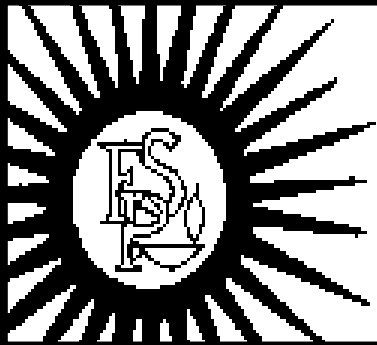


HOWITT MIDDLE SCHOOL 2011-2012

CURRICULUM AND SERVICES GUIDE



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Academic Teams

Every student at Howitt Middle School will be assigned to an academic team. Academic teams are composed as follows:

6th Grade Teams At Howitt we have two teaming variations:

-Two teachers: Math/Science and Social Studies/Writing.

7th/8th Grade Teams

-Four Teachers: Math, Social Studies, ELA, and Science

Why Team?

- o Students have subject matter specialists but there is a coordination of the total instructional program.
- o Teachers work as a team to meet the needs of students.
- o Interdisciplinary units can be planned.
- o Effective education can be included in the overall program
- o Planning time can be used for parent conferences, discipline problems, and discussion of students and curriculum issues.
- o Grouping and scheduling can be determined by the team.
- o Students see teachers cooperating and working together.
- o The team provides students with a place to belong.
- o A feeling of pride for the school can be fostered.
- o Teaming and cooperating are *“REAL WORLD” EXPERIENCES!*

Major unit tests that require all or a substantial portion of one instructional period should be coordinated with the team as to not overload students. Teachers will continue to conduct short quizzes, recitations, and other study and review work at their discretion based upon the length of the unit being studied.

Teachers are asked to adhere to a specified team-testing schedule. Make-up tests due to pupil absences are to be scheduled at the option of the teacher.

Teachers of reading, art, music, instrumental instruction, health, technology and home career skills will schedule tests and evaluate pupils according to planned units of work.

HOWITT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Welcome to Howitt Middle School – and an exciting time in the development and growth of your youngster! Howitt School has adopted the philosophies of middle level education. Our goal is to serve as a bridge, connecting the self-contained structure of our elementary schools and the departmental structure of our high school. Middle level education addresses the unique characteristics and needs of emerging adolescents. We strive for academic excellence and provide experiences designed to help students develop their full potential as responsible, young adults.

We are committed to a school that offers a warm, positive, supportive climate, responsive to the rapidly changing intellectual, physical and social growth experienced by this age group. The mission for our middle school is to equip students with the necessary academic and personal/social skills, knowledge, and attitudes to succeed in the middle level grades, high school, and beyond. We do this by promoting a nurturing, active, and engaging educational environment, which reflects respect, caring, and support for students. We focus on the development of the whole child, emphasizing a balance between academic and personal/social growth, while providing opportunities for self-exploration, self-definition, and self-development in the cognitive, affective and physical domains, thus enhancing self esteem and a sense of personal identity. We encourage the development of a young adult who has a sense of personal competence, one who takes responsibility for him/herself and his or her actions toward others.

To provide age appropriate, research-based, exemplary education for middle school youngsters, our talented and dedicated faculty has undertaken many initiatives, which are child-centered and exemplify quality middle level education. Among these many practices are the following:

- **Teams** - teams are organized around the core subjects of English, social studies, mathematics, and science. These teachers share the same group of students. The teachers work together to coordinate instruction, testing, and rules.
- **Common Planning Time** - the team teachers have the same planning period, which enables them to discuss students, meet jointly with parents, meet with support staff and plan activities and interdisciplinary themes.
- **Heterogeneous Grouping** - students of varied ability levels and learning styles are grouped together in most classes. High academic standards are expected for all students. Cooperative activities and differentiated instruction develop each student's skills, strengths, talents and abilities.
- **Regular Communication with Parents** - strong family support and connection to school is essential to student success. Our staff stays in close contact with parents through phone and personal conferences, interim reports, report cards and notes to home. It is essential that parents and teachers maintain positive and close relationships.
- **Authentic Assessments** - in addition to traditional tests, our teachers have designed many performance tasks to gauge student progress including portfolios, debates, research projects, lab investigations, cooperative learning problem-solving activities, model-building, etc. These assessment practices give students "real world" learning experiences.

