

Foreword

The *Essential Curriculum Documents* for middle schools define for teachers those aspects of the curriculum, both content and skills, which are essential for all students to learn.

The concept of essential curriculum is relevant at all grade levels and all subject areas. The program areas of **art, career and technology education, educational technology, English, ESOL, family and consumer sciences, foreign language, guidance, health, mathematics, media, music, physical education, reading, science, and social studies** are included as they are present throughout the high school years.

The “essential curriculum” of the Howard County Public School System:

- Is present in the *Essential Curriculum Documents* for a primary audience of teachers and administrators,
- Defines clearly what content and skills all students must know and be able to do,
- Is based upon subject area national standards, the Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes, and the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum,
- Aligns with national, state, and local assessment programs, including the Maryland School Assessments and the Maryland High School Assessments, and
- Is supported by curriculum resources for the subject areas.

Notes on Revisions for 2007 - 2008

There are very few changes to the Middle School Essential Curriculum for Science for this academic year. This curriculum reflects the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum for Science, which has been released to help schools, teachers, and students prepare for the Maryland School Assessment for middle school science. Please note that the goals and objectives related to the skills and processes of science are now grouped together into a document listed before the grade level content goals and objectives. Teachers are responsible for covering these skills and processes *every year* and should carefully integrate them throughout all of their lessons. There are no changes in the skills and processes section or the Grade 7 curriculum for this year. The only change in the content goals and objectives in Grade 6 is to the goals and objectives related to the tilt in Earth’s axis and seasons on Earth. These have been moved from the first unit to the fourth unit. In Grade 8, there are several changes including a couple of objectives on acids and bases, which have been moved from unit 4 to unit 3, a bullet on balancing simple chemical equations from unit 4 that has been repeated in unit 3, and an objective in unit 4 on the chemistry of water that has been revised to clarify its intent. Teachers should review their grade-level content goals and objectives throughout the year.