FOCUS ON MIDDLE SCHOOLS
District Mission Statement
The mission of the Fort Mill School District, distinguished by a tradition of excellence, is to put “Children First” by providing a progressive and challenging education that gives our students, and thereby the community, the opportunity to achieve their greatest potential.

District Beliefs
• We believe that children are the most valuable resource in society.
• We believe that wellness is an essential goal for the individual and society.
• We believe that all persons have worth and value and should be treated with dignity.
• We believe that the family is the primary influence in the development of the individual.
• We believe that quality education in a safe and inviting environment provides the foundation for life-long learning and results in productive citizens.
• We believe that excellence is the result of high expectations and continuous improvement.
• We believe that creativity is fostered in a challenging and innovative environment.
• We believe that the best results come from teamwork.
• We believe an informed and educated public is a supportive public.
• We believe the home, the school, and the community share a commitment and a responsibility for the total education of our students.
• We believe that all children can learn and should be provided with the necessary resources to meet their potential.
FOCUS ON MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Table of Contents

Focus on Middle School: General Information
  FMSD Middle Schools Contact Info  4
  The Middle School Student  4
  Making Middle Grades Work  5
  Middle School Day/Quick Facts  7
  Middle School Registration and Scheduling  8-9

Focus on Middle School Curriculum
  Core Classes 6, 7, 8  10-13
  Academic Policies  13
  Physical Education and Related Arts  14-16

Focus on Student Achievement
  Grading Scale  17
  Promotion/Retention  17
  Assessment  18
  Systems of Extra Help  19
  Academic Recognition  21
  Gifted and Talented Programs  21-23

Focus on Student Involvement
  Athletics  25
  Organizations/Service Learning  26

Focus on Student Services
  Media, Health and Safety  26
  Guidance  27

Focus on the Future
  Transition to High School  28-29
  Clusters and Majors  30-31

Fact Sheets
  Parent Authorization for Release of Information  32
  Uniform Grading Policy  33
FOCUS ON MIDDLE SCHOOLS

2015-2016

Fort Mill Middle School
Mr. Greg Norton, Principal
200 Springfield Parkway
Fort Mill, SC 29715
Phone: 803-547-5553
www.fmms.fort-mill.k12.sc.us

Gold Hill Middle School
Mr. Matthew Wallace, Principal
1025 Dave Gibson Blvd.
Fort Mill, SC 29708
Phone: 803-548-8300
www.ghms.fort-mill.k12.sc.us

Springfield Middle School
Mr. Keith Griffin, Principal
1711 Springfield Parkway
Fort Mill, SC 29715
Phone: 803-548-8199
www.sfms.fort-mill.k12.sc.us

Banks Trail Middle School
Mr. Jason Johns, Principal
1640 Banks Road
Fort Mill, SC 29715
Phone: 803-578-2990
www.btms.fort-mill.k12.sc.us

The Middle School Student

The overall purpose of the middle school is to meet the students’ educational, emotional, and social needs that emerge in this developmental period. An effective middle school program provides a supportive, flexible, and student-centered environment that promotes a successful transition from elementary to high school.

As members of the National Middle School Association, the middle schools in Fort Mill School District provide:

• Curriculum that is challenging, integrative, and exploratory;
• Varied teaching and learning approaches;
• Assessment and evaluation that promote learning;
• Flexible organizational structures;
• Programs and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety;
• Comprehensive guidance and support services.
Making Middle Grades Work

Middle schools in the Fort Mill School District are members of the Southern Regional Education Board’s Making Middle Grades Work network.

As members of this network, our schools make a commitment to raise the academic achievement of all middle grades students by implementing the following ten key practices:

MMGW Ten Key Practices

1. An academic core that is aligned to what students must know, understand and be able to do to succeed in college-preparatory English, mathematics, social studies, and science

2. A belief that all students matter

3. High expectations and a system of extra help and time

4. Classroom practices that engage students in their learning

5. Teachers working together

6. Support from parents

7. Qualified teachers

8. Use of data

9. Use of technology for learning

10. Strong leadership
FOCUS
Focus on Middle Schools

Middle School Day

• 8:20 am-3:30 pm (subject to change with school board policy)
• The day consists of homeroom and 7 periods.
• Students have four core academic classes, two related arts classes, and lunch every day.
• Students go to lunch by grade level.
• All middle schools have time built into the weekly schedule for enrichment/remediation.