Additionally, our strong pupil personnel staff is critical in creating a supportive middle school. Our guidance counselors, speech teacher, social workers, crisis intervention counselor, nurses, psychologists, dean, academic dean, and attendance teachers are available to you and your child. Take advantage of eliciting their help. Our secretaries and custodial staff are happy to be called upon to lend a helping hand as well. The building principal and assistant principals have an "open door" policy. We are here to help you and your child at all times. Do not hesitate to contact any one of us when you are seeking information, advice, guidance or support.

As you continue to read this guide, you will become better acquainted with both the curriculums taught here at Howitt, as well as the special services that we offer. Please read this booklet carefully and feel free to contact any member of our staff for additional help.

We look forward to a close relationship with you and your child over the next three years!

PROMOTION POLICY

- To be considered for promotion from grades six to seven, seven to eight or eight to nine a student is expected to pass all core and other required subjects.
- A student who fails English and/or math will be expected to attend summer school, if available, to make up the deficiencies prior to promotion to the next grade.

- A student who fails a combination of core and/or other subjects will also be considered for retention. The principal will consult with the Pupil Assistance Committee to make this decision.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Daily attendance is compulsory unless a student is ill. If a child is absent, a parent must call the Attendance Office on the morning of the absence or, send a note on the first day they return to school, explaining the absence. The attendance office number for all grades is (516) 752-6534.

Family vacations are considered illegal absences. In all cases of absence for any duration, students are responsible for making up all homework and class assignments. For absences of less than five days, students are required to get assignments from a “study buddy.” In cases of prolonged illness (5 or more days), parents should contact the guidance office for assignments.

CURRICULUM

Howitt Middle School incorporates the New York State standards to provide a rigorous academic curriculum. Our teachers incorporate regular homework assignments designed to reinforce classroom learning. By the time they complete this three-year program, the students will have received a sound foundation. Students also learn to organize their work, work both independently and in cooperative groups with other students, study efficiently, write fluently, and read and think critically. We provide accelerated courses in mathematics, science, art, and computer information skills for those students who have demonstrated readiness in those areas.

ENGLISH

GRADES SIX, SEVEN, AND EIGHT

The Howitt English department recognizes the need to prepare students for success with the New York State Education Department’s learning standards and assessments in English/Language Arts. Accordingly, the English program is designed to make the student a better reader, writer, speaker, and thinker. Toward these ends, students will experience learning and enrichment opportunities through ongoing library projects and technology integration.

Students gain a greater understanding and appreciation of literature by studying novels, short stories, poetry, plays, and nonfiction pieces. Students are expected to engage in independent reading (200 pages a week) and maintain reading response notebooks.

The writing component includes narrative, nonfiction and poetic writing. Students are required to have writer’s notebook in order to build writing fluency, to practice writing techniques, and to help them find significance in their lives to write about. Oral presentations, team and/or cooperative work, and performance-based assessments will be employed to monitor and measure student progress. Students will have a variety of opportunities to share and present their work.

For students who would like additional assistance with reading and/or writing, the English department offers support settings.

It is always the goal of the English department to enable students to become enthusiastic, confident and successful readers and writers.

SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADE SIX

The sixth grade social studies curriculum focuses on the Eastern Hemisphere throughout History from the ancient period to our modern world. Students develop an understanding of the larger economic, political and social frameworks of many cultures through world history. Major eras studied include: the Neolithic Revolution, Ancient River Civilizations, Classical Greece and Rome, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Additionally, students will develop an understanding of geography and its impact on civilization, as well as the concepts such as supply and demand, interdependence, market economies, mixed economies and the basic economic questions of wants and needs are interwoven into the core curriculum.

Students also hone their reading skills through text books, non-fiction books and primary and secondary source documents. Writing skills are addressed through reports, essays and Document-Based Questions.

GRADE SEVEN

Grade seven social studies takes students on the first half of the journey to understand the development and growth of our Nation. The course starts in the Pre-Columbian period and runs through the 19th Century prior to the Civil War. There is a strong emphasis on the Colonial period including the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, and the United States Constitution.

