

Middle School
Course Description Guide

2011 - 2012

Grades 7 through 8



Linda Henrie, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

FOREWORD

FutureQuest began in elementary, but planning for college becomes even more focused in middle school. It is hoped that this booklet will prove to be helpful to parents and students alike in making the transition to middle school and on to high school. Units of credit become most important in the ninth grade and above. Units of credit earned in high school are cumulative, and it is on that basis that high school graduation requirements are fulfilled. The seventh and eighth grade student, however, is simply more concerned with successful completion of the courses as required in middle school. Those requirements will be noted in the following pages.

The booklet is divided into three sections: the first section describes the seventh grade courses, the second section describes the eighth grade courses, and the third section provides general information about the state assessment requirements.

Should more detailed explanation or clarification be needed for any section, your counselors, assistant principals, or principals should be contacted. Students are encouraged to study this booklet along with the Student Handbook as they plan their middle school experience. If the State Board of Education and the Texas Education Agency make changes to the requirements after the date of this publication, parents will be notified on the Mesquite ISD website at www.mesquiteisd.org.

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Middle School Promotion Policy

To be promoted from one grade level to the next, students in grades seven and eight must attain a 70 average or above in each of the following classes: English, reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition, students must attain an overall average of 70 or above on all courses taken for the year.

Students failing to meet these requirements will be required to attend and satisfactorily complete an extended year program. Students may replace a failing grade with a passing grade for a maximum of two courses. However, the principal has discretion on placement decisions when extenuating circumstances exist.

The Student Success Initiative promotion requirements will not include the use of the state assessment results in the 2011-2012 school year only, since the passing standards will not yet be established by the Texas Education Agency. Promotion decisions will be based on district policy and teacher/principal recommendations.

No special or formal exercises will mark the promotion from middle school to high school.

WHICH COLLEGE IS IN YOUR FUTURE?

It isn't too early to begin setting goals toward a specific college. Many seventh and eighth grade students already have given at least some thought to their future educational plans. The school administration believes that all students should give careful attention to planning ahead for their career preferences. Most career choices require college. The college-bound students - even those in seventh and eighth grades - need to know something about various college entrance requirements. For that reason, several regional colleges and their **present** entrance requirements are listed below. The number of years of successful high school work in each subject are indicated.

The student is reminded that entrance requirements do change from time to time and that it is wise to consult the various catalogues which are usually available in the high school counselors' offices. Your own school counselor will be happy to assist you if you need help in determining a specific college's entrance requirements.

College/University	English	Science	Math	Foreign Language	Entrance Exam	Early Decision
Abilene Christian	4	3	3	2	ACT or SAT	
Austin College	4	3-4	3-4	2-4	ACT or SAT	Yes
Baylor	4	2	3	2	ACT or SAT	Yes
Dallas Baptist	(High School Graduate or GED)				ACT or SAT	
Dallas County Community Junior Colleges	(High School Graduate or GED)				ACT or SAT (Recommended)	
Kilgore Jr. Col.	(High School Graduate or GED)				ACT or SAT	
Rice Univ.	4	2-3	3-4	2	ACT or SAT & 2 Subject Tests	Yes
Sam Houston State	(High School Graduate)				ACT or SAT	
Southern Methodist Univ.	4	3	3	2	ACT or SAT	Yes
Southwestern Univ.	4	3	4	2	ACT or SAT	Yes
Stephen F. Austin State	(Recommended High School Program)				ACT or SAT	
Tarrant County Jr. Col.	(High School Graduate or GED)				ACT or SAT (Recommended)	
Texas A & M University	4	3	3.5-4	2-3	ACT or SAT	Yes
Texas A & M, Commerce	4	2	3		ACT or SAT	
Texas Christian Univ.	4	3	3	2	ACT or SAT	Yes
Texas Tech Univ.	4	2-3	3-3.5	2	ACT or SAT	
Texas Woman's Univ.	(Top 50% of High School Graduates)				ACT or SAT	
Trinity Univ.	4	3	3.5-4	2-3	ACT or SAT	Yes
Tyler Jr. College	(High School Graduate or GED)				ACT or SAT	
University of Arkansas	4	3	4		ACT or SAT	
University of Dallas	4	3	3	2	ACT or SAT	
University of Houston	4	2	3	2	ACT or SAT	
University of North Texas	4	3	4	3	ACT or SAT	
University of Oklahoma	4	2	3		ACT or SAT	
University of Texas—Arlington	4	3	3	2	ACT or SAT	
University of Texas—Austin	4	2-3	3-4	2-3	ACT or SAT & Subject Tests	Yes
University of Texas—Dallas	4	3	3.5-4	2-3	ACT or SAT	Yes

**SEVENTH GRADE COURSES
2011-2012**

*Seventh Grade
Courses*

Required Courses	Units
English Language Arts.....	1
**Reading.....	1
Mathematics.....	1
Science.....	1
Social Studies/Texas History and Geography	1
*Physical Education.....	1

***Four semesters of physical education are required in grades 6-8.
Athletics will substitute.**

****Students in GT English will be exempt from Reading requirement.**

Electives	Units
Creative Writing.....	1
Speech	1
Creative Problem Solving	1
Choral Music.....	1
General Music.....	1
Orchestra	1
Band	1
Art 1.....	1
Theatre 1	1
Principles of Information Technology 1.....	1
Athletics	1
AVID 7.....	1
STAAR Prep.....	1

Gifted and Talented Courses (GT Program)	Units
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Students may be selected for one or more of the GT courses based upon state approved criteria for identified students.

