

# Honors Committee



MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS  
AT SLEEPY HOLLOW MIDDLE SCHOOL

Joshua Whitham, Principal

# GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- **Does the current process work for our families?**
  - AKA: Are we doing right by kids?
- **How do students learn best?**
- **How can we be strategic in ensuring opportunity for all?**
  - What lessons are we learning from the current work at the HS?
- **Social and Emotional Health/Development - how do we differentiate for and honor tween and teenage development?**
  - AKA: What's developmentally/age appropriate?



# PROCESS

- **Committee comprised of:**
  - Gail Duffy, Scott Dorn, Joshua Whitham, and Jennica Vieira
  - Department Chairs Judy Kelly & Jen Walsh
- **Parent Focus Groups and Feedback Form(email)**
  - WI and SHMS
- **SHMS Teacher Focus Group and Feedback Form**
- **Student Focus Groups**
  - SHMS and SHHS
- **Survey of Surrounding Districts (Principal Level)**
- **Survey of Surrounding Districts (Director of Curriculum Level)**
- **Research and Review of the Published Literature on Honors**



# PROCESS

- **FEBRUARY 6: ROLL OUT TO MS FACULTY**
  - Discuss PD opportunities
  - Gather feedback
- **Meeting with sub-committee of the BOE**
- **Conversations with WI and SHHS to share our work**
- **Continue ongoing conversations with staff and Department Chairs**
- **Formally present to the full Board of Education**



# DIRECTLY FROM TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM

"Honors classes can cause too much pressure on young children. True honors classes need a high level of rigor. When the bar is not met by students, consideration must be given to an appropriate placement. The expectations cannot be watered down so students can meet the minimum requirements. Honors then becomes only a label with no substance. Having the just right number of honors sections will allow for greater flexibility for all classes and allow for an equitable distribution of students in each section."

"Children in the sixth grade are transitioning to a new structure, schedule, and building. I think teachers should be able to spend enough time with their student before they can make any recommendations."

"Guidelines for placement NEED to be strictly followed."

"I have taught the 6th grade ELA honors class. Most students, including top students, are not developmentally ready for the analytical skills they need coming into MS to transition from an English class to a literature course, where deep reading and writing is done. We need time to develop and explicitly teach students what we will expect from them, first."

"For the students who are appropriately placed, this environment is highly motivating and fun for them as they are never bored by content or looking for more challenge. Proper placement procedures as well as criteria and procedures for staying in/exiting the class should be an area for focus."

"I see 6th grade as a foundation year to help them gain skills that they can use as they further their education here in Tarrytown."

"Math is different than ELA. Students that are advanced in math should be able to explore a deeper more rich Math experience in which they are challenged sooner. ELA can be differentiated. All students can engage in the same stories and the teacher can differentiate to meet the reading needs of all students with leveled questions."

# STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

## Student Perceptions about Honors:

- Everyone wants to be it
- There's pressure to be in it
- MS should be a restart
- Higher level work
- Less work in non honors
- Speed is quicker in honors
- If not in honors, don't have to try as hard
- Was told by parents that it is something I had to do
- Didn't know what honors was, everyone took placement test and I was put there
- Friends are dictated by schedule
- If no honors in 6th grade, kids could be more social
- Honors in 6th grade creates barriers



# PARENT FOCUS GROUPS

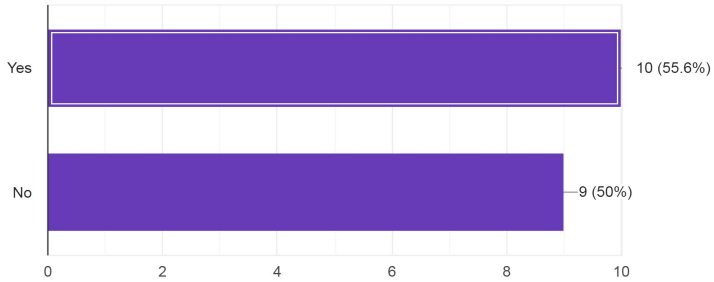
## Parent's Perceptions about Honors:

- “My daughter is in the program, 11 is too young”
- “Why do we need to label [the kids] just give them all good teaching”
- “Honors should be more independent work... it should be research with teacher oversight”
- “I don't get how kids arrive in honors or not...”
- “Honors should be a connection to the HS, a true collaboration”
- “It just goes faster and they give the kids more homework”
- “My child was in Challenge but did not get in honors at the MS, why?”
- “My child is hispanic and smart. No one has helped her get into honors.”
- “Children should be looked at with multiple measures and given a chance to succeed.”
- “If there is honors, the standard cannot be lowered.”

