



March 22, 2023

Dear 7th Grade Parent/Guardian:

We are beginning the scheduling and registration process for the 2023-2024 school year where your child will be an 8th grade student at RJ Grey. This year we will continue to use the **Parent Portal** to complete the registration process. The instructions for how to complete the online registration process are found on the “*RJ Grey JHS Registration Worksheet*” that accompanies this letter. Please note that families must complete the course registration on the Parent Portal by **March 31, 2023**.

Students will automatically be enrolled in the standard 8th grade courses (English, Science, Social Studies, Exploratory, etc.). Current 7th grade math teachers will make a recommendation for which math class your child will take in 8th grade. Our math department has developed a set of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about Math levels in grade 8. Through the Parent Portal, families will be able to view the **math level recommendation** that their child’s current math teacher has made for next year (*Math Fundamentals, 8th Grade Math or Algebra I*). If you wish to override the math level recommendation, please follow the instructions on the Math Form in the Parent Portal. Prior to submitting an override, please be in touch with your child’s math teacher to understand why they made a particular recommendation and review the [Math Success Indicators document here](#). If a family wishes to override the recommended math class, they must complete the online Math Override Form, which will be emailed to parents/guardians and posted on the RJ Grey website on **March 24th** and must be completed by **April 5, 2023**.

Students have some choice about their schedule as it relates to **Grey Block** preferences. All students have Grey Block every other day and this is when students participate in *either* a full-year music elective (Band, Chorus, or String Orchestra) **or** the Grey Block Elective Rotation. Students who select **Band, Chorus or String Orchestra** are guaranteed a space in the program they select and they will be assigned to this course next year. For students who choose the **Grey Block Elective Rotation**, they will participate in a rotation where they are enrolled in a different elective during each quarter (approximately 21-23 class meetings). Students who opt for the *Elective Rotation* will be asked to indicate their preferences in categories of Grey Block courses available for next year. Our hope is that with four quarters in the year, we will have the opportunity to schedule students into at least one of their more preferred choices. That goal notwithstanding, students need to be prepared for the likelihood that at some point in the year they will be enrolled in an elective that was lower on their list of preferences. We view the Grey Block electives as an opportunity for students to experience something different and new in a low-stakes and short-term setting (all classes are Pass/Fail). For this, and other logistical reasons, please know that we cannot accommodate student/family requests for changes to elective assignments before or during the school year. We ask parents/guardians to join us in reinforcing this important message to our students. **A full description of the music electives and the Elective Rotation options is attached to this letter.**

Finally, please also note:

- Students currently enrolled in a World Language will continue to be scheduled into that course for 8th grade.
- Families of students who are scheduled to be in the ASC or Reading will hear directly from their current teachers about their recommendations for next year. Services delivered through an IEP will be added to a student’s schedule later this spring.
- The team placement process will continue to focus on creating teams that strive for balance and diversity in areas such as gender, math placement, World Language, and scheduling specific services that may be part of a student’s daily schedule. We are not able to accept team placement requests from families. We understand that at times there may be information worth considering during the placement process and if that applies to your student, you may complete the **online Family Information Form**. The link for that form will be sent to families in the same email in which the online Math Override Form will be shared, and will be sent on March 24, 2023. **This online form will also be posted on our RJ Grey website and must be completed by April 5, 2023.**

Thank you for working with your child on completing the registration process by March 31, 2023. If you have questions about your child’s course registration, please contact your child’s current counselor (Ms. O’Brien for 7 Gold and 7 Green; Mrs. VanVleck for 7 Blue and 7 Red).