English Language Arts GT.....	1
Mathematics GT	1
Science GT	1
Social Studies/Texas History and Geography GT	1

REQUIRED COURSES*Language Arts***ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This course is designed to engage students in activities that build on their prior knowledge and skills in order to strengthen the strands of reading, writing, speaking/listening, research, and oral and written conventions. Throughout the year students apply strategies to analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions as they read literary and informational texts with a clear controlling idea, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GIFTED/TALENTED

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: See description below
Course Length: Full year

The Gifted and Talented English course enhances the seventh grade language arts curriculum to include an increased academic challenge. The course emphasizes the development of students' critical and creative thinking skills, of advanced oral and writing communication skills, and literary interpretative skills.

Prerequisites include teacher recommendation, academic performance, and standardized evaluations.

*English as a Second Language***ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)**

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: LPAC recommendation
Course Length: Full year

The English as a Second Language (ESL) course is a cumulative and sequential program focusing on listening/speaking, reading, writing and viewing/representing knowledge and skills for students identified as Limited English Proficient. Students will receive instruction in the mastery of the English language as they work on reading comprehension, the writing process, and presentations. **Parent permission is required.**

*Reading***READING**

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This reading course is designed to engage students in activities that strengthen the reading skills and strategies needed to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate informational, as well as literary, selections. This course will focus on state assessment skills: word recognition, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies. Significant blocks of time are provided for reading and responding to both independent and instructional-level material for varied purposes.

READING: ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (READING ESL)

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: LPAC recommendation
Course Length: Full Year

This reading course is designed to teach limited English proficient students reading skills and strategies needed to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate materials. This course will focus on word study, vocabulary development, comprehension, and critical reading strategies by using best practices ESL strategies. **Parent permission is required.**

*Mathematics***MATHEMATICS**

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

Seventh grade math involves addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals as well as percent and geometry for everyday use. The course also includes work on exponents, place value, integers, sets, number theory, prime numbers, graphing, measurement and problem solving.

MATHEMATICS GIFTED/TALENTED

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: See description below
Course Length: Full year

The seventh grade Gifted and Talented Mathematics course provides an enriched and more challenging academic curriculum for students with exceptional mathematical abilities. The course emphasizes the development of students' logical, creative, and independent thinking skills and problem-solving skills. Topics included will be number concepts, geometry, measurements, probability, statistics, graphing, relations and functions.

Prerequisites include teacher recommendation, academic performance, and standardized evaluations.

SCIENCE

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

Seventh grade science focuses on living systems and how they interact with the abiotic factors in the environment.

Matter and energy are conserved throughout living systems. Organic compounds are composed of carbon and other elements that are recycled due to chemical changes that rearrange the elements for the particular needs of that living system. Force, motion, and energy are observed in living systems and the environment in several ways such as, interactions between muscular and skeletal system, the direction and growth of seedlings, turgor pressure, and geotropism. Different environments support different living organisms that are adapted to different regions of the Earth. Students learn that all organisms obtain energy, get rid of wastes, grow, and reproduce. All living organisms are made up of smaller units called cells.

Students will also investigate earth and space phenomena. Earth and space phenomena can be observed in a variety of settings. There are characteristics of Earth and relationships to objects in our solar system that allow life to exist

SCIENCE GIFTED/TALENTED

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: See description below
Course Length: Full year

Gifted and Talented Science covers the same information as Seventh Grade Science in the same sequence. Instruction will be differentiated to meet the unique needs of academically talented students with the substitution of long-term projects and open-ended assignments. Students will be encouraged to take ownership of their own learning by investigating self-selected topics in more depth and complexity. Gifted and talented students are expected to participate in the Science Fair.

Prerequisites include teacher recommendation, academic performance, and standardized evaluations.

SOCIAL STUDIES**TEXAS HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

The design of this class provides opportunities for students to study the heritage and legacy of Texas from early days to present. Major events, people, issues, and conflicts provide a framework for analyzing the development of Texas culture. These include early inhabitants, Spanish colonization, independence from Mexico, nationhood, statehood, and the significance of Texas in United States policy and culture. Historical content reflects the concept of confluence of cultures in which people of various backgrounds and traditions, speaking different languages, came together in a new country and built a republic and later a state. Students will investigate the interaction of man and the environment including regional geography, land and water use, and the processes of ecological change occurring today. This course design explores two fundamental understandings of Texas history: scientific discoveries and technological innovations have had an important impact on the political, economic, and social development of Texas; and the economy of Texas is interdependent with that of the United States and that of other nations of the world.

*Social Studies***SOCIAL STUDIES****TEXAS HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY GIFTED/TALENTED****Grade Level:**

7

Prerequisite:

See description below

Course Length:

Full year

The Gifted and Talented Texas History course expands from the standard seventh grade social studies program by providing students increased intellectual enrichment and new challenges. While content for the course remains similar to the standard curriculum, the GT class enhances learning by providing

- instructional and organizational patterns that enable identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently;
- a continuum of learning experiences that lead to the development of advanced-level products and performances;
- in-school and, when possible, out-of-school options relevant to the student's area of strength that are available during the entire school year; and
- opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength.