Quick Facts about Middle School

• **Teams** - Teachers of different subjects who teach the same students plan together to make instructional decisions for their students.
• **Homeroom** - Short period for attendance, the Pledge of Allegiance, moment of silence, announcements, and distribution of school communications.
• **Academic Core** - English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies
• **Physical Education** - Students are required to take PE one semester (18 weeks) each year in middle school. Uniforms are required and are purchased from the school.
• **Related Arts** - Exploratory courses
• **Extra-Help** - All teachers provide opportunities for extra-help for students.
• **Lockers** - All students are assigned a locker to secure books and personal items.
• **Extra-curricular** - A wide variety of activities and student organizations are offered.
• **Sports** - 7th and 8th grade students who meet eligibility requirements may try-out for interscholastic sports.
The registration process for 2015-16 will begin after the middle school parent meetings during the third week of April. Parents/guardians are asked to use an online product called Registration Gateway that will gather student information, related arts course requests, and accept fee payments online.

If you have an email address on file, you will receive an electronic message on, or about May 10th. This message will contain information on how to access the registration website. On this Registration site, parents/guardians will create a user account, complete the registration process, request related arts classes and pay any annual fees.

Thank you so much for your prompt attention to this important information. Please make every effort to complete the online registration by May 30th.
Focus on Middle School Curriculum

Registration and Scheduling Events

Rising 6th Graders:

- While still in 5th grade, students participate in a tour of the middle school campus, are introduced to middle school faculty, and attend an informational meeting.
- Parents of rising 6th graders are invited to an informational meeting held on the middle school campus.
- Individual conferences are scheduled as needed to discuss specific needs.
- Sixth grades students will be scheduled a semester of physical education.
- Students may opt to participate in sixth grade band.
- Sixth grade students are assigned an exploratory rotation of other related arts courses to complete their schedule.

Rising 7th and 8th Graders:

- Individual conferences are scheduled as needed to discuss teacher recommendations.

All Students:

- Related Arts courses are scheduled on a space available basis, with respect to class size and balance. Efforts are made to honor 7th and 8th grade student preferences, but guarantees cannot be made.
- Parents who wish to communicate special scheduling needs should do so by early summer. A student learning styles form is available for this purpose.
- Schedules are mailed in late summer and are considered final.
- Information regarding “Meet the Teacher” opportunities is provided by each middle school.
Focus on Middle School Curriculum

6th Grade Academic Core Classes

The curricula for 6th grade core academic courses are based on the South Carolina Academic standards. (www.sc.ed.gov) Gifted and Talented classes are offered in each area for students who meet the state identification criteria.

Language Arts 6
Students apply their reading skills to read and interpret more challenging texts. Students study word analysis and vocabulary strategies in order to read fluently. They read a variety of informational texts as well as the four literary texts: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Students use writing to entertain, to inform, to describe, and to persuade. They plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish narrative and expository writing. They learn to use a variety of sentence structures to express their thoughts in both oral and written form. Sixth graders access information in print and electronic forms and document both primary and secondary sources as reference materials.

Mathematics 6
This course is designed to develop mathematical processes of problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections, and representation. In the unit of numbers and operations, students will learn concepts of percentages, integers, ratio, and rate. Algebra skills taught include mathematical expressions, equations, and inequalities. Mathematical concepts in geometry, measurement, data analysis, and probability are developed in sixth grade.

Science 6
In order to develop scientific process skills, sixth grade students engage in hands-on inquiry activities and conduct a variety of scientific investigations throughout the year. Students explore the diversity of living things as they study the structure and function of plants and animals. Students study the atmosphere, weather, and catastrophic weather events. The course also includes a unit on Conservation of Energy that includes chemistry concepts, simple machines, magnetism, and solar energy.

