

8th Grade Course Descriptions for 2017-2018

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Course registration for the next school-year will take place shortly. The middle school curriculum is designed to meet State and Common Core Standards, and the teaching staff is dedicated to instructional practices that promote challenge and successful achievement for all students. Please be aware that the middle school does not accept specific teacher or team requests. Parents are welcome to discuss specific student needs with a counselor or administrator prior to July 1st. Students with an IEP, GIEP, or other legally documented needs, will be scheduled to receive direct support (such as a learning support or gifted support teachers) in classrooms. This support within our inclusionary model may also benefit other students in those classrooms. Although some intentional teaming will take place due to past performance, learning behaviors, or specific interactions with peers, students without special needs will be randomly assigned sections during the scheduling process.

Required Courses:

Language Arts: The eighth grade curriculum is delivered within a philosophy and model of Balanced Literacy. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are integrated during the 90 minute block. Both fiction and nonfiction reading are explored with an emphasis on interpretive and evaluative comprehension. Another focus is upon informational and persuasive writing, while effective speaking and listening skills are practiced through student-centered discussions. One important goal of Language Arts instruction is to build a community of lifelong learners.

Math 8 & Algebra I: Students will be assigned to either Math 8, which focuses on the PA Core 8th grade Math Curriculum, or Algebra One. Both classes will use the College Preparatory Math approach for learning. The CPM approach uses a variety of teaching methodologies, including lecture, class discussions, manipulatives, and structured study teams. During class, students are actively working on guided investigations, much like "math labs," to develop mathematical concepts and problem solving skills. Algebra Students will be required to take the Keystone Exam year-end test as per PDE graduation requirements. Students will be considered for the new **Math 8** course by meeting distinct criteria including; previous state testing achievement and growth, quarterly exam scores, Algebra 1 readiness test problems, and teacher feedback and observation of math competencies. *Parents of students who are recommended to take Math 8 will be contacted prior to the end of the current school year.*

Science: Students will use the processes of science including researching, designing investigations, collecting and interpreting data, formulating conclusions, and communicating results for the investigation of the following: Earth processes and materials, oceanography and fresh water environments, astronomy, and meteorology.

Social Studies: Eighth grade students will explore concepts and events in middle European and early American History. Units include: The Middle Ages expansion and innovation, the Renaissance and Reformation, the Age of European Exploration, and Colonial America.

Health, Physical Education & Safety: Middle School Health and Physical Education encourages students to learn about healthy lifestyles through health education and physical activities. Students will begin to explore various lifetime activities and health concepts through leveled instruction and varied cooperative experiences.

World Language: Students will continue their study of German or Spanish as Part B of their 7th grade World Language experience. They will continue to develop language skills based on the five C's of language learning: Communications, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities; and further develop skills within the modalities of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

March 1, 2017

Related Arts:

Animation: This class will teach students what makes a successful cartoon character and how to create one as well as how to make them move in a flipbook. They will spend a full semester using the IStop Motion program on the Mac computers and create a 15-20 second full animated cartoon with sound.

Visual Art I: This class is an advanced combination of 2-dimensional, 3-dimensional and recycled art. Students will use numerous materials including clay, colored pencil, paint, pastel, and paper mache.

Visual Art II: This class will be an additional combination of advanced 2-d, 3-d, and recycled art. A recycled fashion project or sculpture will be made from a variety of art materials and everyday “throwaway” materials.

Band & Orchestra: The Band and Orchestra programs offer an exciting opportunity for students to develop their instrumental music skills. Students who will be playing an instrument for the first time in 8th grade will be offered pull-out lessons but will not be included in performances or rehearsals until proficiency with the instrument is attained. A limited number of percussion students will be chosen to participate in band and orchestra ensembles and will be selected by audition. Students not selected for band or orchestra ensembles will have the opportunity to continue pull-out lessons and perform in a percussion ensemble. Band and orchestra are full year courses of study. Concert participation is required. **(Please note: All band ensemble students are required to participate in the Marching Band events.)**

Chorus: Students will meet to develop vocal and choral skills. Along with the rehearsal and preparation of music for the winter and spring concerts, areas such as voice training, ear training, music reading and sight reading skills will be included in the class instruction. Chorus is a full year course of study. Concert participation is required.

Careers: Students will explore the many careers available in our ever-changing society. They will take interest inventories and investigate specific career paths and post-secondary education needed to follow those paths. Career guest speakers are often invited to present their real world perspectives and descriptions about their career experiences.

Music & Technology 2: Fundamentals of music composition and production using various software and hardware tools such as Macs, Garage Band, Notation Software. The fundamentals of music will be explored through a variety of projects including free composition, podcasts, and video soundtrack production.

PA Sports History: This course will focus on the Pennsylvania athlete and sports franchises. Focus will begin with Berks and Chester county individuals of note, and then shift to state-wide sports figures who have achieved greatness. Investigation will also be made into PA sports franchises.

Peer Mentoring: This peer tutoring program is designed for 8th grade students to help and support students in 5th, 6th, or 7th grades. Peer tutors will learn basic principles of learning and best instructional practices and will assist other students in various classrooms. The focus for peer tutoring is to utilize unique student abilities and talents to help all students learn better, while developing their own deeper understanding and peer leadership skills.

Automation & Robotics: This is a Project Lead the Way, Gateway Program, class where students trace the history, development, and influence of automation and robotics as they learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Students use the VEX Robotics® platform to design, build, and program real-world objects such as traffic lights, toll booths, and robotic arms.