Sincerely,

James Marcotte
Principal

8th Grade Grey Block Course Descriptions

8th Grade Grey Block: YEAR-LONG COURSES

Title	Course Description
Band	Band is an elective open to any student interested in performing exciting music with their peers. It is recommended but *not* required that students have prior experience on a band instrument (woodwind, brass, or percussion). If you've taken band in elementary school or 7th grade, we encourage you to continue your musical journey with many performance opportunities.
Chorus	Chorus is an elective open to all interested students. It will provide the opportunity to perform vocal music in a variety of styles and genres. Students will learn ways to improve their vocal technique and gain confidence as a performer. The class is designed to provide an authentic choral experience for students of all ability levels. No prior experience is necessary.
String Orchestra	String Orchestra is an elective open to all interested students with previous experience playing a stringed instrument (violin, viola, cello, string bass). A variety of string ensemble literature will be studied and performed.

8th Grade Grey Block: QUARTER ROTATION COURSES

Title	Course Description
Art Lab	This class gives students a chance to explore a wide variety of art materials. Students can choose to follow their own artistic passions, or explore some more guided projects provided. Some materials are unique to the art lab and are different from those provided in 7th and 8th grade art. Options may include clay, mosaics, fuse beads, alcohol inks and more.
Classic Card Games	Card games have long been a way to bring people together. Put away your ChromeBooks and have fun learning and playing some of the most popular card games - Gin Rummy, Hearts, Spades, Cribbage, Euchre, and others from around the world - and leave with lifelong skills, friendships, and a new way to socialize.
Cooperative and Competitive Games	This PE style class will work on skills and strategies for cooperative / team building and competitive games. We will talk and learn how both can be fun for different reasons.
Digital Design	What makes a design pop? What fonts, colors, images, spacing and background work together to promote an eye-catching design that grabs a consumers' attention to want to know more? Students will use Google Drawings, Chrome Canvas, Canva and Pixir to learn more about the basics of aesthetic designs. Students will kindly critique each other's designs to help enhance the final 'look'.
iOS Digital Photography	In this class students will explore iOS digital photography techniques using their own iPhone or a class iPad. Projects will include dynamic portraits, storytelling through photos and using the Elements and Principles of Art in photography. Additionally, students will learn how to better control use of exposure, use the grid function for composition and work with extreme close ups to create abstraction.
Engineering the Future	Students will develop skills to solve problems using the engineering design process. Challenges will ask students to use different strategies to find and implement the best solution to solve a problem.
Handmade Arts	This course will focus on creating handcrafted, decorative projects such as ornaments, and serving boards, primarily composed of wood, metal, acrylic or fabric. Students will use small tools, paint, and dye to customize their creations. Projects differ between 7th and 8th grade.
Lifetime Fitness	This class is designed for students who want to learn more about fitness and fueling their bodies to optimize their health and athletic performance. We will be trying out a variety of workouts, which will build endurance, strength, balance and flexibility. Some of our time will involve designing workouts, exercising as a class, fitness testing, researching muscles and nutrients, as well as playing some games. We will use the fitness center as well as the outdoor track. Students are expected to be dressed to go outside.
Playwriting	Students will write their own scripts and perform them for one another, working independently and in small groups. We will take our inspiration from improvisation activities and genre studies of classic plays, movies and television.
Recreational Games	This class will incorporate classic playground games such as kickball, capture the flag and tag games while introducing new games and fun twists on the classics. Games will be a mix of fun and competitive, active and leisure.
RJ Grey Leaders	This course will allow students to examine the skills and traits of effective leaders. We will practice our own leadership by identifying areas of importance to us and developing projects to improve those areas. We will focus our projects on events and initiatives that will make RJ Grey and our larger communities more positive places to be.

RJ Grey JHS Course Registration Worksheet

7th to 8th Grade

As you transition from 7th to 8th grade, you have the chance to provide us with some information on which Grey Block course you would like to take next year. We will automatically enroll you in the rest of your courses (English, Science, Social Studies, etc.). Please complete this worksheet by following the steps below. The completed worksheet will serve as a helpful tool as you submit your course selections on the PowerSchool Parent Portal. We will not collect this worksheet, it is only for your reference as you sign up for courses on the Parent Portal. You and your parents/guardians must complete the course registration on the Parent Portal by **March 31, 2023**.

