

David E. Owens Middle School  
470 Marion Avenue  
New Milford, N.J. 07646  
201-265-8661  
[www.newmilfordschools.org](http://www.newmilfordschools.org)



**Mr. James DeLalla**  
Principal

**Ms. Nicolette Perna**  
Assistant Principal

April 23, 2024

Dear Seventh Grade Families,

The selection process for our eighth-grade honors classes is approaching. In an effort to make the selection process as equitable and comprehensive as possible, we implemented a variety of tangible factors to evaluate all students' eligibility. We also made some changes to the process, which are highlighted in this correspondence.

Honors classes are offered in the core subjects of English Language Arts (ELA), Social Studies, Math, and Science. All 7th-grade students will be evaluated for honors eligibility through a series of assessments and evaluations that will occur during the school day. Our honors classes will be grouped as ELA/Social Studies and Math/Science for the first time next year. Therefore, students who qualify will be scheduled for the classes as a pair. Students can still qualify for both groups of classes. We are encouraging our educators to make cross-curricular projects and this will assist us in making that possible. **Students who qualify to take these classes will be expected to attend learning experiences that fall outside the school day (Model UN in Social Studies and The Science Fair in Science).**

All eighth-grade students will complete assessments in May, including an ELA/SS DBQ (Document-based Question) LinkIT analysis and an Algebra Readiness Assessment. Qualifying students will then be given a Writing Assessment as well. These results, their current class grades, teacher input, benchmark, and NJSLA testing scores will be used to determine eligibility. When students receive their schedules in the summer of 2024, it will indicate if they are eligible for Honors Classes; families will be able to "opt-out" at that time if they are not interested in taking honors courses. An email would be sent to the school counselor for this purpose.

Please contact your child's school counselor directly if you have any questions or need clarification.

**Mrs. Catherine Bigwood**  
[cbigwood@nmpsd.org](mailto:cbigwood@nmpsd.org)  
201.265.8661 x 3009  
**Grade 7 (A-I)**

**Ms. Mary Sullivan**  
[msullivan@nmpsd.org](mailto:msullivan@nmpsd.org)  
201.265.8661 x 3011  
**Grade 7 (J-Z)**

Sincerely,

James De Lalla  
Principal

## Course Descriptions

**Honors Language Arts (ELA)** - The Honors Language Arts course examines the art of Language in all its forms, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The work is designed to prepare students with the academic skills necessary as they transition to high school. Honors students will complete additional work in reading, writing and research, much of which will require outside of class time to complete. The course encourages more independent learning and in-depth exploration of the content. Students are asked to create original work with their own original thoughts and ideas about the material. Throughout the year honors students will be required to do multiple assignments that involve public speaking both in and outside of class. Students taking this course should be aware that to be successful in the honors ELA class, they must be self-motivated, outgoing, and willing to go above and beyond the expectations of any ELA class they have taken before.

**Honors Social Studies** - The Social Studies course explores the subjects of Middle Ages, Renaissance, Age of Exploration and Discovery, and U.S. Civics. In addition to these subjects, students will also participate in a Junior Model United Nations unit. This unit discusses the history of the United Nations and the components of participating in a mock United Nations conference. The students will work on their primary and secondary source analysis skills through this course, as well as writing argumentative and informational essays. The class will also conduct research assignments that will work on their skills of investigation.

**Honors Algebra 1** - The textbook for Algebra I – Honors is *Big Ideas Math: Algebra I – A Common Core Curriculum*. In order to be successful, all students will be expected to master the following concepts: solving linear equations, solving linear inequalities, graphing linear functions, writing linear functions, solving systems of linear equations, exponential functions, polynomial equations and factoring, graphing quadratic functions, solving quadratic equations, radical functions and equations, and data analysis. Students will also gain experience in the use of the TI – 83 Graphing Calculator. In addition, in order to proceed to the next honors-level mathematics course, students will be expected to pass the Algebra I NJSLA Test. While math skills and problem-solving capability are required for success, a mature attitude and the capacity to persevere are equally important.

**Honors Science** - The Honors Science course examines topics in physical science. Throughout the course students are expected to design experiments, and collect data by making accurate and detailed observations and measurements. Students will develop skills to analyze test results using math and logic in order to identify trends or lack of trends and accurately come to conclusions. There will be an emphasis on properly writing lab reports and explanations. The written work in this course must be accurate, direct and to the point. The expectation being that all written work and results can be easily understood after only one reading. Students must have a strong working knowledge of math. This course requires students to independently take notes, follow directions, be creative, and work safely and collaboratively. Finally, students must be able to voluntarily express input on course materials and content so that when possible the content can be student directed. As stated earlier, to be successful in this course a student must possess strong math skills and writing skills.