Social Studies 6
Sixth grade students study people and events of ancient civilization and their contribution to the modern world. The study includes the Middle Ages, Renaissance and the Reformation of Europe, and ends with the age of European exploration and settlement in the New World. The course includes the significance of geography in the development of the human story. Students explore the everyday lives, problems, and accomplishments of the people and their roles in developing social, economic, and political structures of the major civilizations.
Focus on Middle School Curriculum

7th Grade Academic Core Classes

The curricula for 7th grade core academic courses are based on the South Carolina Academic standards. (www.sc.ed.gov) Gifted and Talented classes are offered in each area for students who meet the state identification criteria.

Language Arts 7
Seventh-grade students continue to apply their skills in reading and writing. Students in grade seven read fiction, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Students read and comprehend a variety of informational texts in print and non-print formats. Students use word analysis and vocabulary strategies to read fluently. Students create written works for a variety of audiences that have a clear focus, sufficient detail, coherent organization, effective use of voice, and correct use of the conventions of written Standard American English. Seventh graders learn to access and use information from a variety of sources to design and carry out research projects.

Math 7
This course is designed to develop mathematical processes of problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections, and representation. In the unit of numbers and operations, students will expand their understanding of concepts of percentages, integers, ratio, and rate. New algebra skills taught include proportional relationships. Mathematical concepts in geometry, measurement, data analysis, and probability are developed in seventh grade.

Pre-Algebra
This course builds on basic math skills to move the student towards readiness for a high school Algebra I course. Students will work with equations, slope, inequalities, and irrational numbers. Applying the Pythagorean Theory and solving multi-step equations are examples of pre-algebra skills.

Science 7
Students continue to develop inquiry skills throughout the course as students conduct investigations in the areas life science and chemistry. Seventh graders study the structure and function of cells and explore the molecular basis and patterns of heredity. Other units include Human Body Systems and Disease, Ecology, and the Chemical Nature of Matter.

Social Studies 7
This course continues the study of world cultures with a focus on the changes that have occurred in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas from 1600 to the present. Some topics include colonial expansion of European powers, 17th and 18th century forms of government and revolutions, imperialism, 20th century world conflicts, and international developments in post-World War II.
Focus on Middle School Curriculum

8th Grade Academic Core Classes

The curricula for 8th grade core academic courses are based on the South Carolina Academic standards. (www.sc.ed.gov) Gifted and Talented classes are offered in each area for students who meet the state identification criteria.

Language Arts 8
Eighth-grade students continue to apply and expand their skills in reading and writing. Students read fiction, literary nonfiction, poetry, and drama. They compare and contrast different perspectives on similar topics or themes. Students evaluate elements of the author’s craft such as the use of tone, and imagery to create emotional responses in the reader. As eighth graders write for a variety of audiences and purposes, they learn to pay attention to the examination of content, development, organization, quality of voice and language conventions. Students learn to access, use, and document information from multiple sources to design and carry out research projects. Students deliver oral presentations on topics citing evidence to support their views.

English I-1 Carnegie Unit
This high school level course is literature based with students learning strategies to unlock the meaning of a variety of poems, short stories, essays, and novels. In addition, students will learn to read a Shakespearean play and literary nonfiction. Vocabulary development and writing for a variety of audiences and purposes is integrated throughout the course. The state requires that students take the English I End of Course Exam provided by the South Carolina Department of Education. The exam counts 20 percent of the student’s grade.

* See Academic Policies regarding high school courses on next page.

Pre-Algebra
This course builds on essential math skills to move the student toward readiness for a high school Algebra I course. Students will work with equations, slope, inequalities, and irrational numbers. Applying the Pythagorean Theory and solving multi-step equations are examples of pre-algebra skills.

Algebra I - 1 Carnegie Unit
In this high school level course, emphasis is placed on solving linear equations and inequalities, basic operations and factoring of polynomials, and applying the concepts to solve real world problems. It is recommended that students have a graphing calculator although one is provided at school for classroom use. The state requires that students take the Algebra I End of Course Exam provided by the South Carolina Department of Education. The exam counts 20 percent of the student’s grade.

* See Academic Policies regarding high school courses on next page.
Focus on Middle School Curriculum

8th Grade Academic Core Classes

Science 8
Eighth graders continue to develop their scientific process skills as they explore the nature of science and topics primarily in geology and physics. Earth Science units include the Earth’s Biological History, Catastrophic Events, the Earth’s Structure and Processes, Astronomy, Earth and Space Systems. The physics unit includes topics such as Newton’s Laws of Motion, Waves, Sound, and Light.