Students will analyze historical content focusing on the political, economic, and social events and issues related to the development of Texas. The course of study equips students with skills to evaluate the impact of major Texas events and issues such as early inhabitants, Spanish colonization, independence from Mexico, nationhood, statehood, and the significance of Texas in United States policy and culture.

Prerequisites include teacher recommendation, academic performance, and standardized evaluations.

*Physical Education***PHYSICAL EDUCATION****Grade Level:**

7

Prerequisite:

None

Course Length:

Full year

Four semesters of physical education are required for all students in grades 6-8 unless substituted by participation in a school athletic program.* Students must fulfill two semesters of their physical education requirement in sixth grade and may fulfill the two semesters of their physical education requirement in either the seventh or eighth grade year. Students are expected to suit-out in appropriate attire and actively participate in movement activities to successfully fulfill course requirements. Emphasis is on:

- acquiring knowledge and skills for movement that provide the foundation for enjoyment and continued social development through physical activity
- understanding the relationship between physical activity and health throughout the lifespan
- application of similar concepts from one sport or movement setting to another
- identification of key elements in performance that lead to movement success
- knowledge of safety practices involved in active participation of movement activities and management of their own behavior
- acquiring the health information and skills necessary to become healthy adults and learn about behaviors in which they should and should not participate.

**Athletics includes the following sports: football, basketball, track and cross country, volleyball, and tennis.*

ELECTIVES*Electives***CREATIVE WRITING****Grade Level:**

7

Prerequisite:

None

Course Length:

Full year

Creative Writing is an elective course open to seventh and eighth grade students with an interest in writing. Teacher guidance in areas such as fiction, poetry, memoir, nonfiction, and publishing can deepen student knowledge of the writing process as individual writing occurs. All integrated language arts TEKS are addressed in the curriculum.

SPEECH**Grade Level:**

7

Prerequisite:

None

Course Length:

Full year

Middle school students will develop effective communications skills to further their academic pursuits and to prepare for interaction in social, civic, and professional roles. To become competent communicators, students will develop and apply skills in using oral language, nonverbal communication, and listening in interpersonal, group, academic, and public contexts.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This course allows students to develop critical and creative thinking skills while collaborating to solve relevant problems. Students will actively engage in research as they work in teams to solve challenges with unique approaches. Creative Problem Solving nurtures research and inquiry skills and develops teamwork and leadership skills. Students' presentation skills will also be enhanced. Students enrolled in this course are required to participate in the Destination Imagination tournament which is held on a Saturday in late February or early March each year.

CHORAL MUSIC***Mixed Choir**

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: Audition
Course Length: Full year

This course provides a choral experience for the young male and female singer. The students are encouraged to discover the academic, historical, and aesthetic aspects of choral music and its relationship to all areas of their lives.

Boys Choir

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This course provides a choral experience for the young male voice. Students are encouraged to discover the academic, historical, and aesthetic aspects of choral music and its relationship to all areas of their lives.

Girls Choir

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This course provides a choral experience for the young female voice. Students are encouraged to discover the academic, historical, and aesthetic aspects of choral music and its relationship to all areas of their lives.

**Additional expense may be required for a uniform in choral classes. Some out-of-school rehearsal is required in addition to several evening concerts which are part of the curriculum.*

GENERAL MUSIC

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

General Music is an introductory course in the basic reading of music notation. It includes the history of music and its development through several cultural periods to the present time. The course is integrated chronologically with other fine arts.

ORCHESTRA***Beginning Orchestra**

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This is a class for the student who is a beginner on an orchestral string instrument. Proper instrument care, correct playing techniques, finger positions, tone production, counting, basic musical terms, and notation are stressed. Placement on individual instruments will be determined by teacher recommendation based on consultation with students and parents.

Intermediate Orchestra

Grade Level: 7
Prerequisite: Beginning Orchestra and/or Audition
Course Length: Full year

The intermediate orchestra is primarily a performance organization for students with at least one year of orchestra experience. Members of this organization should have developed

Electives

a moderate degree of performance ability. The work of the first year is continued with a greater emphasis placed upon growing musical awareness and continued development of musicianship, control, and technical facility. Members of this class are expected to participate in all orchestra activities.

Advanced Orchestra

Grade Level: 7

Prerequisite: **Beginning or Intermediate Orchestra and/or Audition**

Course Length: **Full year**

The advanced orchestra is primarily a performance organization for students with at least one year of orchestra experience. Members of this organization should have developed a high degree of performance ability. The work of the previous year is continued with a greater emphasis placed upon growing musical awareness and continued development of musicianship, control, and technical facility. Members of this class are expected to participate in all orchestra activities.

**Additional expense may be required for a uniform. Some before and after school rehearsals are required in addition to several evening concerts which are part of the curriculum.*

BAND***Beginning Band (Beg. Brass, OR Beg. Woodwind, OR Beg. Percussion)**

Grade Level: 7

Prerequisite: **None**

Course Length: **Full year**

This is a class for the student who is a beginner on a band instrument. Proper instrument care, correct playing techniques, fingerings, tone production, counting, basic musical terms, and notation are stressed. Placement on individual instruments will be determined by teacher recommendations based on consultations with students and parents. Additional audition procedures may be necessary to determine instrument placement.

