

Rilke Middle School

# Info Booklet

Edition 1.3 Spring 2019 /// Year 2019 – 2020



*Welcome to Rilke Schule's Middle School! Over the past years, our program has grown both in numbers and options. This booklet strives to address community, parent, and student questions. All content is subject to change. This publication is split into six parts: **WHAT, WHO, WHY, WHEN, HOW, FAQs**. Do you have a suggestion what information we should add in next year's info booklet? Please send an e-mail to [radke\\_tobias@asdk12.org](mailto:radke_tobias@asdk12.org). If you have any further questions, concerns, or feedback, do not hesitate to contact us.*

*Your Rilke Middle School Team*

# WHAT

## CLASSES

The basic set-up is similar across all three grade levels (6, 7, 8); we offer **FIVE core classes**:

- I. ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
- II. MATH (Math 6, Math 7, Math 8, Algebra, Geometry)
- III. GERMAN GERMAN IMMERSION
- IV. SOCIAL STUDIES GERMAN IMMERSION
- V. SCIENCE GERMAN IMMERSION

In addition, Rilke Middle School students attend classes in:

- i. MUSIC
- ii. ART
- iii. PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- iv. 6<sup>th</sup>: HEALTH / SCIENCE PROJECTS / TRANSITIONAL STRATEGIES  
7/8<sup>th</sup>: HEALTH / ROBOTICS / SCIENCE PROJECTS / PROJECT LEAD THE WAY

## SCHEDULES

At the beginning of the school year, each student will be given his/her full schedule. Seven periods per day is the norm. Scheduling all middle school classes is a very complex and time-consuming task; be assured that student needs are always put first when developing our complex schedule. Sometimes it becomes necessary to make minor changes to the schedules within the first couple of weeks. Once the final changes are announced, a student's basic schedule should remain the same for the entire school year.

# W H O

While we strive for staff consistency as much as possible, each school year brings some changes. Here is a basic overview of who is projected to be teaching Middle School in 2019-2020; subjects marked with \* are taught in German:

TEACHER	GRADE	SUBJECT	CONTACT
Herr Radke	7/8	Social Studies German Immersion *	radke_tobias@asdk12.org
Herr Radke	7/8	German Immersion *	
Herr Honer	6	Science German Immersion *	honer_tom@asdk12.org
Herr Honer	7/8	Science German Immersion *	
Frau Johnson	6	German Immersion *	johnson_sasha@asdk12.org
Frau Johnson	6	Social Studies German Immersion *	
Frau Oakley	7/8	English LA	oakley_susan@asdk12.org
Frau Oakley	7/8	Math 7, Math 8, Algebra, Geometry	
Frau Oakley	6	Transitional Studies (incl. Science Projects etc.)	
Herr Strauch	7/8	Science Projects (incl. PLTW etc.)	strauch_branden@asdk12.org
Herr Strauch	6	Math 6	
Herr Strauch	6	English LA 6	
Frau Visser	6	Math 6, Math 7	visser_madison@asdk12.org
Frau Visser	6	English LA 6	
Frau Visser	6	Transitional Studies (incl. Science Projects etc.)	
Herr Downie	6, 7/8	Music	downie_kevin@asdk12.org
Frau Doniere	6, 7/8	Art	doniere_jill@asdk12.org
Trainer Krueger	6, 7/8	PE	krueger_jill@asdk12.org

## GRADING

We use the ASD grading scale (A, B, C, D, F), with the following reference percentages:

A = 90 – 100%

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 – 79%

D = 60 – 69%

F = 0 – 59%

# W H Y

Sometimes, we are asked the following questions:

1. “Why are the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in combined classes?”
2. “Are they re-doing 7<sup>th</sup> grade when they are in 8<sup>th</sup> grade?”
3. “Why are you continuing the German Immersion model in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade?”