Social Studies 8
The focus for eighth grade social studies is the history of South Carolina and the role that the state and its people have played in the development of the United States. The settlement of South Carolina and the United States, the American Revolution, the American Civil War, and Reconstruction. The course ends with investigating major social, political, and economic developments of the 19th and 20th century.

Academic Policies

High School Credit Courses: Algebra I and English I

Attendance:
In order to be eligible for high school credit, students must meet attendance requirements as well as pass the course. Credit will be denied if the student accrues more than 10 unexcused absences in a year-long high school credit course.

South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy:
This policy applies to all high school credit courses taken in middle and high school. Once a student begins taking credit-bearing courses, their official high school transcript is initiated. (See SC Uniform Grading Chart on page 31.)

Retake option for students taking high school courses prior to 9th grade:
Students who take high school credit courses (e.g. English I, Algebra I) while in middle school may retake these courses in ninth grade and have the original course grade dropped from their transcript. Only the retake grade will appear on the transcript and be used to calculate the student’s Grade Point Average (GPA.) This rule applies whether the retake grade is higher or lower than the grade the student previously earned in eighth grade.
Focus on Middle School Curriculum

Physical Education and Related Arts

In middle school, physical education is required every year for one semester. Related Arts courses are designed to give middle school students the opportunity to explore and experience a variety of electives in the areas of fine and performing arts, technology, consumer science, and foreign language.

Schools cannot guarantee that students will be scheduled in their choice of related arts.

Art
6th grade 9 weeks
7th - 8th grade One Semester

Students taking art will be able to describe, analyze, interpret, and judge various types of art. Elements and principles of design will be incorporated into projects developed by the students. As students progress, they will create artwork with greater detail and will experiment using more sophisticated art media and processes.

Band
6th-8th grade Year-long

Band is a year-long class offered to students in sixth through eighth grade. Instrument assignment for sixth graders is determined by the band director. Students are taught basic fundamentals of playing an instrument along with music theory. As students continue to improve and develop their music skills, they have opportunities to compete at local, state, and national levels.

Chorus
6th grade 9 weeks
7th - 8th grade One Semester

Students learn breathing techniques, pitch, and correct dynamics for singing. They apply basic music reading skills to various types of music literature. All grade levels will have opportunities to perform.

Concert Chorus
8th grade Year-long

Some schools offer a concert chorus class at the eighth grade level that is a year-long class. Students will study and perform diverse and more complex music. Auditions may be required.
Focus on Middle School Curriculum

Physical Education and Related Arts

**Computer Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>9 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th-8th grade</td>
<td>One Semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In computer class students will learn basic computer operations and concepts. They will use technology for productivity, communication, research, problem solving and decision making. Various software programs will be used to increase the opportunities for the students to experience real life situations. Social, ethical, and human issues related to technology will be discussed as well as the history and development of the modern computer.

**Family and Consumer Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>9 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th-8th grade</td>
<td>One Semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through hands-on activities and projects, students enrolled in Family and Consumer Science will have opportunities to explore self-image, consumer issues, environmental concerns, clothing care, child development, nutrition, food preparation techniques, and skills for successful employment.

**Foreign Language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>9 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th-8th grade</td>
<td>One Semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the middle grades, foreign language is an exploratory class and not a progressive sequence. Students read, write, speak, and listen to the language through a variety of lessons, games and activities. Cultural differences and similarities are also explored.

**ITE and/or Gateways to Technology (Pre-Engineering)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>9 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th-8th grade</td>
<td>One Semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gateways to Technology (Industrial Technology Education) provides students hands-on experiences and an awareness of the advances in technology. Designed for all students, the units of study address national standards in math, science, and technology with practical applications. As part of this introductory class modules aligned with *Project Lead the Way* build a foundation for future study in engineering and related careers.
Focus on Middle School Curriculum

Physical Education and Related Arts

Physical Education
6th-8th grade One Semester

In physical education the goal is to expose the students to a wide range of sports and activities that promote a lifetime of healthy living. Activities will include dual, individual, and team sports and skills. A comprehensive unit of health is included at each grade level.

