**Chapter 4 Organizing the Middle School Curriculum**

**A middle school program should reflect the philosophy of the school itself. For this reason, it may be difficult to find an identical program in any two schools, even within the same school district.**

**I.Balanced curriculum**

**-learning experiences should be provided for each student’s own intellectual levels and should relate to immediate rather than remote academic goals**

**-to account for the full range of students who are at many different levels of concrete and formal operations, a wide variety of cognitive learning experiences should be made available**

**-learning objectives should be sequenced to allow for the transition from concrete to formal operations**

**-a diversified curriculum of exploratory and fundamental activities should result in daily experiences that stimulate and nurture intellectual development**

**-a curriculum must be flexible enough that all areas taught reveal opportunities for further study, help students learn how to study, and help them appraise their own interests and talents**

**-methods of instruction should involve open and individually directed learning experiences**

**-teachers should play the role of a personal guide and facilitator for learning**

**-curriculum and teaching methods must reflect cultural ethnic and economic subgroups within the middle school**

**-experiences in the arts must be accessible!**

**-the purpose of the middle school is to offer a balanced, comprehensive curriculum that facilitates student success and is designed to bridge the gap between the self-contained environment of the elementary school and the departmentalized structure of the high school**

**Essential parts of balanced curriculum:**

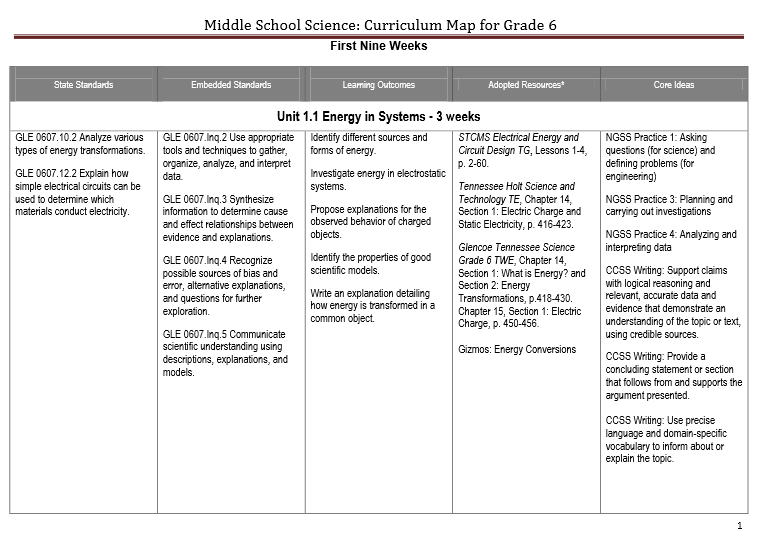
**1.Personal development**

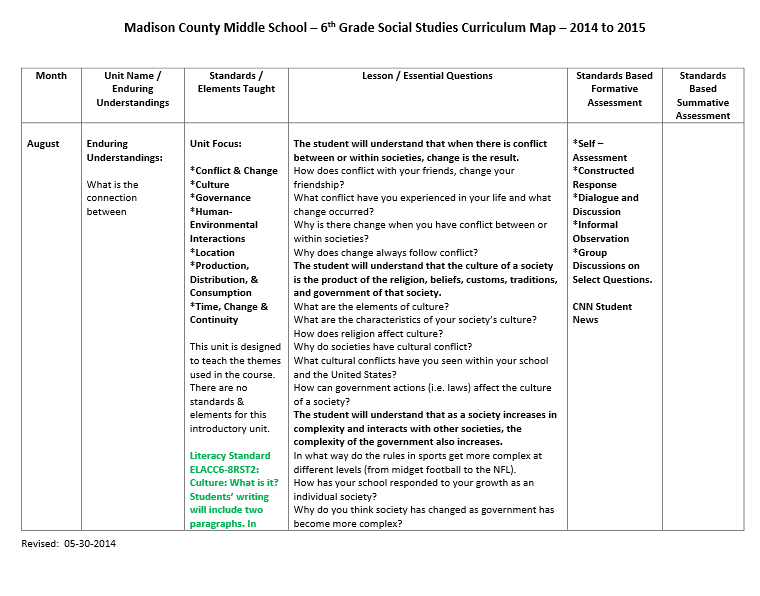
**-is designed to foster social, emotional, and moral growth through student-centered curricular and extracurricular activities**