Additionally, along with the study of Canada and Latin America, the history of New York State is integrated into the course with attention to county and local government and civic responsibility as well.

Students continue to hone their reading skills through text books, non-fiction books and primary and secondary source documents. Writing skills are addressed through reports, essays and Document-Based Questions.

GRADE EIGHT

The eighth grade course charts the history of the United States of America from its expansion and Civil War to the Modern era.

Additionally, the Constitution and all three branches of government are studied as students see the idea of checks and balances at work between the executive legislative, and judicial branches.

Current events are integrated within the history lessons and parallels are drawn between the present and past. Today's events become living history as the past is related to the present. Citizenship and patriotism are major themes that are reviewed and understood throughout the year.

Students are expected to write reports, give oral presentations, do library research, and complete reading assignments. The course culminates with the NYS Assessment in Social Studies in June.

MATHEMATICS

GRADES SIX, SEVEN, AND EIGHT

The mathematics program is designed to improve the problem solving skills of students, while continuing a natural development in areas such as mathematical skills, applications and concepts. To foster this approach, problem solving situations and real life applications are integral in the curriculum.

The middle school math curriculums evolve around the five content strands in the NYS Core Curriculum for mathematics: number sense and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement and probability and statistics. The scope and sequence for each grade level drives the curriculum and can be found on the Farmingdale District website.

Problem solving is the basic approach to the math program and is utilized in each content strand. For students who experience difficulty in mathematics, a supportive mathematics lab is offered in grades seven and eight to provide more individualized help in addition to the mathematics class.

All students in grades six, seven and eight take the NYS Math Assessment in March of the school year. Students who have demonstrated readiness for acceleration in sixth grade will be chosen for the accelerated math class in grade seven. This course, extremely intensive, covers both the seventh and eighth grade math curriculums. Upon successful completion of the seventh grade accelerated math class, these students will begin their study of high school

mathematics in grade eight, taking the HS Algebra course and the Algebra regents exam in June of eighth grade.

SCIENCE

GRADE SIX

Students in grade six science employ the scientific method and study topics in both the physical sciences and the biological sciences. These topics include: evolution and the fossil record, ecology, matter, light, gravity and motion, and human health. Students will have the opportunity to participate in laboratory experiences and utilize a variety of scientific equipment.

GRADE SEVEN

This course of study includes the following topics – atomic structure, periodic table, matter and energy, life and life processes, cell theory, cell processes, classification, genetics, and human body systems.

During the year, the students will develop an understanding of how scientists work. Our laboratory investigates and incorporates the use of various types of science equipment.

GRADE EIGHT

This course of study includes the following topics – physical properties and changes, chemical properties and changes, forces and motion, astronomy, weathering and erosion, and plate tectonics.

During the year, the students will develop an understanding of how scientists work. Our laboratory investigates and incorporates the use of various types of science equipment.

Earth Science Regents

The Earth Science regents course adheres to the New York State Core Curriculum course of study. The subject matter deals with geology, paleontology, meteorology, and astronomy. This course includes extra laboratory periods and written laboratory reports. A Regents exam will be given in June. Students must complete the lab requirement to be eligible to sit for the Earth Science Regents exam.

Middle School Science Research

Middle school science research is a science elective for grade eight students. The course will utilize a scientific inquiry approach and discuss career opportunities in science. Students will learn about science research and spend time practicing the process with guided activities provided by the teacher and later with individually selected activities. This course will be project based, grades will be awarded based on student projects. Students may continue in grade nine science research at the high school following successful completion of this course.

A co-requisite is the core grade eight Science course (8T Science or Accelerated Earth Science).

This course meets every other day.

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

READING

GRADES SIX, SEVEN, AND EIGHT

The Howitt academic instructional support (AIS) reading program is designed to assist students in becoming proficient sophisticated readers. The goal is to develop independent readers who enjoy reading and become emotionally invested in what they read. AIS reading teachers align instruction with the English Language Arts Core Curriculum units of study.

Power Reading

Students will read a variety of genres matched to their ability level, with an emphasis on non-fiction reading that coordinates with what they are learning in their core subjects. This course will give major attention to teaching students to generate, articulate, and negotiate interpretations of texts read. Vocabulary instruction and reading strategy lessons will be given. Students in this course are performing about one year below grade level expectations.

