

February 2011

Dear Eighth Grade Students and Parents/Guardians:

I want to thank all who attended the Parent Orientation at the high school on February 3rd. I hope that you found the presentation to be helpful and informative. On Wednesday, February 9th and Thursday, February 10th, the high school guidance counselors came to UVMS to meet with each of the Eighth Grade Teams. It was a great opportunity for students to ask questions about the programs that are offered. This week I am going into 8th grade classrooms and students will receive their scheduling packets. The packet will include this letter, a page listing the requirements for high school graduation with information regarding the Regents Diploma and the Advanced Regents Diploma, and a Course Selection Sheet personalized with course recommendations from your child's core teachers. Classroom teachers have made recommendations for courses based on the criteria established by the departments at Arlington High School and their knowledge of your child. There will be check marks next to the classes for which your son or daughter has been recommended. If you are in agreement with the class that is indicated, please circle that class. If you have a question about a recommendation, please call me or the specific class teacher.

Please use the Student Course Selection Guide 2011-2012, which is available online through a link on the Union Vale Middle School webpage, to obtain course descriptions and to find out about prerequisite courses for certain classes. While the guide contains courses for all four years of high school, please note that the only courses open to prospective Ninth Grade students are the courses listed on the Course Selection Sheet. Additionally, the high school presentation on February 3rd is now available on the Arlington Central School District website under the Guidance and Counseling tab.

There are mandatory summer reading requirements for the students that are registered for English Honors and Global Honors. During the month of May, Mrs. Hartman and the English and Social Studies Coordinators from the High School are coming to present the work to the students. Eighth grade subject teachers made recommendations based on the criteria established by the high school and their knowledge of your child's appropriateness for the level. Students that do not meet the criteria at the end of the Fourth Marking Period will be taken out of the course. The criteria that were used by the Eighth Grade teachers are as follows:

English - Prerequisite for Honors: A final average of 90 or better in Grade 8 English and motivation in Middle School English.

Science - Prerequisite for Honors Biology: A final average of 85 in Regents Earth Science in Grade 8 or a grade of 85 on the Regents Examination of Earth Science.

Global - Prerequisite for Honors: A final average of 90 in Grade 8 Social Studies and motivation in Middle School Social Studies.

Math - Please see pages 32-36 for recommendations and accurate descriptions of the different levels offered.

The High School has an eight-period day and lunch is scheduled as one period. Most students have two spots left in their schedules for electives. One spot is usually assigned to year two of their foreign language study, which is a requirement for an Advanced Regents Diploma. Students that successfully pass the necessary requirements to obtain one credit of foreign language in June may choose to drop the foreign language because they have fulfilled the New York State graduation requirement, since the Arlington district divides Year 1 between grades 7 and 8. Please be aware that the decision to drop foreign language may impact the type of diploma for which they are eligible and affect their college search. Some colleges require or highly recommend that students have completed a three-year foreign language sequence. Depending on their long-term goals, we strongly suggest that students continue their foreign language study during high school.

The remaining period is often used for the completion of the one-year Art or Music requirement. However, students may choose classes in other areas, such as Business, Technology, and Family and Consumer Science. Specific classes within these disciplines may be used to satisfy the one-year Art or Music requirement. Along with the classes in the Art and Music Departments, Introduction to Drama, Intro to Engineering Design, Business of Music, Jewelry, Fashion for Your Future, and World of Fashion may be used to fulfill the mandatory Art or Music requirement. A class with a “3” meets all year and is worth a full credit, while a “1” meets the first semester and a “2” meets the second semester. Semester courses are worth half credits so two are needed to fill the slot. In most cases there is room in a student’s schedule for an elective. Please circle your choice for the elective and also write down two alternate electives on the bottom right part of the course selection sheet in case their first choice classes are filled.

For parents/guardians with students in special education programs, please know that staff and faculty are currently still working on the high school programs. Therefore, the recommendations that may appear on your child’s Course Selection Sheet are preliminary, pending the CSE Annual Reviews in the late spring. We will make the appropriate changes during the CSE meetings and forward the changes to the high school. Please send in the sheet regardless.

Parents/guardians must sign the Course Selection Sheet and give them back to students to bring to school. Students must bring them individually to the Guidance Office during their study halls or lunch periods so they can ask me any questions regarding their courses. I will begin collecting them on **Thursday, February 24th**. All students will be required to have them signed by their parent/guardian and turn it into the Guidance Office so they can meet the High School deadline no later than **Friday, March 18th**. I encourage you to call me with any questions or concerns at 223-8612.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Anne-Marie Nolan-Dolce
Guidance Counselor