

# **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Core Curriculum**

**Core Content Area Classes: Math, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts are all aligned with state benchmarks. MA and LA reflect Grade Level Content Standards (GLCE).**

## **Language Arts**

Basic areas of study in this course are writing, reading, and communications. Throughout the year students will be engaged in the writing process and will use the 5 Traits of Writing. We use class time to learn all the steps in the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and even publishing. The principles of grammar, mechanics, spelling, and usage are taught to facilitate the writing process.

Students will read a variety of materials: short stories, novels, drama, and non-fiction. While reading, students will be aware of their text connections, emotional responses, new thoughts, while also being able to express responses in writing. Students will also explore conventions of literature such as genres, author's tone, characterization, and theme.

Group work and individual presentations are the main emphasis in speaking. Listening skills are developed as a vital part of all learning.

Activities explored throughout the year:

- Writing Workshop (to explore the writing process.)
- Reading in all three genres: realistic, historical, and science fiction.
- Multicultural literature exposure.
- Grandparent biography/letter writing, decade research, visual and verbal presentation, and a celebration with grandparent.
- Persuasive and technical writing.
- Short story unit to address all story elements.
- Vocabulary building skills throughout the year.

## **Mathematics**

Suggested Tracks:

7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Most Students - Course 2  
Advanced Students - Pre-Algebra I

8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Most Students - Pre-Algebra  
Advanced Students - Algebra

## **Course2**

A seventh grade course offering. It is similar to Pre-algebra in content, but more emphasis is placed on measuring, Geometry, data analysis, percent, proportion, and probability. Order of operations, graphing, equations, and the study of functions are also emphasized. Students who complete Course 2 will be placed in either Algebra, or Pre-Algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This will be at the discretion of the teacher and end of year test.

## **Pre-Algebra**

An 8<sup>th</sup> grade course offering as well as our Advanced Math for 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Greater depth of order of operations, functions, algebraic expressions and equations is emphasized. Other topics include: fractions, exponents, area and volume, ratios, and nonlinear functions and polynomials. Students who successfully complete this course will take Algebra I at the HS.

## **Algebra I**

This is offered for 8th grade advanced students, and is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade course offering. It is all Algebra in content. The major topics include: the use of variables, patterns, graphing, functions, solving equations, expressions, and solving systems of equations. Successful completion of this course will allow students to earn HS credit, and earn placement into the Geometry course at the HS.

## **Earth Science**

Upon successful completion of the High School Science Content Expectations for Earth Science (HSSCE), students will earn one high school elective credit. Topics covered in Earth Science for the 2011-12 school year include: Rocks, Earth's Energy, Plate Tectonics, Earthquakes and Volcanoes, Geologic Time, Atmosphere and Weather/Climate, Oceanography, Astronomy, and Human Interaction with the Environment.

## **American History: The American Revolution to Reconstruction**

This course will continue the student's studies of United States History from the writing of the Constitution through Reconstruction. The course is divided chronologically into eras, with geography, civics/government, and economic content being integrated within the historical context. Using content knowledge, research, and inquiry, students will analyze, argue, and explain various issues and events that shaped the growth of our nation. Where appropriate, students will make comparison to relevant and contemporary issues.

## **Eighth Grade Physical Education – one semester**

Eighth grade physical education emphasizes cardiovascular and strength training. Lifetime fitness is encouraged with various sports and activities. Technical training is experienced through strength and fitness training. Individual sports are included in the experience.

## **Computers/Careers – one marking period**

This course is a continuation of seventh grade computer skills with career exploration work done in the form of a computerized Educational Development Plan (EDP). The EDP will follow the student to help in course selections, interests, and Career Pathway selection. Included is also enhanced work in keyboarding, publishing, spreadsheets, graphing, and PowerPoint. Students also will participate in several service projects.

## **Elective Class Descriptions**

Please note: all students will have the opportunity to enroll in one nine-week exploratory class regardless of a band, choir, or Spanish selection.

### **Band – (Elective Class)-one full year**

Students who choose this class will continue developing instrumental music skills begun in earlier grades. Students will participate in concerts and MSBOA sanctioned festivals. The emphasis will be on refining individual and ensemble performances while playing music of a serious and challenging nature.

### **Choir –(Elective Class)-one full year**

Vocal music students will learn music appreciation, music theory, sight-reading and perform pieces during concerts throughout the school year. This class does not require students to have prior involvement in vocal music. Students will be given instruction and placed based on range, knowledge, and interest.

## **Spanish 1- (Elective Class)- one full year**

Spanish 1 is a year-long introductory course to the Spanish language. The course covers a broad overview of both the language of Spanish as well as the cultures whose primary language is Spanish. Students can earn high school credit with successful completion of this course. This class will focus on many components including:

- a) Basic vocabulary  
(Food, time, days of week, introductory greetings, places, activities, activities/sports, colors, expressions, numbers, etc.)
- b) Spanish grammar  
(Present tense conjugations of verbs, the present progressive, male and female nouns, sentence structure, adjectives, articles, etc.)
- c) Cultural lessons  
(Geography, religious customs, daily life, understanding of time, last names, word associations, etc.)
- d) Pronunciation  
(Alphabet, vowel sounds, consonant sounds, etc.)
- e) Speaking/Comprehension  
(Developing the ability to listen and speak basic Spanish sentences in real life situations)

## **Spanish 2- (Elective Class)- one full year**

*Requires successful completion of Spanish 1*

Spanish 2 is a year-long continuation of the study of the Spanish language and related cultures. Students may earn a high school credit for successful completion of this course. Components of this class include:

- a) Vocabulary  
(Extension of many of the basic vocabulary units from Spanish 1.)
- b) Spanish grammar  
(Preterite tense, imperfect tense, etc.)
- c) Cultural lessons  
(Geography, customs, etc.)
- d) Pronunciation  
(Continuation of vowel sounds, consonant sounds, etc.)
- e) Speaking/Comprehension  
(Get needs met, express simple ideas, discuss current and past events using complete sentences)

## **Exploratories – (Elective Class)- one-quarter classes**

Possible courses:

- **Art:**  
Drawing, painting, printmaking, and ceramics as well as how the differing genres fit into a historical context.
- **Cultures of South America:**  
The study of the basics of Spanish. A nine-week taste of Spain, its different cultures, people, customs, food, and ways of life.
- **What's Important in Life:**  
A contemporary exploratory class that focuses on everything from CPR to diversity issues.
- **Computer Applications-Digital Photography:**  
Using digital cameras, students will learn the basics of photography. Students will develop an eye for photography by practicing the elements of composition. Students will also learn how to manipulate the camera to produce different effects, upload, and transfer files. Additionally, students will learn photo editing techniques using Google Picasa .
- **Service Learning Leadership Class:**  
By developing and implementing service learning opportunities, students will learn leadership skills. The course offers a hands-on approach to learning as students collaborate with many community organizations.

**Encore classes offered are based on student demand as well as teacher availability.**