Grey Block Course Selections

In this section of the worksheet, you are going to inform us about your preferences for Grey Block next year by completing **EITHER** Step 1 or Step 2 (not both). Please know that if your schedule requires that you attend Learning Center, ASC, Speech, Reading services, etc. during Grey Block, we will schedule you into those services instead of what you select below. However, we would like all students to complete Steps 1 or 2 in case any of those services change throughout the year. **All students must complete Step 3 (next page)**.

Step 1: Are you interested in taking a Music Elective (Band, Chorus, or String Orchestra) next year? These courses meet every-other-day during Grey Block and run for the entire year. If you sign up for one of these courses, you are making a commitment to be enrolled in the course for the entire year.

If you are interested in taking Band, Chorus, or String Orchestra, place a checkmark in the box next to the course and then skip ahead to **Step 3**.

	Band		Chorus		String Orchestra
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Step 2: If you did not choose a Music Elective, please complete this section with your Grey Block preferences. Each Grey Block Elective will run for one quarter, so you will be enrolled in four courses during the year. Please *select your top 4 courses* (see descriptions on the previous page) below using #1 as your most preferred course and #2 as your second preferred course in each session, etc. We do our best to schedule students into their most preferred classes, so please make sure to select 4 options for each category.

Category A <i>Rank #1, #2, #3, #4 in this category</i>		Category B <i>Rank #1, #2, #3, #4 in this category</i>	
<i>Rank</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Course</i>
	Art Lab		Classic Card Games
	Digital Design		Cooperative and Competitive Games
	Engineering the Future		Engineering the Future
	Lifetime Fitness		iOS Digital Photography
	Playwriting		Handmade Arts
	Recreational Games		RJ Grey Leaders

Step 3: Log-on to the PowerSchool Parent Portal

It is important that your parents/guardians help you with this step, as the Parent Portal account belongs to them.

Log onto the Parent Portal at this link: <https://powerschool.abschools.org/public/>

If you have forgotten your password, or have never logged on to the Parent Portal, please contact Christina Pharo at cpharo@abschools.org or at 978 264-4700 x3330.

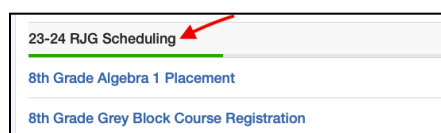
Choose **Forms** on the left sidebar



Under “23-24 RJG Scheduling” please open the two forms listed here:

1. **8th Grade (*math class*) Placement**

Each child will have their own math placement letter included here. Please read the letter and click the appropriate button at the bottom of the page indicating “I acknowledge that my child is recommended for...”



2. **RJ Grey JHS Grey Block Registration** (to tell us which Grey Block your child wants to take)

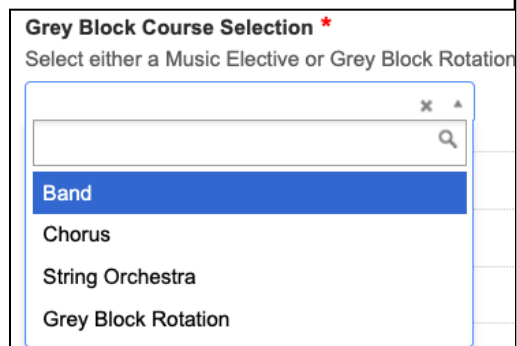


If you want to take a music elective: Choose *Band*, *Chorus*, or *String Orchestra* in the dropdown menu, followed by **Submit**.

If you want to take a series of Grey Block elective classes:

Choose *Grey Block Rotation*. Based on the groupings of Grey Block courses on the previous page of this packet, choose your “first choice” of Category A courses, followed by your “second choice” in Category A, etc.

Please do not select the same course within a single category. This will not help guarantee you are placed in that course. Complete all eight choices and press **Submit** when you’ve finished.



**Thank you for submitting this Course Registration information
on the Parent Portal by March 31, 2023.**

Questions related to course registration should be directed to your team counselor:

7 Gold and 7 Green: Ms. O’Brien

7 Blue and 7 Red: Mrs. Van Vleck