Intermediate Band

Grade Level: 7

Prerequisite: **Beginning Band and/or Audition**

Course Length: **Full year**

The intermediate band is primarily a performance organization for students with at least one year of band experience. Members of this organization should have developed a moderate degree of performance ability. The work of the first year is continued with a greater emphasis placed upon growing musical awareness and continued **development** of musicianship, control, and technical facility. Members of this class are expected to participate in all full band activities. Placement in this band would be determined by audition.

Advanced Band

Grade Level: 7

Prerequisite: **Beginning Band, Intermediate Band and/or Audition**

Course Length: **Full year**

The advanced band is primarily a performance organization for students with at least one year of band experience. Members of this organization should have developed a high degree of performance ability. The work of the previous year is continued with a greater emphasis placed upon growing musical awareness and continued development of musicianship, control, and technical facility. Members of this class are expected to participate in all full band activities. Placement in this band would be determined by audition.

**Additional expense may be required for a uniform. Some before and after school rehearsals are required in addition to several evening concerts which are part of the curriculum.*

ART 1*

Grade Level: 7

Prerequisite: **None**

Course Length: **Full year**

The program consists of an introduction to design, drawing, sculpture, painting, art history, printing, and art forms. The course includes an orientation in the use of a variety of media and the basic skills essential in the use of each.

**Additional supplies will need to be purchased.*

THEATRE 1**Grade Level:**

7

Prerequisite:

None

Course Length:

Full year

This course is designed to introduce students to theatre by teaching creative expression through theatre performance. Through a variety of theatrical experiences, students communicate in a dramatic form, make artistic choices, solve problems, build positive self-concepts, and relate interpersonally. Topics include theatre heritage and traditions, interpreting, character development using the voice and body expressively, technical elements of theatre, theatre design, and directing and production concepts and skills, all designed to instill an appreciation of live theatre.

PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY 1**Grade Level:**

7

Prerequisite:

None

Course Length:

Full year

Students develop computer literacy skills to adapt to emerging technologies used in the global marketplace in this comprehensive hands-on, high tech laboratory program. In this course, learning experiences are guided by individual learning module assignments. These modules are designed so that a pair of students, working as a team, are guided through the exploration of a technology being explored and provide the opportunity for problem-solving.

Activities that students may be exposed to in this course include the following: aerodynamic testing, structural stress testing and analyzing, aerodynamics, laser technology, electricity/electronics, computer animation, satellite communication, desktop publishing, robotics, computer aided design, pneumatics, programming, microelectronics, model building, video, computer digitizing and more.

**Additional supplies or materials will be required. Cost will be dependent upon the projects the student chooses.*

ATHLETICS**Grade Level:**

7

Prerequisite:

Meet UIL requirements

Course Length:

Full year

Athletics at the middle school includes football, basketball, tennis, track, cross country and girls' volleyball.

A physical exam and a notarized release are required for participation in athletics. Additional practice outside the school day is required.

AVID 7 (ADVANCEMENT VIA INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATION)*(McDonald, New and Vanston Middle Schools Only)***Grade Level:**

7

Prerequisite:

Application and acceptance into the program

Course Length:

Full year

The AVID class addresses key elements in college preparation: academic survival skills, college entry skills, tutorials, motivational activities, and career and college exploration. Additionally students will improve their oral communication skills through presentation and Socratic Seminar, participate in writing to learn activities, including note taking, learning logs, and essay writing, prepare for college entrance examinations, including the SAT and ACT, and complete and present a multi-grade level portfolio of their work. AVID can take the place of seventh grade Reading for students accepted into the program.

STAAR PREP**Grade Level:**

7

Prerequisite:

None

Course length:

1/2 - 1 Full year

This course may be required for students not mastering state assessment in seventh grade. Skills reinforced in this course will provide the student with activities which will demonstrate the practical aspects of math, reading, composition, and grammar skills. Since there will be a focus on remediation of writing, reading, and math skills targeted to state assessment, instruction will be individualized to eliminate specific areas of deficiency.

SEVENTH GRADE PRACTICE SCHEDULE

COURSES

- 1 English Language Arts or English Language Arts GT or English Language Arts ESL
- 2 Reading or Reading ESL
- 3 Mathematics or Mathematics GT
- 4 Science or Science GT
- 5 Social Studies/Texas History and Geography or Social Studies GT
- 6 Physical Education (Athletics will substitute.)
- 7 _____ (Elective Course)

Students may take a maximum of two elective courses.

Notes

**EIGHTH GRADE COURSES
2011-2012**

Required Courses	Units
English Language Arts	1
* Reading	1
Mathematics	1
Science.....	1
Social Studies/United States History and Citizenship.....	1
** Physical Education	1

* This course will be required only for designated students.

** Students who have completed Physical Education or Athletics in grade 7 will not be required to take Physical Education in grade 8.

Electives	Units
Creative Writing	1
Speech.....	1
Creative Problem Solving.....	1
Scientific Research.....	1
Spanish 1.....	1
Spanish for Spanish Speakers 1.....	1
Choral Music.....	1
General Music.....	1
Orchestra.....	1
Band.....	1
Art 1.....	1
Art 2.....	1
Theatre 1.....	1
Theatre 2.....	1
Principles of Human Services.....	1
Principles of Information Technology 1.....	1
Principles of Information Technology 2.....	1
Health and Aerobic Activities.....	1
Health and Team Sports.....	1
Athletics.....	1
STAAR Prep.....	1
AVID 8.....	1
Independent Study.....	1

Gifted and Talented Courses (GT Program)	Units
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Students may be selected for one or more GT courses based upon state approved criteria for identified students.