Developmental Reading

Students will read high quality books in varied genres matched to their ability level. Opportunities for small group and independent reading will be provided. The course will focus on reading as a meaning making process. Reading comprehension strategies will be taught to increase students' ability to read strategically. Lessons will support the use writing as a tool for thinking about their reading. Expanding vocabulary knowledge and use will be fostered. Students in this course are performing about two years below grade level expectations.

Foundations of Reading

Reading for enjoyment will be promoted. Students will be assisted in selecting materials for independent reading. Instruction will provide a balance of word recognition, fluency, and reading comprehension work. Writing will be used to support comprehension development. Students in this course are performing three or more years below grade level.

Multi-sensory Reading

This course targets students whose decoding or spelling ability is significantly impairing their ability to read fluently with comprehension. Instruction is implemented in small groups using multi-sensory techniques. A student's ability to decode is substantially below their capability to comprehend what is read.

GRADE SIX

IFL (Introduction to Foreign Languages) is an exciting and diverse course that is offered in four distinct segments, each one highlighting the language and culture of Italy, American Sign Language Users, Spanish-speaking countries and French-speaking countries. IFL exposes students to key vocabulary and interesting cultural aspects through a variety of flavorful resources. In this ten week course students acquire a foundation for next year's 7th grade start of the student's high school sequence in LOTE, Languages other than English.

GRADE SEVEN

Similar to English Language Arts, this LOTE course follows the balanced literacy approach to language learning while emphasizing the four language arts skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Students will make connections between their own language and a language other than English as they learn details to help them become proficient in communication. Students will broaden their cross-cultural experiences as they learn about familiar topics such as family, school, sports and leisure activities, food, etc. with an international flair.

GRADE EIGHT

This course completes the 7th grade LOTE course with an extension of communicative skills. This 8th grade course builds upon seventh grade learning and enhances the student's cultural understandings. The course concludes with a New York State standardized assessment, The Second Language Proficiency Examination. It accomplishes Checkpoint A of the New York State Standards in LOTE and students receive one high school credit by passing this state exam. Since most colleges and universities require a high school language sequence, students are encouraged to continue their language learning in high school as they work towards their Advanced Regents diploma.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

GRADES SIX, SEVEN, AND EIGHT

This course is provided to students who qualify for ESL services and whose home language is other than English. The goal of this course is to have students become proficient in reading, writing, speaking and listening to the English language so that they may benefit from academic course work provided in English.

Students are scheduled for ESL according to the degree of proficiency in English: basic, intermediate, or advanced.

ART

GRADE SIX

Students are introduced to a variety of media and techniques, art history and critical analysis following the New York State Standards for the Arts. The elements and principles of design will be introduced and emphasized throughout the course. Students will learn how to identify these elements in their own artwork and that of others. This half-year art curriculum provides the foundation for the seventh and eighth grade studio art curriculum.

GRADE SEVEN

Students explore various media, such as pencil, colored pencil and tempera paint and use the elements and principles of design according to the New York State Standards for the Arts. Class activities include contour line, observational drawing, 2-point perspective, color theory and lettering. Assessments will be given on knowledge of technical terms and the understanding of the elements and principles of design.

GRADE EIGHT

Students who apply for Studio Art in seventh grade are selected through an application process that includes observational drawing and a selection of past artworks. Studio Art is taken in either eighth grade or ninth grade and is a prerequisite for all the advanced courses in the high school art curriculum. Completion of this course fulfills one high school fine-arts unit. The course includes further study of the elements and principles of design, studies in drawing, solving design problems, painting, graphic art, commercial art and three-dimensional design. The portfolio review and student performance evaluation are based on the New York State Standards for the Arts.

