

160-4-2-.05 MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM CRITERIA.

(1) DEFINITIONS.

(a) **Academic classes** - instruction in English and language arts, reading, mathematics, science and social studies. Instruction in foreign language may be included as academic classes at the discretion of the local school system.

(b) **Academic team** - an interdisciplinary team of teachers of academic classes with common planning time who share a common group of students.

(c) **Common group of students** - a group of students assigned to an academic team.

(d) **Common planning** - planning for instruction, student needs, and modifications of student groupings or schedules during the students' instructional day by academic teams for a common group of students. Such planning may include parent conferences and participation in professional development.

(e) **Connections (exploratory) classes** - instruction beyond the academic classes that is designed to integrate and apply the skills and concepts taught in the academic classes by reinforcing critical reading, writing and thinking skills.

(f) **Remediation** - academic instruction designed to bring students not performing on grade level, as defined by the Office of Student Achievement, to grade level performance.

(2) REQUIREMENTS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM FUNDING.

(a) The middle school program shall be contained in a school, staffed by a full-time principal, which houses grades six, seven or eight, or any combination thereof.

(b) The middle school program shall have academic teams.

(c) The middle school program shall provide each academic team a minimum of 55 consecutive minutes for common planning.

(d) Each academic team shall provide its common group of students a minimum of five hours of instruction in academic classes. Each academic team shall have control over the academic instructional time and schedules of its common group of students.

(e) A local system may include foreign language instruction as an additional academic class or as a Connections class. If foreign language is included as an academic class, class sizes for academic classes must be followed. Foreign language taught as an academic class must be taught by a teacher certified in the language.

(f) Beyond the minimum of five hours of academic instruction, the local board of education shall have the authority to schedule academic classes or Connections classes for the remainder of the day.

(g) Except as provided below, each middle school student shall complete at least one Connections class each grading period or term.

1. Any student shall be allowed to take an additional academic class instead of a Connections class at the request of the parent or guardian, subject to availability.

2. Any student performing below grade level may receive additional academic remediation instead of taking a Connections class.

3. The local board shall determine the number of instructional contact hours for each Connections class.

(h) All Connections class offerings shall be made from the list of state-funded subjects in Rule 160-4-2-.20 List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses for Students Entering Ninth Grade in 2008 and Subsequent Years. All subjects or courses shall adhere to the requisite content standards as delineated in the Georgia Performance Standards. In addition, all subjects and courses offered as Connections classes shall conform to one of the following areas:

1. Agricultural/Environmental/Technical Education. Courses in agricultural and environmental education are designed to develop awareness of the scope and importance of agriculture, ecology, conservation, agribusiness, and the basic use of the equipment and technologies related to agricultural and environmental preservation. Courses in technology education are designed to develop awareness of and gain practical experience with a variety of technologies essential to modern society, such as robotics, electronics, aeronautics, computer-aided design, and computer numerical control systems which are used in areas such as aviation, construction, communications, engineering, and manufacturing.

2. Business and Information Technology Education. Courses in business and information technology are designed to develop awareness of the importance and scope of business in areas such as entrepreneurship, finance, international business, management, and marketing. Students develop awareness of the rapidly evolving fields of information technology, e-commerce, and computer skills necessary for living, learning, and working in the modern era of electronic communication and ready access to information.

3. Communication/Performing/Visual Arts Education. Courses in fine arts and exploratory foreign language are designed to enable students to learn the basics of other languages and acquire an understanding of the cultures of other countries.

Courses

in performing and visual arts develop student knowledge and skill in drama, art, instrumental music, and vocal music.

4. Home/Careers/Community Education. Courses in family and consumer sciences and career connections courses are designed to develop knowledge and skills in areas such as nutrition, household safety, consumer decision making, family responsibilities, and community responsibilities and service. Career connections courses develop an awareness of broad career fields, learning interests and aptitudes related to educational and career alternatives, and build understanding of the academic prerequisites for postsecondary education and future careers.

5. Physical/Health Education. Courses in physical and health education are designed to provide students with the opportunity to learn the information and skills necessary to be active and healthy now and for their entire lives. Students also learn cooperation and teamwork skills that can be applied in family, school, work, and community situations.

(i) Connections classes shall count toward promotion requirements.

(j) Pass-fail grades are prohibited in academic classes and Connections classes.

Authority: O.C.G.A. § 20-2-240; 20-2-290; 20-14-33.

Adopted: September 8, 2011

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