English Language Arts GT.....	1
Mathematics GT/Algebra 1.....	1
Science GT.....	1
Social Studies/U. S. History and Citizenship GT.....	1

Students who successfully complete a high school course(s) in middle school receive high school credit but do not receive grade points for class ranking for the course.

REQUIRED COURSES*Language Arts***ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: English 7
Course Length: Full year

This course is designed to engage students in activities that build on their prior knowledge and skills in order to strengthen the strands of reading, writing, speaking/listening, research, and oral and written conventions. Throughout the year students apply strategies to analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions as they read literary and informational texts from a wide variety of cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts. Students compose a variety of written texts with a clear controlling idea, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GIFTED/TALENTED

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: See description below
Course Length: Full year

The Gifted and Talented English course enhances the eighth grade language arts curriculum to include an increased academic challenge. The purpose and objectives of this course are essentially the same as those of the seventh grade Gifted and Talented course. Prerequisites include teacher recommendation, academic performance, and standardized evaluations.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: LPAC recommendation
Course Length: Full year

The English as a Second Language (ESL) course is a cumulative and sequential program focusing on listening/speaking, reading, writing and viewing/representing knowledge and skills for students identified as Limited English Proficient. Students will receive instruction in the mastery of the English language as they work on reading comprehension, the writing process, and presentations. **Parent permission is required.**

*Reading***READING**

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Students are assigned
Course Length: Full year

Reading is an intervention course to improve reading fluency and comprehension skills. Students are required to participate in this class on the basis of their state assessment reading scores and recommendations of their teachers and counselors. The classroom provides a variety of multi-leveled materials (Lexile leveled) and computers to provide independent practice. Classroom instruction emphasizes word study, vocabulary development, and critical comprehension skills and strategies.

READING: ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (READING ESL)

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: LPAC recommendation
Course Length: Full Year

This reading course is designed to teach limited English proficient students reading skills and strategies needed to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate materials. This course will focus on word study, vocabulary development, comprehension, and critical reading strategies by using best practices ESL strategies. Students will participate in this class on the basis of their state assessment reading test scores. **Parent permission is required.**

*Mathematics***MATHEMATICS**

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Math 7
Course Length: Full year

The eighth grade math course will cover the same topics as Pre-Algebra. Problem solving in the real world, number and numeration concepts, operations and computation, geometry and measurement, probability and statistics, graphing, and relations and functions are topics that will be included.

MATH GIFTED/TALENTED**ALGEBRA 1****Grade Level:**

8

Prerequisite:

See description below

Course Length:

Full year

The eighth grade Gifted and Talented Mathematics course will cover the same topics as Algebra 1: the study of foundations for functions, linear functions, and quadratic and other nonlinear functions. The course emphasizes basic algebraic reasoning processes, applications, and problem-solving in real world situations. Students passing this course will receive one high school credit for Algebra 1 but will not receive grade points.

Prerequisites include teacher recommendation, academic performance, and standardized evaluations.

SCIENCE**Grade Level:**

8

Prerequisite:

Science, Grade 7

Course Length:

Full year

Eighth grade science will primarily focus on earth and space science.

Students will recognize that matter is composed of atoms. Lab activities will allow students to demonstrate evidence of chemical reactions. Students will experiment with the relationship between forces and motion through the study of Newton's three laws and how these forces relate to geologic processes and astronomical phenomena. Students will identify the role of natural events in altering Earth systems. They will interpret land and erosional features on topographic maps.

In studies of living systems, students will explore the interdependence between these systems. Interactions between organisms in ecosystems, including producer/consumer, predator/prey, and parasite/host relationships, are investigated in aquatic and terrestrial systems.

SCIENCE GIFTED/TALENTED**Grade Level:**

8

Prerequisite:

See description below

Course Length:

Full year

Gifted and Talented Science covers the same information as eighth grade science in the same sequence. Instruction will be differentiated to meet the unique needs of academically talented students with the substitution of long-term projects and open-ended assignments. Student will be encouraged to take ownership of their own learning by investigating self-selected topics in more depth and complexity. Gifted and Talented students are expected to participate in the Science Fair.

Prerequisites include teacher recommendation, academic performance, and standardized evaluations.

SOCIAL STUDIES**UNITED STATES HISTORY AND CITIZENSHIP****Grade Level:**

8

Prerequisite:

None

Course Length:

Full year

U.S. History introduces the first half of our national history, heritage, and legacy. Students will study the second half in high school. The span of this course includes the earliest beginnings of our nation, the steps forward of the early republic, and the significant issues and events through the Civil War and Reconstruction. Early American history emphasizes the development and structure of the Constitution, as well as the relationship of the Bill of Rights to the nature of citizenship in the democracy of the United States. Emphasis on the multicultural nature of the American people demonstrates the value and contributions of a diverse society. Within this historical context, students will study the role of geography, immigration, and emerging capitalism as these and other various forces shaped our national identity. This course design explores two fundamental understandings of early American history: several important reasons contributed to the growth of representative government in the United States; and citizens of the United States have both rights and responsibilities.