MUSIC

GRADE SIX

All students are required to take general music for one quarter during their sixth grade year. The sixth grade general music curriculum builds upon the foundation of the elementary music curriculum. Focus is on the elements of music, listening to and analyzing music, and performing music through the use of classroom Orff instruments and un-pitched percussion instruments. All students are also offered the opportunity to continue their instrumental studies by enrolling in band and orchestra, and/or by singing in one of the sixth grade choruses. Instrumental students are required to attend a weekly group rotation lesson and rehearsals, which are scheduled every other day throughout the year. Students are encouraged to participate in NYSSMA Festivals and to audition for the annual Howitt Spring Musical

GRADE SEVEN

All students must meet the New York State regents requirement to take music in grade seven. Students who are not enrolled in the band, orchestra, or chorus classes are required to enroll in the General Music course, a hands-on music course including the music of yesterday and today. The electronic keyboard and guitar are used to involve students in creating and performing music. Band and Orchestra students are required to attend a weekly group rotation lesson as well as ensemble rehearsals which are scheduled every other day throughout the year. Students may also audition for Jazz Band which meets before school. Students are encouraged to participate in NYSSMA Festivals.

Chorus students are enrolled in one of two choruses determined randomly by scheduling. Regular chorus rehearsals are held every other day throughout the year. Full chorus rehearsals are scheduled two weeks prior to a concert. Students are encouraged to participate in NYSSMA Festivals.

Band, orchestra, and chorus students are required to perform two or more concerts per year. Band students also perform in the annual Memorial Day parade. All students are invited to audition for the annual Howitt Spring Musical.

GRADE EIGHT

The eighth grade music curriculum offers band, orchestra and chorus. These groups rehearse every other day during regular school hours as they did in grade seven. Requirements are the same as in seventh grade. Instrumental students may audition for Jazz Band. Students are encouraged to participate in NYSSMA Festivals. All students are invited to audition for the annual Howitt Spring Musical.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

GRADES SIX, SEVEN AND EIGHT

Our physical education program provides for systematic instruction in a wide variety of activities. These include team sports, individual and self-testing activities, wellness units, rhythmical activities, aerobics and physical fitness developing activities. An adaptive physical education program is available for those students who require a specialized program.

After school intramural and interscholastic sports are encouraged for all students. The intramural program consists of the following: softball, table tennis, basketball, tennis, volleyball, gymnastics, and badminton.

The interscholastic program consists of football, soccer, volleyball, cross country, basketball, wrestling, baseball, track and field, lacrosse, softball, swimming and diving, and badminton.

GRADE EIGHT

Fitness – Level 1

This course provides an alternative physical education class for students who are interested in

overall fitness as opposed to traditional “team sport” units. Students will have an in-depth learning environment focusing on the five components of physical fitness as well as nutrition. Students will actively participate and develop a personal wellness plan. The Howitt Wellness Center will be a major part of an active laboratory for instruction, but it will not solely be used. Walking the track, jumping rope and alternative healthy activities, which are fitness oriented will be incorporated. Each quarter will be conducted with a different aspect of overall wellness in mind, including brief lectures on specific topics. Class topics will include, but will not be limited to: strength training, cardiovascular training, physical fitness components, developing a lifelong wellness plan, reading nutrition labels, choosing healthy foods and snacks, exercising without gym equipment, and terminology.

HEALTH

GRADE SEVEN

The health program is both knowledge and skills based. There is emphasis on substance abuse prevention, human growth and development, family life and AIDS education. Skills such as wise decision-making and steps to resist peer pressure are reinforced throughout the course. Instruction integrates hands-on activities, laser disk technology and life skills.

HOME & CAREER SKILLS

Home and Career Skills is the course designed to deliver the NYS Intermediate Level Learning Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences to middle school students. It also focuses on the Intermediate Level Learning Standards in Career Development and Occupational Studies. This course affords students multiple opportunities to read, write, and compute in the context of real world situations relevant to early adolescents. Home and Career Skills is taught using a hands-on experimental approach.

GRADE SEVEN

Students are actively involved in learning in a participatory, supportive environment. Content topics include: entrepreneurship, food & nutrition, clothing management, consumerism, and personal & public relations.

GRADE EIGHT

Students are engaged in activities that will prepare them to meet their present and future responsibilities as family and community members, consumers, home managers, and wage earners. Curriculum expands on the life skills emphasized in seventh grade. Content topics include: career development, nutrition and wellness, community connections, financial management, and child development and parenting.

TECHNOLOGY

GRADE SIX

Our technology program begins with an introduction to technology and its history. Problem solving skills along with measurement, design, engineering, and basic building skills are introduced. These skills include basic drawing, drafting, button construction, and tower construction.