Theatre Arts
6th grade 9 weeks
7th-8th grade One Semester

In middle school, Theater Arts is a combination of dance and drama. The dance portion will increase the student’s knowledge of expression in movement, methods, and connections between dance and a healthy lifestyle. Dance vocabulary will be utilized when discussing the aesthetic value, choreography, and history of dance. Students will have opportunities to apply choreographic tools and composition principles in dance. Drama will develop an understanding and appreciation of theatre concepts and the dramatic process. Activities will include skits, playmaking, improvisation, and pantomiming.
Focus on Student Achievement

District Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>70-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Promotion and Retention

1. Sixth grade students must pass three of the four core academic classes in order to be promoted to seventh grade.
2. Seventh and eighth grade students must pass three of the four core classes in order to be promoted. However, seventh and eighth grade students will not be promoted if they fail the same core subject in two consecutive years.
3. Parent conferences for students who face potential retention will be conducted. Parents/Legal Guardians may appeal a retention decision to the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction. The appeal must be made in writing with the reasons for disagreement with the decision within two weeks of the notification of the retention.
4. Summer school may be required.
Focus on Student Achievement

Assessment

Aspire
ACT developed achievement test administered to all grade levels. Subjects tested include writing, English, reading and mathematics.

PASS
SC developed achievement test administered to all grade levels. Subjects tested include science and social studies.

MAP
Formative assessment may be administered and used to measure progress, to develop individual educational goals, or for special program placement information.

PSAT
Practice SAT is offered to 8th graders, and is used to identify South Carolina Junior Scholars. Participation is optional and may require a fee.

NAEP
Schools, grade levels, and students are selected on a random basis. Assessment is used to track trends in student achievement at the state and national level.

ACCESS
Students who are English Language Learners are assessed in reading, writing, listening, and speaking until a specified level of proficiency is demonstrated.

NCSC and SC Alt
These assessments are administered to students who have Individual Education Plans which call for alternate assessment.

*Other assessment instruments are used at the discretion of the administration.
Focus on Student Achievement

Systems of Extra Help

Special Education
Students with disabilities who qualify for an Individual Education Plan receive special services to help them meet their individual academic goals. Plans are reviewed and updated annually by members of an educational team which includes the student, parents/guardians, and school personnel. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Office of Special Services.

English Language Learners
Students who are not yet proficient in the English language are evaluated and can be eligible to receive assistance to help them be successful. This assistance can come in the form of pull-out programs, classroom accommodations or both.

Structured Support and Enrichment Time
Each middle school has a specific time built into the schedule for additional support and/or enrichment. This time is unique for each middle school and provides differentiation for students. More information about this will be provided by the individual middle school your student will attend.

Before and after school help is available for students.
Each teacher will communicate to parents and students their specific system and times for assisting students. Other school level homework help or peer tutoring opportunities may be available.

Summer Bridges/Leadership For Rising 6th Graders
Rising sixth grade students who may need extra help with the transition to middle school are identified in the spring of their fifth grade year and invited to participate in a short summer program on their middle school campus. The program includes study and organizational skills, character development, school tours, a preview of middle school procedures and rules, and team building activities. A similar program is offered for rising 9th graders at each high school.

Summer School
Students who are in danger of retention may be offered an opportunity to attend a summer school program. Tuition is required.

Math Camp
A math camp is offered for one week during the summer for rising 6th, 7th or 8th grade students who feel they need extra support in math in order to be successful next year. There is a charge for this summer camp. Please see the Fort Mill School District website for more information.
Focus on Student Achievement

Academic Recognition

**Honor Roll**
Each middle school recognizes students who earn all A’s and B’s for a nine weeks period.

**Junior Beta Club**
Students are invited to be members of this national service organization based on grade point average and teacher recommendation.

**Junior Scholars**
Eighth grade students with a qualifying score on the seventh grade PASS in ELA and Math are invited to take the PSAT. Those who achieve a qualifying PSAT score are identified as South Carolina Junior Scholars. Eighth grade Junior Scholars are recognized in a ceremony.

Gifted and Talented Programs

**Academic**
The Fort Mill School District uses the identification guidelines as outlined by the South Carolina State Department of Education. Eligible students are served in core academic classes.