*Social Studies***SOCIAL STUDIES****UNITED STATES HISTORY AND CITIZENSHIP GIFTED TALENTED****Grade Level:**

8

Prerequisite:

See description below

Course Length:

Full year

The Gifted and Talented United States History course expands from the standard eighth grade social studies program by providing students increased intellectual enrichment and new challenges. While content for the course remains similar to the standard curriculum, the GT class enhances learning by providing

- instructional and organizational patterns that enable identified students to work together as a group, to work with other students, and to work independently;
- a continuum of learning experiences that leads to the development of advanced-level products and performances;
- in-school and, when possible, out-of-school options relevant to the student's area of strength that are available during the entire school year; and
- opportunities to accelerate in areas of strength.

Students will analyze historical content focusing on the political, economic, and social events and issues related to the development of the Republic through the end of Reconstruction in 1877. The course of study equips students with skills to evaluate the impact of major American events and documents such as the creation and ratification of the U.S. Constitution, westward expansion, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Students evaluate major Supreme Court decisions of the 19th century and examine the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in our unique American democracy.

Prerequisites include teacher recommendation, academic performance, and standardized evaluations.

*Physical Education***PHYSICAL EDUCATION****Grade Level:**

8

Prerequisite:

None

Course Length:

Full year

Four semesters of physical education are required for all students in grades 6-8 unless substituted by participation in a school athletic program.* Students must fulfill two semesters of their physical education requirement in sixth grade and may fulfill two semesters of their physical education requirement in either the seventh or eighth grade year. Students are expected to dress-out in appropriate attire and actively participate in movement activities to successfully fulfill course requirements. Emphasis is on:

- acquiring knowledge and skills for movement that provide the foundation for enjoyment and continued social development through physical activity
- understanding the relationship between physical activity and health throughout the lifespan
- application of similar concepts from one sport or movement setting to another
- identification of key elements in performance that lead to movement success
- knowledge of safety practices involved in active participation of movement activities and management of their own behavior
- acquiring the health information and skills necessary to become healthy adults and learn about behaviors in which they should and should not participate.

* *Athletics includes the following sports: football, basketball, track and cross country, volleyball, and tennis.*

ELECTIVES*Electives***CREATIVE WRITING****Grade Level:**

8

Prerequisite:

None

Course Length:

Full year

Creative Writing is an elective course open to seventh and eighth grade students with an interest in writing. Teacher guidance in areas such as fiction, poetry, memoir, nonfiction, and publishing can deepen student knowledge of the writing process as individual writing occurs. All integrated language arts TEKS are addressed in the curriculum.

SPEECH

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

Middle school students will develop effective communication skills to further their academic pursuits and to prepare for interaction in social, civic, and professional roles. To become competent communicators, students will develop and apply skills in using oral language, nonverbal communication, and listening in interpersonal, group, academic and public contexts.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This course allows students to develop critical and creative thinking skills while collaborating to solve relevant problems. Students will actively engage in research as they work in teams to solve challenges with unique approaches. Creative Problem Solving nurtures research and inquiry skills and develops teamwork and leadership skills. Students' presentation skills will also be enhanced. Students enrolled in this course are required to participate in the Destination Imagination tournament which is held on a Saturday in late February or early March each year.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Teacher Recommendation
Course Length: Full year

The Scientific Research course is designed for students who have an interest in designing and conducting scientific research in a meaningful way. Students will investigate the process of scientific inquiry, its historical development, and its modern application. Students will be led through a systematic process to identify a significant problem or question, and then guided in the research process. They will design and carry out an investigation to study the problem and will then communicate their findings to the public. Students will enter their project in both the campus and regional science fairs. In the spring, students will have the option of continuing their initial project in greater detail or choosing a new project to study with the aim of presenting it the following year in the High School Science Fair.

SPANISH 1

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

The student uses the four fundamental communicative skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing with emphasis on listening and speaking. Students read and write material containing vocabulary and grammar that is comprehended aurally and reproduced orally. The student studies the way of life, the history, and the customs of Spanish-speaking peoples. With a focus on oral proficiency, extended time is devoted to listening and responding. High school credit for Spanish 1 is earned for this course.

SPANISH FOR SPANISH SPEAKERS 1

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: See description
Course Length: Full year

The Spanish for Spanish Speakers class is designed to meet the needs of those students who are already able to communicate orally in fluent Spanish. Geared for the first-year Spanish student who speaks Spanish at home, this course will focus on improving grammar, reading, and writing skills in Spanish. Please note that this course is conducted solely in Spanish. High school credit for Spanish for Spanish Speakers 1 is earned for this course.

CHORAL MUSIC***Mixed Choir**

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Any 7th choir and audition
Course Length: Full year

This course provides a choral experience for the young male and female singer. The students are encouraged to discover the academic, historical, and aesthetic aspects of choral music and its relationship to all areas of their lives.

Electives

Boys Choir
Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This course provides a choral experience for the young male voice. Students are encouraged to discover the academic, historical, and aesthetic aspects of choral music and its relationship to all areas of their lives.

Girls Choir
Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This course provides a choral experience for the young female voice. Students are encouraged to discover the academic, historical, and aesthetic aspects of choral music and its relationship to all areas of their lives.

**Additional expense may be required for a uniform. Some out-of-school rehearsal is required in addition to several evening concerts, which are part of the curriculum.*

GENERAL MUSIC
Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

General Music is an introductory course in the basic reading of music notation. It includes the history of music and its development through several cultural periods to the present time. The course is integrated chronologically with other fine arts.

