

Science Acceleration

September 2013

Dear Parents/Guardians of 7th grade students,

At Ballston Spa Middle School students in 8th grade have the opportunity to take Science 8 or Regents Physical Setting/Earth Science. Most students take Science 8, which is a wonderful, hands-on, activity based course that completes the 5-8 New York State Intermediate Science sequence. Students who have distinguished themselves with their performance in 6th and 7th grade math and science have the opportunity to take a high school Regents science class as an alternative to Science 8.

While we like students to challenge themselves, it is also extremely important to us that students are enrolled in the proper course in order to ensure course enjoyment and future success. Since accelerated students will be taking a high school course and not completing the rest of the New York State Intermediate Science Core Curriculum, they will need to demonstrate mastery of the material in the core curriculum by the end of 7th grade. The timeline and process for qualifying for acceleration is outlined below:

September – February

7th grade science teachers monitor academic progress of students including their completion of assignments and mastery of content/skills. Students need to demonstrate the following:

- Average of at least 92% at the 20 week interval of 7th grade science
- Average of at least 92% on 7th grade unit assessments
- High level of work ethic
- High level of attendance
- Math acceleration or a high level of math skills
- Strong interest in science
- Score of at least 85% on Advanced Science Placement Test

Parents should encourage students to pursue outside enrichment opportunities in science including reading science articles and visiting museums especially those in the areas of meteorology, astronomy, chemistry and genetics. These topics are not covered at the intermediate level prior to 8th grade.

March

All 7th grade students will sit for a placement test that aligns with the NYS 8th grade Science Test which assesses the entire Intermediate Core Curriculum that students are expected to know by the end of 8th grade. Teachers will recommend students who they feel are capable of handling the rigors of a Regents level science class based on student performance on the criteria listed previously. A letter will be sent to students that are being recommended for acceleration in science.

Even without accelerating in eighth grade, students that have a strong academic record have the opportunity to take electives in science throughout high school as well as AP classes during their senior year. High School science electives include courses such as Natural Disasters, Forensics and Biomedical Science are open to all students. Students can take AP Biology or AP Chemistry at the same time they are taking Physics during their senior year.

If you would like additional information about acceleration please contact Diane Irwin, K-12 Science Coordinator, at dirwin@bscsd.org.



Please separate slip from letter and return to your child's science teacher.



Please sign below to confirm that you have received the information on 8th grade science acceleration:
Thank you.

Science Teacher _____

Student Name (please print) _____

Signature _____

Parent Name (please print) _____

Signature _____