

UPDATED 6th Grade Elective Course Descriptions

Introduction to Computer Applications

Through hands on projects, students will learn word processing, spreadsheet and graphing, multimedia presentation, web site design, and desktop publishing using Microsoft Office. Students will also learn basic programming in Scratch. In addition, students will learn typing techniques, internet safety, research strategies, and basic computer components.

Beginning Band (aka the Black and Gold Band) – Offered 1st semester only.

The Black and Gold Beginning Band is for students who have never played a band instrument, or play at a beginner level (**flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, baritone, tuba, and percussion**). If you've never played an instrument before, you will get help choosing the instrument that's the best "fit" for you. Students are encouraged to provide their own instrument, but if you don't have one, the school will provide an instrument for you to play. Students will learn how to hold the instrument properly, play with a good tone, and read music notation. Beginning Band is only offered during the first semester. The goal of beginning band is for students to advance out of beginning band and into intermediate band (or advanced band) by the end of the first semester. Beginning band will perform a winter concert in December or January. Participation in after-school concerts is required and part of the class grade.

Intermediate Band (aka the Toro Concert Band)

The Toro Intermediate Band is for students who have already played an instrument for 1 or 2 years in elementary school or 6th grade, can hold their instrument properly, produce a good tone on their instrument, read and perform basic rhythms and simple melodies, play the Bb Eb and Ab concert major scales, and know all of the notes in the treble or bass clef. Drummers need to be able to play simple rudiments on snare drum and simple melodies on bells. Most incoming 6th graders will be placed in this band, unless they aren't yet reading music fluently or their playing skills are at the beginner level, in which case they will be placed in beginning band where they can get the individual attention and support they need in order to progress to the intermediate and advanced level, in both reading and playing. Incoming 6th graders who think they are at the intermediate or advanced level are encouraged to audition in the spring, so that they can be scheduled into the appropriate classes before school starts in the fall.

Advanced Band (aka the Montera Symphonic Band) – by audition only. Auditions occur in the spring.

The Montera Symphonic Band is for students who can read music and play an instrument at an advanced level. ALL students must audition to be in this band and can only be placed in this band with the recommendation of Mr. Swihart. Incoming 6th graders who play at an advanced level are encouraged to audition for advanced band in the spring so that they can be scheduled into this band BEFORE school starts in the fall. Advanced Band plays 3 evening concerts at school and at various off-campus events, like the Montclair Holiday Stroll and Restaurant Walk. Attendance at all concerts is required and part of the class grade.

After-School Jazz Band – by audition

The Montera Jazz Band rehearses after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:15-4:30. Students must already be playing at an intermediate or advanced level on their instrument, and must audition to join this group. Participation in one of the school bands or orchestras is highly encouraged but not required. The instrumentation of this band is flexible, including a combination of wind and string instruments, piano, guitar, bass, and drumset. Auditions will be held during the third or fourth week of school. Jazz Band will perform at 2 evening concerts at school, and at various school and community events throughout the year. Participants are expected to perform at all concerts.

Beginning/Intermediate Orchestra (aka the Toro Orchestra)

For students with little to no experience playing a string instrument (**violin, viola, cello, and string bass**). Students will learn how to hold the instrument properly, read music notation, produce a good tone on the instrument, and play full-orchestra arrangements. This group will perform at two evening concerts at school. One in December/January and one in May. Participation at these concerts is required and part of the class grade. Students are encouraged to provide their own instrument, but if they don't have one, the school will provide an instrument for you to play.

Advanced Orchestra – By audition only. Auditions occur in the spring.

The Montera Advanced Orchestra is for students who play a string instrument at an advanced level, can read music fluently, and play the D, G, and C major scales on their instrument. ALL students must audition to be in this orchestra and can only be placed in this orchestra with the recommendation of Mr. Swihart. Incoming 6th graders who play at an advanced level are encouraged to audition for advanced orchestra in the spring so that they can be scheduled into this class BEFORE school starts in the fall. Advanced Orchestra plays 3 evening concerts at school and at various off-campus events, like the Montclair Holiday Stroll and Restaurant Walk. Attendance at all concerts is required and part of the class grade.

Orff/World Music Ensemble (aka "Play, Sing, and Dance!") Offered 2nd semester only.

Offered during the 2nd semester, this class is based on the approach to music education created by composer Carl Orff and composer/choreographer Gunild Keetman. Students will sing, dance, and play a variety of instruments (drums and xylophones), music, and games from around the world. No previous music experience is required. All you need is a desire to play music, be musically creative, and discover your inner voice and creativity through music. This group will perform at 1 evening concert in May. Performance at school concerts is required and part of the class grade. Join this class if you want to Play, Sing, and Dance!

Leadership

Leadership is designed to encourage and empower students to make a positive impact in their school, local, and global communities. In Leadership, students get the opportunity to express their thoughts, beliefs, and identities, while also learning about important human rights issues. Not only do leadership students learn how to become compassionate and impactful leaders, but they also undertake exciting projects designed to promote social justice and improve school culture.

Man-Up

This course is designed to address the needs of African-American males with a focus on providing additional support to be successful in middle school and the prerequisite skills needed to succeed in high school and college. The curriculum addresses areas of self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills.

Newspaper/Journalism

Students will gain relevant experience in the field of journalism. During the process of creating the school's student-written newspaper, students will work individually and in groups to develop research skills, conduct interviews, write and edit stories, photograph events, and design the publication's layout. Event reporting, op/ed pieces, student/teacher profiles, sports writing, art reviews, and many other distinct types of journalism will be explored. Students will also analyze the past, present, and future of print journalism.