ORCHESTRA*

Beginning Orchestra
Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This is a class for the student who is a beginner on an orchestral string instrument. Proper instrument care, correct playing techniques, finger positions, tone production, counting, basic musical terms, and notation are stressed. Placement on individual instruments will be determined by teacher recommendation based on consultation with students and parents.

Intermediate Orchestra
Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Beginning Orchestra and/or Audition
Course Length: Full year

The intermediate orchestra is primarily a performance organization for students with at least one year of orchestra experience. Members of this organization should have developed a moderate degree of performance ability. The work of the first year is continued with a greater emphasis placed upon growing musical awareness and continued development of musicianship, control, and technical facility. Members of this class are expected to participate in all orchestra activities.

Advanced Orchestra
Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Beginning or Intermediate Orchestra and/or Audition
Course Length: Full year

The advanced orchestra is primarily a performance organization for students with at least one year of orchestra experience. Members of this organization should have developed a high degree of performance ability. The work of the previous year is continued with a greater emphasis placed upon growing musical awareness and continued development of musicianship, control, and technical facility. Members of this class are expected to participate in all orchestra activities.

**Additional expense may be required for a uniform. Some before and after school rehearsals are required in addition to several evening concerts which are part of the curriculum.*

BAND***Beginning Band (Beg. Brass, OR Beg. Woodwind, OR Beg. Percussion)**

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This is a class for the student who is a beginner on a band instrument. Proper instrument care, correct playing techniques, fingerings, tone production, counting, basic musical terms, and notation are stressed. Placement on individual instruments will be determined by teacher recommendations based on consultations with students and parents. Additional audition procedures may be necessary to determine instrument placement.

Intermediate Band

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Beginning Band and/or Audition
Course Length: Full year

The intermediate band is primarily a performance organization for students with at least one year of band experience. Members of this organization should have developed a moderate degree of performance ability. The work of the first year is continued with a greater emphasis placed upon growing musical awareness and continued **development** of musicianship, control, and technical facility. Members of this class are expected to participate in all full band activities. Placement in this band would be determined by audition.

Advanced Band

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Beginning Band, Intermediate Band and/or Audition
Course Length: Full year

The advanced band is primarily a performance organization for students with at least one year of band experience. Members of this organization should have developed a high degree of performance ability. The work of the previous year is continued with a greater emphasis placed upon growing musical awareness and continued development of musicianship, control, and technical facility. Members of this class are expected to participate in all full band activities. Placement in this band would be determined by audition.

**Additional expense may be required for a uniform. Some before and after school rehearsals are required in addition to several evening concerts which are part of the curriculum.*

ART 1*

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

The program consists of an introduction to design, drawing, sculpture, painting, art history, printing, and art forms. The course includes an orientation in the use of a variety of media and the basic skills essential in the use of each.

**Additional materials or supplies will be required.*

ART 2*

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Art 1
Course Length: Full year

The intent of this program is to refine art skills developed in Art 1. The class is composed of a selected group of students exhibiting exceptional talents in the field of art.

**Additional materials or supplies will be required.*

THEATRE 1

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This course is designed to introduce students to theatre by teaching creative expression through theatre performance. Through a variety of theatrical experiences, students communicate in a dramatic form, make artistic choices, solve problems, build positive self-concepts, and relate interpersonally. Topics include theatre heritage and traditions, interpreting, character development using the voice and body expressively, technical elements of theatre, theatre design, and directing and production concepts and skills, all designed to instill an appreciation of live theatre.

Electives

THEATRE 2

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Theatre 1 & teacher recommendation
Course Length: Full year

This eighth grade theatre course is intended to further refine the skills developed in Theatre 1. The class is focused on students exhibiting exceptional talents in the field of theatre. Students will use improvisation and pantomime, and will learn to further express thoughts and feelings using effective voice and diction. The students will apply elements of drama to interpret characters using the voice and body expressively. They will learn and apply theatre production skills in the areas of sets, sound, costuming, makeup and publicity. The students will delve deeper into theatre history, exploring major time periods of theatrical development.

PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN SERVICES

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

This laboratory course will enable students to investigate careers in the human services career cluster, including counseling and mental health, early childhood development, family and community, and personal care services. Content includes a focus on personal development, interpersonal studies, child development, nutrition and wellness, budgeting and consumer-buying practices, and personal care.

Students successfully completing course requirements will receive one high school graduation credit.

PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY 1

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course Length: Full year

Students develop computer literacy skills to adapt to emerging technologies used in the global marketplace in this comprehensive hands-on, high tech laboratory program. In this course, learning experiences are guided by individual learning module assignments. These modules are designed so that a pair of students, working as a team, are guided through the exploration of a technology being explored and provide the opportunity for problem-solving.

Activities that students may be exposed to in this course include the following: aerodynamic testing, structural stress testing and analyzing, aerodynamics, laser technology, electricity/electronics, computer animation, satellite communication, desktop publishing, robotics, computer aided design, pneumatics, programming, microelectronics, model building, video, computer digitizing and more.

**Additional supplies or materials will be required. Cost will be dependent upon the projects the student chooses.*

PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY 2

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Principles of Information Technology 1
Course Length: Full year

This advanced course is a continuation of the concepts and skills developed during the Principles of Information Technology 1 course.