Answers to the previous questions:

1. There are several reasons for combining two grade levels. First, due to the number of students vs. the number of available teachers, we would not be able to offer as many classes if we went to a standalone 7<sup>th</sup>, standalone 8<sup>th</sup> model. Second, we have to work with space limitations. Third, we truly believe in the benefit of the “this year I am the younger guy/gal, next year I get to be the older one” – experience. Older students can practice leadership skills, while younger students often try to “keep up” with their older peers; both scenarios offer positive development opportunities for our students.
2. No; our curriculum is set up to rotate annually, meaning one year the students receive instruction in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum, one year in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Within the study units we strive to differentiate the presented learning opportunities. Our experiences with this set-up have been very positive.
3. While younger students are developmentally not ready to discuss more complex subject matters, most 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are. This allows us to branch out more, challenging students with unfamiliar topics across subjects. The goal is to lead them to a stage in their language production ability where they can INDEPENDENTLY function in the target language. After 6<sup>th</sup> grade, this process is not nearly complete; we are rather beginning to transition from GUIDED to INDEPENDENT language production. Furthermore, our experience and multiple scientific studies prove that the academic and linguistic benefits of dual language education become the most prevalent in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade; benefits in students’ reading and writing abilities in their mother tongue and across several other subjects are scientifically measurable in these grade levels.

# W H E N

Have you ever wondered what German tests students take? Check out the table below:

Test Name	Grade Level	Language Level & Skills Assessed	Source
A1 level	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	Novice fluency in all 4 skills <i>(reading, writing, speaking, listening)</i>	Provided by German authorities
A2 level	End of 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Intermediate fluency in all 4 skills <i>(reading, writing, speaking, listening)</i>	Provided by German authorities
B1 level <i>(DSD I/Deutsches Sprachdiplom I/German Language Diploma I)</i>	End of 8 <sup>th</sup> grade <i>(teacher recommendation is given prior to sign-up in December; only 2 official attempts allowed)</i>	Advanced fluency in all 4 skills <i>(reading, writing, speaking, listening)</i>	Provided <b>AND GRADED</b> by German authorities
STAMP <i>(Standard-based Measurement of Proficiency)</i>	Every year in the spring, starting in grade 2	Computer-based, adaptive test, tests all 4 skills <i>(2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade take basic test, 7<sup>th</sup> &amp; 8<sup>th</sup> grade take advanced version of test)</i>	Provided and graded by US company AVANT, organized by and offered through ASD

# H O W

How are we fostering learning beyond our regular classes? The Rilke middle school program provides many supplemental activities, such as multimedia education, field trips, student exchanges, sport teams, and after-school clubs. Here you will find a basic overview:

- **Field trips:** An overview of our annual field trip schedule can be found below (several more field trips occur during the year; the ones mentioned here are the “big” ones):

6 <sup>th</sup> grade	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	8 <sup>th</sup> grade
Birchwood Camp, September <i>(focus: team-building)</i>	Biking trip, September <i>(focus: leadership training, team-building)</i>	
Neon Bowling @ Jewel Lake Bowl, December <i>(focus: team-building)</i>		
Ice fishing, February <i>(focus: outdoor education)</i>	8 <sup>th</sup> grade rock climbing, April <i>(focus: problem-solving)</i>	
BLM outdoor education, May <i>(focus: outdoor education)</i>	Kenai Challenger Center, May (1 <sup>st</sup> year) <i>(focus: Physical Science)</i>	
Anchorage Zoo, May <i>(focus: Life Science)</i>	Seward Sea Life Center, May (2 <sup>nd</sup> year) <i>(focus: Life Science)</i>	

- **Sport teams:** We are working towards being able to provide at least one team option per quarter; if a student desires to join a different sport, he/she is welcome to attend at Hanshew Middle School (transportation has to be provided by parents). For the 2019-2020 school year, Cross-country running is confirmed during the first quarter. Contact coach Honer if you have any questions.

- **Clubs:** After-school clubs are provided through RSI. Check out their current offers.
  
- **Exchanges:** Each year, Rilke Schule hosts at least one group of 15 German exchange students from one of our partner schools in Germany. They are usually in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade and come either in September (1<sup>st</sup> year) or in May (2<sup>nd</sup> year). Rilke's exchange coordinators send out information regarding hosting an exchange student and travelling to Germany far in advance. These exchanges provide monumental opportunities for our students, both in the cultural as well as in the personal realm. Unfortunately, not all of our students will be able to travel to Germany, as there is a limited amount of spaces available. However, all German high school programs in Anchorage maintain exchange programs as well.
  
- **Multimedia:** We make extensive use of computers and other devices across all core subjects, while still recognizing that computers are not the teacher but rather a medium that supports instruction. Different teachers use different platforms; you will get all necessary parent information at the beginning of the school year. Additional activities include, but are not limited to: website building, coding, presenting, typing, video cutting, etc.
  