GRADE SEVEN

Students are introduced to basic hand tools along with their proper use and application with an emphasis on safety. Basic drawing, engineering and problem solving skills are used together with a variety of projects, which might include wind, or rubber band powered vehicles or airplanes. Engineering skills are reinforced in conjunction with the construction of basic wood projects.

GRADE EIGHT

The program continues to emphasize the approach to problem solving, engineering, and drafting as it pertains to real life. Their continued understanding of technology and its history, engineering, construction and testing will also be stressed. Students will be required to complete a research project along with evidence of their understanding by demonstrating safe use of power tools. Students will be given the opportunity to explore a wide variety of projects.

STUDY SKILLS

GRADE SIX

This curriculum presents students tools to assist them with taking responsibility for their own learning. It will help students build critical habits of mind. They will learn how to be organized, identify and make use of appropriate resources for study, break down large tasks into more manageable subtasks, and follow through and self-monitor on the tasks they begin. Projects utilizing technology and Internet safety lessons are incorporated in this course.

THE 21ST CENTURY TEEN

GRADE EIGHT

It's never too early to start planning your future. The 21st Century Teen elective will focus on habits students can learn and practice now in order to become more successful and confident. Students will create both short-term and long-term goals. Emphasis will be placed on thinking about post high school options, such as college and work. Students will use technology to complete a number of hands-on creative projects that are all relevant to their lives.

COMPUTER INFORMATION SKILLS

21ST Century Computer Skills

In order to meet the needs of today's society in the area of computer technology, this twenty-week course for eighth graders will assist our students to become computer literate as well as acquire college readiness 21st century computer information skills. In the early part of the course, students will acquire a thorough understanding of keyboarding and Microsoft Office. In addition, a variety of computer software and WEB 2.0 applications will be introduced. Students will learn to explore innovative ways to use technology to discover, collaborate and share knowledge, while enhancing their critical thinking skills. Student digital portfolios, utilizing wikispaces, will be created for students to host, create and share their curriculum-based projects. Students will become more knowledgeable in website cyber safety and "netiquette."

This course meets the prerequisite requirements for advanced business courses at the high school. One-half high school credit is awarded.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Administration

The principal, and assistant principals are responsible for the daily operations of the school. They make sure that everything is as it should be in order for the children to get the best education possible. A student may request a pass from any teacher to see a school administrator. Students may also get a pass from the cafeteria aides during lunch periods. Parents should feel free to call a school administrator anytime help is needed. They will either help you directly or guide you to the proper resource.

Dean

The dean's office is located in the West building. The dean works with students, teacher, support staff and parents to address issues related to student behavior. The dean will address conduct issues occurring in school and busses, such as: bullying, crisis intervention, fighting, disruptiveness, cursing, being disrespectful, stealing etc. Parents can reach the dean's office by phone at (516) 752-6542.

Health Services

Our school nurses can provide you with information regarding immunizations, physical examinations, medication in school, home tutoring, readmission to school following medical disability or home tutoring, communicable diseases, readmission after accidents, free or reduced price lunch or milk, and transportation for medical reasons. They provide for the safety, health and welfare of our students on a daily basis. For more information, contact our health office at (516) 752-6541.

Horizons – Gifted and Talented Program

The HORIZONS program recognizes and serves students whose intellectual ability, rate of learning and creative potential require enriched programming beyond that which is available in the regular academic core curriculums. The HORIZONS program seeks to promote the use of higher level thinking processes, to expand interests of the students and their use of technology, to enhance research skills and problem solving techniques, and to foster independent learning. HORIZONS classes are delivered through teams of sixth, seventh and eighth grade teachers who create challenging lessons that are differentiated to enhance the core academic classes.

Library Media Center

The library media center offers students and teachers informational materials in various formats. By accessing our automated catalog, information can be found in book and non-book materials including the Internet, databases, books on tape, and DVDs.

Materials are selected and ordered to support subject area curriculum and to provide students and teachers with interesting, thought provoking learning tools. Students are invited to use these materials on scheduled class visits as well as on an individual basis.

Through the use of the library media center, it is hoped that enthusiasm is elicited and the desire to seek out knowledge is engendered.