Students successfully completing course requirements can receive one high school graduation credit that meets the Technology Education requirement.

**Additional supplies or materials will be required. Cost will be dependent upon the projects the student chooses.*

HEALTH AND AEROBIC ACTIVITIES

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Written parent permission
Course length: Full year

This is an integrated year-long health and personal fitness course. It will include one semester emphasizing issues concerning personal wellness, mental health, nutrition, interpersonal relationships, the rights and responsibilities of parenting, CPR instruction and the detrimental effects of substance abuse. The individual and societal cost of sexually transmitted diseases will be presented. Also included is one semester that addresses personal wellness issues and life-long physical education activities. The goal is to give students sufficient information to make good health/fitness choices that promote a long and healthy life. Upon successful completion of this class, students can earn one-half credit of high school

health for first semester and one-half credit for Aerobic Activities-a high school physical education course.

HEALTH AND TEAM SPORTS

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Written parent permission
Course length: Full year

This is an integrated year-long health and team sports course. It will include one semester emphasizing issues concerning personal wellness, mental health, nutrition, interpersonal relationships, the rights and responsibilities of parenting, CPR instruction and the detrimental effects of substance abuse. The individual and societal cost of sexually transmitted diseases will be presented. Also included is one semester that addresses team sports. Students will be provided with the opportunity to develop health-related fitness and an appreciation for teamwork and fair play through participation in a variety of team sports. Students should be able to demonstrate proficiency in two or more sports that may include: basketball, field or floor hockey, flag football, soccer, softball, team handball or volleyball. Expectations of students may include:

- demonstration of consistency using basic offensive and defensive skills of a sport,
- application of movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills,
- development of basic components such as strategies, protocol, and rules of structured physical activities and
- exhibits a physically active lifestyle that provides opportunities for enjoyment and challenge through team sports.

Upon successful completion of this class, students can earn one-half credit of high school health and one-half credit for Team Sports-a high school physical education course.

ATHLETICS

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Meet UIL requirements
Course Length: Full year

Athletics at the middle school includes football, basketball, tennis, track, cross country and girl's volleyball.

A physical exam and a notarized release card are required for participation. Additional practice outside the school day will also be required.

STAAR PREP

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course length: 1/2 - 1 Full year

This course may be required for students not mastering state assessment in seventh grade. Skills reinforced in this course will provide the student with activities which will demonstrate the practical aspects of math, reading, composition, and grammar skills. Since there will be a focus on remediation of writing, reading, and math skills targeted to state assessment, instruction will be individualized to eliminate specific areas of deficiency.

AVID 8 (ADVANCEMENT VIA INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATION)

(McDonald, New and Vanston Middle Schools Only)

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: Application and acceptance into the program
Course Length: Full year

The AVID class continues to address key elements in college preparation: academic survival skills, college entry skills, tutorials, motivational activities, and career and college exploration. Additionally students will improve their oral communication skills through presentation and Socratic Seminar, participate in writing to learn activities, including note taking, learning logs, and essay writing, prepare for college entrance examinations, including the SAT and ACT, and complete and present a multi-grade level portfolio of their work.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Grade Level: 8
Prerequisite: None
Course length: Full year

Each individual campus has electives that fall under Independent Study. Check with the campus registrar for available options.

EIGHTH GRADE PRACTICE SCHEDULE

COURSES

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | English Language Arts or English Language Arts GT or English Language Arts ESL |
| 2 | Mathematics or Mathematics GT |
| 3 | Science or Science GT |
| 4 | Social Studies/United States History and Citizenship or Social Studies GT |
| 5 | _____ *(Elective Course) |
| 6 | _____ (Elective Course) |
| 7 | _____ (Elective Course) |

* Some students will be required to take Reading in place of one elective. These students will be notified.

Notes

STATE ASSESSMENT

STATE ASSESSMENT

The Texas Education Agency is currently revising state assessment requirements.

SSI EIGHTH GRADE PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

For eighth grade students the Student Success Initiative promotion requirements will not include the use of the state assessment results in the 2011-2012 school year only, since the passing standards will not yet be established by the Texas Education Agency. Promotion decisions will be based on district policy and teacher/principal recommendations.

GRADUATION PROGRAMS and ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

With the implementations of the STAAR EOC program, assessment requirements for graduation have changed. Students in the current TAKS program are required to meet the passing standard on the four TAKS exit level assessments (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). With the new STAAR program, students will be required to meet the passing standard (or at least make the minimum score) on eight to twelve STAAR EOC assessments (English I, II, III, Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, world geography, world history, and U.S. history) depending on their graduation program. However, scoring only at the minimum level on all the STAAR EOC assessments will not meet the cumulative score requirement. This is a significant increase in the number of assessments on which students must perform at a high level compared to the current TAKS exit level assessments for graduation (four assessments).

Additional Information can be found on the Internet

The website address for the Student Assessment Division at the Texas Education Agency is www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment. Information regarding the student assessment program, the testing calendar, released TAKS tests, STAAR and EOC, statewide results, and technical information about the testing program can be found at this site.

Study Guides

Students who do not meet the passing standard on any of the TAKS tests can download a TAKS study guide free of charge. This guide is provided to help strengthen the skills needed to be successful on TAKS. Study guides may be downloaded from TEA website, www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/guides/study/.

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