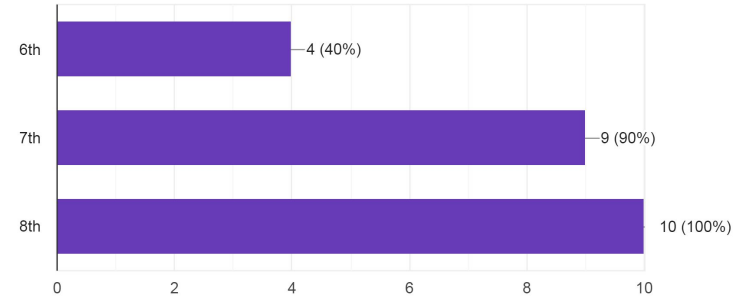


# NEIGHBORING SCHOOLS SAY...

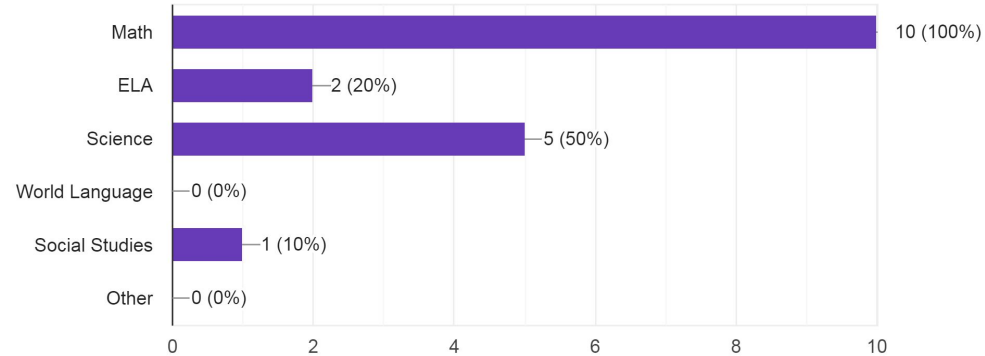
Does Your Middle School Offer Honors Courses?



If yes, please indicate the grade levels they are offered in.



If you offer honors courses, please indicate for which subject/s.

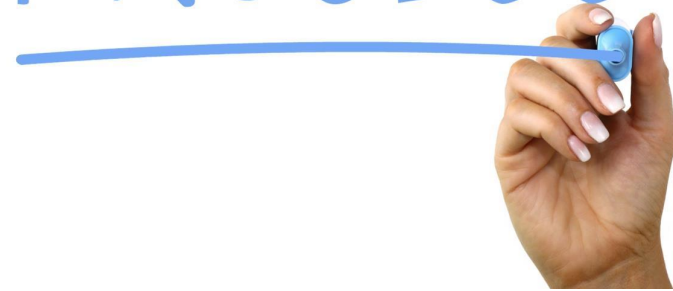




# Current Model

- ELA Honors & Math Honors, 6-8
  - One of each on each grade level team
- Universal Science (Living Environment) for All
  - Two year sequence
  - Ends in Regent Exam
- Honors Spanish
  - Designed for students who were previously in the Dual Language Program
  - Name change to accelerated Spanish
  - Ends with Check Point B Exam
- Entrance/Exit Process
  - Placement exam in 5th grade (developed by MS Math & ELA teachers)
  - AimsWeb data
  - MS teachers make recommendations to have students join the class
  - Struggling students receive recommendations to move to the grade level course