Psychologists

We have a psychologist for each grade. If a student wants to discuss a personal problem or is having difficulty in a class, this is a resource person for them to see. Students may meet with a psychologist by placing a request to see them in their mailboxes located in either the principal's or west assistant principal's offices. Parents should feel free to call or request to meet with the psychologists at any time.

Remedial Services

Remedial reading and corrective math are provided for students who are identified to receive such help. These classes become part of the student's schedule.

Social Workers

Our social workers are available to help students with personal, family, and school problems as well. Students may make an appointment to see a social worker by bringing a note to their mailboxes located in either the principal's or west assistant principal's office. Parents should feel free to call upon the social workers at any time.

Special Education Services

A full spectrum of special education services is available at Howitt including: consulting services, resource room, integrated co-teaching, including a life skills component and self-contained classes. Related services such as occupational therapy and counseling are also mandated through individualized education

programs. Students identified by the CSE will receive such services.

Speech Therapy

A speech and language pathologist works with students who have speech and language difficulties which impact their educational performance. Students are seen for speech and language therapy at a frequency recommended by the speech and language pathologist or the Committee on Special Education.

Guidance Services

Throughout the year, guidance counselors provide a wide range of services geared to suit the individual needs of students, parents, and staff members. The thread that runs throughout these services is that the counselor, above all else, is the pupil's advisor and advocate. Counselors are assigned their students as they enter sixth grade and will remain the counselor until the student transitions to the high school.

The counseling curriculum covers personal development, career development, and academic advisement. In the course of the school year, counselors make presentations in classrooms to inform students about academic requirements, school practices and to instruct them in decision-making and goal setting skills.

Sixth grade students often have transition concerns. The counselors visit all sixth grade classes in late September to talk about adjustment to the middle school. This is a follow-up to the fifth grade visits they made the previous year.

At that time the students have the opportunity to request participation in counseling groups on various topics which will run through the fall semester.

The guidance counselors offer an Early College Awareness Program that introduces seventh grade students to the basic skills needed to begin to gather information about what colleges require for admissions and how high school courses meet those requirements. The highpoint of that program is the Early College Fair at which college admissions representatives treat our seventh graders as full-fledged potential admits.

In the eighth grade, counselors meet with students and parents to outline a tentative four-year graduation plan for each student and to request high school courses.

Counselors conduct hundreds of individual pupil conferences throughout the school year. Program planning, social adjustment, interest and career exploration, and academic progress are a few of the many topics discussed during these conferences. The counselors impress upon students the importance of obtaining the maximum benefits from their studies. They try to help students adjust to the demands of a rigorous curriculum, capitalize on their abilities, broaden their interests, and explore the vast and rapidly changing world of work.

A very large percentage of the counselor's contact with students consists of self-referrals initiated by pupils who wish to discuss problems, seek guidance, or obtain information. Topics

often brought to the attention of the counselors include: academic difficulties; personal/social adjustments; problems with other students, parents and/or teachers; an awareness of some personal inadequacy and uncertainty in attempting to deal with it; requests for information concerning occupational or career opportunities; post high school and college training information; participation in clubs and other co-curricular activities. The counselor assists the student to gain insight and understanding of themselves, their peers and the adult world.

As an integral member of the pupil personnel team, the counselor is involved with many other persons in the effort to assist pupils. He or she must discuss issues of concern with the parents whose cooperation is vital. Often the counselor will confer with teachers and other specialists and enlist the services of the psychologist, speech therapist, nurses, attendance officer, and/or the school physician. Occasionally, the outside public and private agencies must also be contacted.

The parents of our students make numerous daily requests for information and assistance. They may wish to confer with teachers both individually and as a team; they may need homework assignments for a sick child; they sometimes seek a sympathetic listener; occasionally, they wish to register a complaint. When needed, group conferences are arranged with parents, teachers, and other school personnel to discuss an individual pupil's progress and personal adjustment. Meetings are sometimes scheduled with parents to discuss such matters as educational planning, the interpretation of test data, special programs, and courses of study.

You are urged to take advantage of the services offered by our guidance staff. Encourage your child to use these services as well. Our guidance counselors can be contacted at (516) 752-6531.