**Artistic**
Students may audition in the fall to attend the regional St-ARTS program held at Winthrop University. This program offers enrichment opportunities to students in visual arts, drama, dance, and instrumental or vocal music. Three spring workshops and a three week summer camp are held.

**Process:**
- Each fall, St-ARTS Brochures are distributed to each middle school student.
- Parents or students must complete and return the referral form.
- Auditions are held after school at a designated middle school in late November or early December.
- Students are notified when accepted into the program by the district and information from Winthrop University is sent directly to students regarding the logistics of the spring semester workshops and summer program.

**Enrollment is limited. Students who attend one summer may return for their subsequent years in middle school without another audition. Transportation to this program is not provided by the district.**
SC Gifted Program Eligibility Criteria

**SC Criteria for Eligibility:** Students must have at least one qualifying score in **two different dimensions** to be eligible for Gifted and Talented classes.  
*(Exception: If a student scores 96th percentile or above in composite aptitude, he does not need to meet dimension B or C.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension A---Aptitude</th>
<th>Dimension B---Achievement</th>
<th>Dimension C---Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93rd national age percentile rank in verbal or quantitative or nonverbal or composite reasoning</td>
<td>94th national percentile on approved subtests (reading comprehension and/or mathematical concepts and problem solving; or, if not available, total reading or total mathematics)</td>
<td>Performance Task Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 2 – verbal or non-verbal, 16 or more out of 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 3 – verbal or non-verbal, 18 or more out of 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 4 – verbal, 16 or more out of 20 or non-verbal, 22 or more out of 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 5 – verbal, 18 or more out of 20 or non-verbal, 25 or more out of 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspire Reading or Math (The SCDE determines qualifying scale scores on a yearly basis.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grades 5-12 – final Grade Point Average of 3.75 on a 4.0 scale in core academic courses only (must have at least four courses for review)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common instruments: CogAT, TCS, InView, Ravens (non-verbal only), OLSAT

Common instruments: Aspire, PASS, MAP, Terra Nova, ITBS, CTBS, Stanford

Accepted Measures: Performance Task Assessment or GPA
SC Gifted Program Eligibility Criteria - continued

Beginning July 2013, students who have been identified as gifted in another state by state (not local school district) criteria, are eligible for gifted services in SC. Documentation of state eligibility is required.

Local Review Process
- October---Fall MAP scores are reviewed.
- November---Grades 4-7 who have met achievement are invited to test/re-test aptitude.
- January---Grade 2 CogAT scores are reviewed.
- February---Grades 2-5 who have met achievement or aptitude take Performance Task (aptitude score must be on file).
- June---Grades 2-5 Spring MAP and Performance Task scores are reviewed.
- July---Grades 3-8 Aspire is reviewed. GPA is checked for rising grades 6-8 who have met achievement or aptitude.

Referral Process
- Referrals for screening can be made through the counselor or administrator at any time, provided previous records have been received and student is seeking to continue, not begin, gifted services.
- Referred students who need additional testing will be scheduled into the next test session; aptitude in July and November; achievement in Fall, Winter, or Spring windows.

Notes
- Private testing is not accepted for identification or placement into the gifted program.
- There are no parent overrides for placement into the gifted program.
Focus on Student Involvement

Middle School Athletics

Due to South Carolina High School League rules, sixth graders may not participate in middle school sports. The SC High School League is the governing body for interscholastic sports, including middle and high school athletics.

Seventh and eighth grade middle school students will only be allowed to participate in high school sports if the sport is not offered on the middle school level.

The following sports are offered in the Fort Mill middle schools for seventh and eighth graders. Fall and winter sports have separate teams for seventh and eighth grade students. Teams that play in the spring are comprised of a combination of seventh and eighth grade students.

**Fall** – Cheerleading, Dance Team, Football, Volleyball
**Winter** – Basketball, Cheerleading, Dance Team
**Spring** – Baseball, Soccer, Softball, Track

**High School Sports that allow middle school participation:**
Students may try out for these sports at the high school in the student’s attendance area if the sport is not offered in the middle school.