- **High expectations:** Excellent education needs to operate under certain rules and within set boundaries. Here you can find a brief overview of expectations that are communicated to all Rilke middle school students. At the core is the Anchorage School District's middle school hand book, which is provided to every student at the beginning of each school year. In interacting with the students, we as teachers are striving to foster the positive character traits spelled out in our **R I L K E** Code of Conduct. Beyond these documents, our specific expectations are as follows:
  - ✓ Stay in German during German-speaking classes
  - ✓ Each student is to have, maintain, and bring a zippered binder to each class (contents can be found via the general Rilke Schule supply list).
  - ✓ The middle school dress code, as spelled out in the general Rilke Schule dress code policy, is to be followed at all times (unless otherwise instructed, e.g. during certain field trips)

# FAQs

## **Can a student pick his/her own locker?**

**No.\* Lockers are assigned annually.**

\* If there is an immediate need due to medical reasons etc., switches can usually be accommodated by contacting the Rilke office (Frau Brewer).

## **Can a student bring his/her own lock?**

**No. Locks for the lockers are provided by Rilke Schule; private locks may not be used; a coded lock can be received by depositing \$10 at the front office (Frau Brewer). Once the lock is returned at the end of the year, the money will be handed back as well.**

## **Should a student bring his/her own computer to school?**

**No. We do provide a computer for every student when in-class assignments need to be worked on.**

## **Is there a special dress code for PE class?**

**Yes. We encourage all middle school students to change into workout clothes and wear proper sport shoes. Shorts need to reach down to a student's fingertips, and shirts need to have sleeves.**

## **How much time is allotted for switching classes?**

**Not much. Since we want to maximize our instructional time and because we would like to have the lowest number of hallway/locker behavior problems, we allot only a few minutes to switch classes (usually 3). Students are to go directly to the next class and/or only stop briefly at their locker to gather necessary materials.**

## **Will parents receive a weekly newsletter?**

**No. We are using more flexible options of communication, such as blogs and texts. You will receive the necessary information at the beginning of the school year from your child's teachers.**

### **Can a middle school student go to Kaladi's during recess/lunch?**

No. We are a closed campus. Students are to stay on the premises during the entire school day. If you would like to allow your child to walk somewhere after school, a permission slip needs to be on file in our front office.

### **Why does every middle school student have to stay in German during the Immersion classes?**

Imagine getting a group of people together to practice soccer. Now imagine one or two people out of the group picking up the ball with their hands and running around with it on the field, trying to play American football every time the ball comes close to them... We don't want a few to ruin the educational experience for the majority of the group.

### **What happens to the German language education after 8<sup>th</sup> grade?**

As of the 2016/2017 school year, ASD is offering German Immersion classes at Service High School. Therefore, we encourage our students to attend Service High, but most other high schools in Anchorage offer regular German programs as well. Students can earn a "Seal of Biliteracy" in high school, and some may eventually be able to take AP German courses and possibly earn university credits.

### **How can a parent help at home not knowing German?**

Because we know that only a very few of our parents are fluent in German, we try to cover most German work during our regular classes. A non-fluent parent can still offer opportunities for the student to engage with the foreign language! The more exposure, the better. Give German books and games as gifts, watch movies and shows in German, download German apps, etc... Amazon.de is a great source of materials and you can login with your regular Amazon credentials. If you have questions about certain materials, do not hesitate to contact your child's German teachers.

### **How do you determine which math class to place a student in?**

Our math levels are as follows: Math 6, Math 7, Math 8, Algebra, Geometry. A proficient math student will complete Math 6 in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, move to Math 7 in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and either Math 8 or Algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. However, there are always exceptions to the rule. Determining which student gets placed in which math class depends on many factors, such as past and present test scores, maturity level, and teacher availability. Should a student be recommended for an out-of-the-ordinary placement, the math teacher responsible will get in contact with the student's parents and discuss details.

### **Is there a snack break for middle school students?**

Students have the option to eat a small healthy snack at the beginning of their 3<sup>rd</sup> hour class. The 3<sup>rd</sup> hour teacher sets his/her classroom rules regarding snacks. Usually, this means no lunch boxes and/or crinkly bags of chips etc. We encourage students to bring a small snack, such as a piece of fruit.