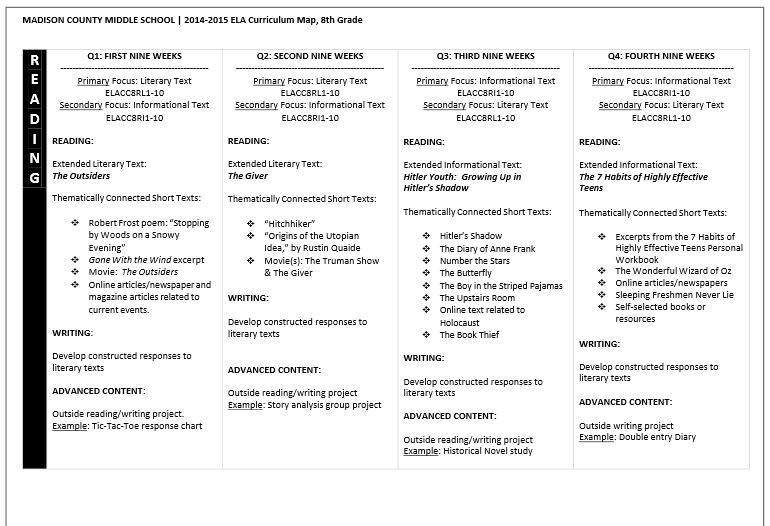
**-advisor program-can help initiate and implement personal development topics**

**2.Subject content-outlined for a school district-example would be 3 years math, 3 years science ect…**

**3.Essential learning skills-such topics as school awareness, community awareness, problem solving, study skills, ect…**

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**II. Achievement in the middle school**

**-For many students, the middle years are the make or break time**

**-either they acquire the necessary cognitive skills or they will risk dropping out of high school later on**

**A.creating a standards-based curriculum in the modern middle school**

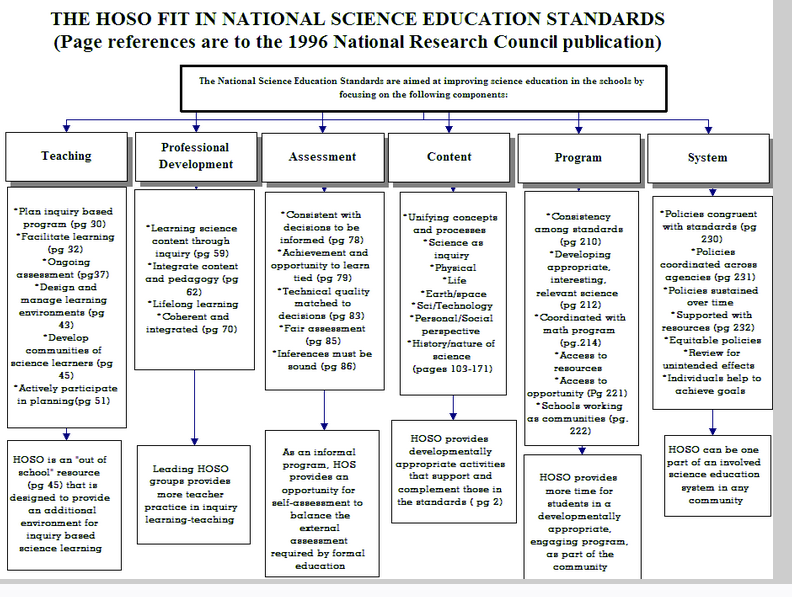
**-some argue that teachers should play a far greater role in contributing to the performance of their pupils in a variety of contexts and over extended periods of time vs the formal testing which is only a snapshot of academic progress**

**B.National Science Standards**

**-in a world filled with products of scientific inquiry, scientific literacy has become a necessity for everyone**

**-everyone needs to use scientific information to make choices every day and be able to engage intelligently in public discourse and debate about important issues involving science and technology**

**-the standards outline what students need to know, understand, and be able to do scientific literate at different grade levels**

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**C.Math**

**-the constructivist theory in math points out that in learning, abstraction is the fundamental mental mechanism by which new mathematics knowledge is generated**

**-abstraction is the process by which the mind selects, coordinates, combines, and registers in memory a collection of mental items or acts that appear in the attention field**

**-reflection- is the conscious process of replaying experiences, actions, or mental processes and considering their results or how they are composed**

**D.language arts**

**-there is a stress for the need for students to read a wide variety of literature representing many time periods, genres, and ethnic and cultural groups**

**-students should see themselves as readers and writers**

**-we have now argued phonics vs whole learning**

**-personal narrative writings are often used to help students express personal events that are important in their lives**

**E.social studies**

**-global education, the internet, and the growing diversity of the U.S. population had led to new ways to study social studies in the middle school**

**-as today’s world becomes increasingly more interdependent, today’s students need tools for analyzing information, thinking critically, and problem solving**

**F.bilingual education**

**-we have a growing number of non- or limited-English speaking students in our schools**

**-to continue to lead the global economy, we must get all of our young people into the mainstream as fast as possible which will be a challenge as we have new waves of immigrants entering the country**