**Fall** – Cross Country, Golf (female), Tennis (female), Swimming
**Winter** – JV Wrestling
**Spring** – Golf (male), Tennis (male), JV Lacrosse

**Eligibility Requirements for Middle School Athletes**
1. Age - A student who becomes 15 years of age prior to July 1, 2015 will not be able to compete on an 8th grade team and in any athletic activities during the 2015-2016 school year. However, the student can play for the high school athletic program.
2. Due to South Carolina High School League rules, sixth graders may not participate in middle school sports. The SC High School League is the governing body for interscholastic sports, including middle and high school athletics.
3. Students promoted academically (not social or placed) are considered as having met the requirements for academic eligibility for first semester.
4. Students in grades seven and eight must be doing satisfactory work at the end of the first semester in order to be eligible second semester.

**NOTE:** Satisfactory work is defined as meeting the school district’s promotion policy. A seventh or eighth grader who met academic requirements for promotion but elected to stay back/repeat are ineligible for the entire year.

**NOTE:** A student failing the seventh or eighth grade is eligible during second semester if he has satisfactorily passed first semester work.
Focus on Student Involvement

Student Organizations

Each middle school provides opportunities for students to participate in a variety of activities, clubs and school sponsored organizations. Consult the student handbook and note other announcements regarding club enrollment and events.

Service Learning

Service learning is an organized way of helping other people. Through homerooms, classes, and clubs, students have the opportunity to become involved in their community by taking part in a variety of service learning projects and activities.

Focus on Student Services

Media Center

The media center is available for students to read, check out books, work on the computer, access the internet, and do research.

Health Services

Each middle school has a full time nurse to assist students. Nurses administer medication, contact parents as needed, and provide common medical screening services.

School Resource Officer

In cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, each school has a full time resource officer to assist the school personnel in promoting and maintaining a safe environment for all students.
Focus on Student Services

Guidance Services

School Counselors
Middle School Counselors provide a variety of support services to students through individual, small-group, and classroom interactions. The middle school guidance program includes: academic counseling, social, emotional, personal counseling and support, and career counseling. Each middle school has at least one counselor who also has Career Development Facilitator (CDF) training and national CDF certification.

Character Education
Character education is a vital part of the middle school concept. Every student is assigned an adult advocate through our year-long advisory program. Small groups meet regularly to discuss issues related to the middle school years. An emphasis on positive character traits is embedded throughout the total school program.

Career Education
In preparation for the transition to high school, middle school students participate in educational and career assessments and interest inventories as directed by the guidance counselors. Counselors help students understand the importance of their academic work to their career interest and plans.

Each school provides special opportunities for career exploration. Activities, such as career fairs, career speakers, and job shadowing opportunities, allow students to learn about various careers and to experience the world of work.

By the end of eighth grade, students, parents and counselors develop an Individual Graduation Plan (IGP). (See next page.)

Release of Information to Outside Agencies/Medical Personnel
Occasionally parents will request that information about their student be provided by the school or teachers to an outside agency (private school, medical professional, agency, etc.). Before any school employee can release information about any student to anyone outside of the current school building a signed Release of Information form must be completed by the parent/legal guardian and kept on file to document the request. The signed release is in effect for one calendar year only. The Release of Information form should be given to the School Counselor. (See Release of Information form on page 32).
Focus on the Future

Transition to High School

The Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) Vision:
“Personal Pathways to Success” For All Students

This system integrates academic and career-tech education that offers more and better ways for all students to succeed. Together, parents, students, and guidance counselors work to develop an Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) that serves as an adaptable road map through high school based on student interests and goals. The purpose of the IGP is to help students and parents explore educational and professional possibilities in order to make appropriate secondary and post-secondary decisions. The foundation of every IGP is the core curriculum of English, math, science, and social studies. High school graduation and college entrance requirements, relative to post-secondary goals, are considered first in the planning process.

Beginning in the 8th grade, middle school students develop an IGP where they select a School of Study and potential Career Cluster. A School of Study is a broad program area that inter-relates academic content and career pathways.

The Schools of Study offered in Fort Mill School District include:
• Arts and Humanities
• Business and Information Systems
• Engineering and Integrated Technologies
• Health and Human Services

A career cluster is an organizational “clustering” of common educational preparatory paths for students with similar goals, strengths, interests, and skills.

The Schools of Study are separated into various clusters that allow specific organizing and tailoring of course work and work experience best suited for individual students.

