle school students are members of heterogeneous, interdisciplinary teams designed to include all achievement and ability levels. The teachers on the teams make decisions about the groups within their teams and utilize a variety of grouping strategies throughout the school year.

At the high school level, a wide variety of instructional programs are available. Within these programs are different levels of challenges and experiences. Students may choose from, or be recommended for, three levels of course work, from Advanced Placement courses to level 3 courses. Students are recommended for courses, depending upon their talents and interests, after consultation with teachers, parents and guidance counselors. The school makes placement decisions on the basis of standardized testing, past academic performance and teacher recommendations. Placement levels may vary in different subject areas and attempts at upward placement are always encouraged.

The Shrewsbury Public Schools recognize that students grow and change during their years in school and that school programs must respond accordingly. Students must not be categorized and tracked in such a way as to limit their potential growth. Consequently, each level in the system develops flexible grouping strategies based upon the ages and the needs of its students.