# PROCESS

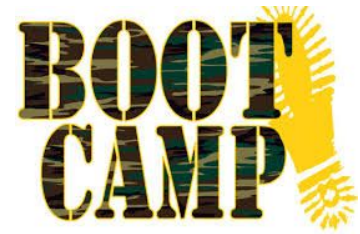


School Year	Mathematics
2019-2020	Grade 6: Math Enrichment in FLEX Grade 6: Quarter 4 Boot Camp Grade 7: Honors (Current Structure) Grade 8: Honors and/or Algebra (Current Structure)
2020-2021	Grade 6: Math Enrichment in FLEX Grade 6: Quarter 4 Boot Camp Grade 7: Honors (New Structure) Grade 8: Honors and/or Algebra (Current Structure)
2021-2022	Grade 6: Math Enrichment in FLEX Grade 6: Quarter 4 Boot Camp Grade 7: Honors (New Structure) Grade 8: Honors and/or Algebra (New Structure)

## 2019-2020

Students in 6th grade will be identified as MATH honors students by February. Those students will enter a “boot camp” during their FLEX in quarter 4.

\*With a summer boot camp possibility.



\*Pending 2020-21 Budget Cycle

School Year	English Language Arts
2019-2020	Grade 6: Enrichment opportunities Grade 7: Honors (Current Structure) Grade 8: Honors (Current Structure)
2020-2021	Grade 6: Enrichment opportunities Grade 7: ELA Enrichment in FLEX Grade 7: Quarter 4 Boot Camp Grade 8: Honors (Current Structure)
2021-2022	Grade 6: Enrichment opportunities Grade 7: ELA Enrichment in FLEX Grade 7: Quarter 4 Boot Camp Grade 8: Honors (New Structure)

## 2020-2021

Students in 7th grade will be identified as ELA honors students by February. Those students will enter a “boot camp” during their FLEX in quarter 4.

\*With a summer boot camp possibility.



\*Pending 2021-22 Budget Cycle

School Year	Mathematics	English Language Arts
2019-2020	Grade 6: Math Enrichment in FLEX Grade 6: Quarter 4 Boot Camp Grade 7: Honors (current) Grade 8: Honors and/or Algebra (current)	Grade 6: Enrichment opportunities Grade 7: Honors (current) Grade 8: Honors (current)
2020-2021	Grade 6: Math Enrichment in FLEX Grade 6: Quarter 4 Boot Camp Grade 7: Honors (new) Grade 8: Honors and/or Algebra (current)	Grade 6: Enrichment opportunities Grade 7: ELA Enrichment in FLEX Grade 7: Quarter 4 Boot Camp Grade 8: Honors (current)
2021-2022	Grade 6: Math Enrichment in FLEX Grade 6: Quarter 4 Boot Camp Grade 7: Honors (new) Grade 8: Honors and/or Algebra (new)	Grade 6: Enrichment opportunities Grade 7: ELA Enrichment in FLEX Grade 7: Quarter 4 Boot Camp Grade 8: Honors (new)

# IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Teams of teachers and building administrators will identify students for honors using some or all of the following criteria (Committee will establish):

- EXPOSURE TO QUESTIONS/HONORS LEVEL WORK - ATTEMPTS? THINKING PROCESS?
- STUDENT INTEREST
- STUDENT INTERVIEW
- AIMSWEB (Universal Screener)
- TEACHER INPUT
- QUARTER AVERAGES IN ALL CLASSES (In class assessment grade)
- STATE ASSESSMENTS (When applicable)
- SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF BOOT CAMP
- ENTRANCE EXAM
- RUBRIC TO CAPTURE DATA

# NEXT STEPS...

## Final Approval of Proposal

## Committee to Develop Criteria

- Entrance/Exit
- Rubrics

## Communication

- Parent communication (WI and SHMS)
  - Web Site (MS and Office of Curriculum)
  - Parent Orientation to MS



## TO DO:

Explore requirements to remain in Honors class - how much support is beneficial or detrimental?

Explore Movement into Honors mid-year? Sept and Feb?

# Questions & Thoughts



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