In the ninth grade during their High School 101 class, students revise their IGP and may select a major. Beginning in the 10th grade, students declare a major to help focus their elective choices. Collaborative annual reviews of the IGP are required in grades 9-11. Students are encouraged but not required to complete a major in high school.

(See the FMSD4 Curriculum Framework of clusters and majors offered at the high school level on pages 30-31.)
Focus on the Future

Transition to High School

Additional Transition Activities for Preparing for 9th Grade

• Eighth grade teachers make recommendations for 9th grade academic classes.

• Eighth graders receive a *Fort Mill School District Program of Studies* during a classroom guidance session to help in high school academic planning.

• Eighth graders and their parents are invited to an informational meeting at their assigned high school where school specific information is shared.

• High school counselors come to the middle schools for ninth grade individual graduation planning.

• Eighth graders tour their assigned high school in the spring.

• High Schools offer ninth grade orientation prior to school starting.

• High School 101 and JROTC offer many high school transition topics including orientation to high school, goal setting, study skills, habits of success, academic planning, career exploration, and employability skills.
Fort Mill School District Curriculum Framework
HIGH SCHOOL CAREER CLUSTERS

School of Arts and Humanities

Arts Cluster
Majors:
- Choral Music
- Dance
- Theatre
- Instrumental Music
- Visual Arts

AV Technology and Communications Cluster
Majors:
- Digital Art and Design
- Media Technology (TV)
- Graphic Communication
- Journalism

Humanities Cluster
Majors:
- AP: Interdisciplinary Studies
- English
- International Studies
- Social Studies

School of Business and Information Systems

Business Management and Administration Cluster
Majors:
- General Management
- Operations Management

Finance Cluster
Major:
- Accounting

Information Technology Cluster
Majors:
- Programming and Software Development

Marketing, Sales & Service
Majors:
- Marketing Management
# Fort Mill School District Curriculum Framework
## HIGH SCHOOL CAREER CLUSTERS

### School of Health & Human Services

#### Education & Training Cluster
Major:  
- Early Childhood Education

#### Health Science Technology
Majors:  
- Biomedical Sciences  
- Health Science  
- Sports Medicine  
- Diversified Health Science

#### Law & Public Service Cluster
Majors:  
- Law & Legal Services  
- Military Science

#### Hospitality and Tourism
Major:  
- Culinary Arts

### School of Engineering and Integrated Technologies

#### Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources Cluster
Majors:  
- Animal Science  
- Environment and Natural Resources Management

#### Architecture & Construction Cluster
Major:  
- Project Lead the Way

#### STEM* Cluster
*Science, Technology, Engineering, Math
Majors:  
- Math  
- Pre-Engineering (PLTW)  
- Science

#### Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Cluster
Major:  
- Automotive Technology
**Parent Authorization for Release of Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>School:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOB:</td>
<td>Grade:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent/Guardian:</th>
<th>Phone:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Requesting Records from:**

_________________________________________________________

**Purpose of Request:**

_________________________________________________________

**Information Needed:**

_________________________________________________________

My signature below authorizes ____________________________________________ (releasing agency) to release all personally identifiable data such as psychological and academic test results, classroom performance and medical information to Fort Mill Schools in reference to this student.

My signature also provides permission for Fort Mill Schools and the agency listed above to share any and all educationally relevant information concerning this student. I understand this information will remain confidential and will be used for the benefit of the student’s educational program.

Signature: ____________________________________________ Date: _______

I am the (check one):  
- Parent  
- Legal Guardian  
- Surrogate Parent  
- Adult Student
## Grade Point Conversion Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale Conversions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numerical Average</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55-03-2
Contributors

Principals, Assistant Principals and School Counselors
All Middle Schools

Jerry Howell, Graphic Communication Instructor
Fort Mill High School

Jan West, Coordinator of Testing and Accountability
Fort Mill School District

Chari Young, District Curriculum Coordinator
Fort Mill School District

Marty McGinn, Assistant Superintendent
Fort Mill School District

Mike Brown, Business Partner
Alpha Graphics

References

This We Believe: Developmentally Responsive Middle Level Schools
National Middle School Association
Columbus, Ohio. 1998

Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century
Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development
Carnegie Corporation
New York, 1990

Making Middle Grades Work
Southern Region Education Board
www.sreb.org