



Altoona Middle School

8th Grade Course Description Handbook

2022-2023

All courses, including Career and Technical Education courses, are available without discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, sex (including transgender status, change of sex or gender identity), or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability, any other characteristic protected by law (“protected classes”) in any of its student programs, activities, and employment.

REQUIRED COURSES

American History – Every day for one semester

Eighth grade American History is a detailed exploration of our nation’s past from the events precipitating the American Revolution until the end of Reconstruction. AMS Students will do so using a variety of primary and secondary sources to interpret the historical context, audience, purpose, point of view to draw conclusions. Further analysis will examine 9-11, the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, our Bill of Rights and Supreme Court cases to identify and analyze democratic principles and ideals while examining and interpreting rights, privileges, and responsibilities in society. Additional activities will have our students initiate an inquiry, gathering evidence, evaluating sources, and developing claims using evidence to support reasoning concerning the Lewis and Clark expedition, Westward Movement and the Civil war. Throughout the year we will also be requiring students to use geographic tools to analyze the world around us as well as the economic interdependence of nations.

English Language Arts – Every day for one semester

The eighth grade ELA curriculum focuses on the art of writing. Students read and analyze mentor texts and samples of high level writing in order to incorporate those writing moves and techniques into their own pieces. Emphasis is placed on creating narrative, informative, argumentative, and creative writing pieces. Grammar and conventions lessons are taught throughout the year. Students write personal narratives, argumentative essays, textual analyses, reflective responses, informative biographies, podcast and short film scripts, newspaper articles, and a variety of other genres of writing.

Literature – Every day for one semester

Literature (Reading) class will focus on students’ growth in the areas of reading, listening, speaking, discussion, and reflection. Reading strategies, critical thinking skills, citing text evidence, and vocabulary building will be the focus. A variety of novels, short stories, and magazines that are fiction, nonfiction, and poetry will be used to practice reading strategies and comprehension skills. The overall goal of the class is to increase the literacy and writing ability of all students. Some topics will be Believing in Yourself!, Differences are what makes us Unique, The Outsider’s Novel Unit, Holocaust Novel Unit, Social Media Unit using Scholastic Teen Choices Magazine, Poetry Unit, and Student Choice Novel Unit.

Math – Every day all year

Eighth grade math uses *Core Connections Course 3* and is designed to prepare students for a rigorous college preparatory algebra course. It uses a problem-based approach with concrete models. The course helps students develop multiple strategies to solve problems and to recognize the connections between concepts. Though more will be covered over the course of the year, the following essential standards/skills are what every student must master in order to be considered minimally proficient in this course: Problem Solving, Simplifying with Variables, Graphs and Equations, Multiple Representations, Systems of Equations, Transformations and Similarity, Slope and Association, Exponents and Functions, Angles and the Pythagorean Theorem, Surface Area and Volume. Study Teams are used in this class to learn or do work, while assessments focus on the individual.

Physical Education – Every other day all year

Students will be introduced to a variety of fitness based warm-ups, followed by the specific unit activities and skill work. The following units will be taught throughout the year if time permits; net games (volleyball, team handball, tchoukball, lacrosse, tennis, badminton) invasion games (basketball, floor hockey, flag football, soccer), fitness (fitness testing, weight room), outdoor recreation (snowshoeing, cross country skiing, disc golf, archery, golf), and team building. Students will be expected to work well with a team/partner setting as well as perform the necessary skills to be successful in the units. Students will be required to wear a PE shirt and will be given a PE locker. PE shirts are \$8 and can be purchased through the PE teachers.

PIE (Prevention/Intervention/Enrichment)

This non-graded course provides students an opportunity for additional review and instruction in the areas of math and ELA helping them stay on track. This course also provides an array of enrichment and school-community activities, as well as continuing to reinforce and review what it means to have great character and be a good citizen.

Science 8 – Every day for one semester

Science 8 will be a progression of the same topics covered in Science 6 and 7. Topics include: Waves and Wave Properties, Sound and the Electromagnetic Spectrum, The Rock Cycle, Plate Tectonics, Earth's Energy Resources, Humanity's Relationship with the Earth, Climate Change, The Sun-Earth-Moon System, Solar and Lunar Eclipses, and the Seasons. The emphasis of this course is on the scientific process through the study of the topics listed above. Students use models to make predictions and construct explanations. They also collect, analyze and interpret data, and report their findings through a formal scientific lab report using the CER format (claim, evidence, and reasoning). This study will continue through the first semester of 9th grade with emphasis on the Earth's place in the universe.

TRANSMATH – Every day all year

Transmath is a balanced mathematics class that provides students with opportunities to develop skills in mathematics computation, application, problem solving, and conceptual understanding that will prepare them for high school and beyond. The course will provide sequential and structured opportunities for students. Students will learn skills that will enable them to solve a variety of mathematics problems in both written and numeric forms.

ELECTIVE COURSES – Every other day all year

Advanced Tech Ed ELECTIVE

This is a relatively new class that focuses on taking the design process, the new technology in the FabLab, and going more in depth to create a more personalized and community service approach to projects. Students will also get a hands-on experience and introduction to many Technology Education classes offered at the high school by doing short units in some classes offered at the high school. We will design and create personalized phone holders, vinyl designs, various lasered projects, epoxy coaster, wood project, program robots, and much more. We will also have engineering challenges. Students will use the laser engraver, vinyl machine, sublimation machine, high school woodshop, and various other machines to advance their skills and knowledge of today's technology.

Band ELECTIVE

How can students develop their skills to become a lifelong musician? 7th and 8th Grade Band is the ensemble that students become a part of after the year of 6th Grade Band. Our class is split into two sections, one with all woodwinds and one with brass and percussion. In this course, students will further develop their technical and musical skills on their instruments. A strong emphasis on fundamental skills and technical development will be taught throughout the year. The repertoire of music that students play will be more advanced than that of the beginning band. Some evening performances are required for this course. Students should practice outside of the school day to help develop their skills and promote the growth of our classroom ensemble. Please note that a purchase of a method book will be required.

Ceramics and Sculpture ELECTIVE

Three-dimensional art occupies space defined through the dimensions of height, width and depth. This class will look at three-dimensional works of art, the methods an artist used to create the three-dimensional piece, and the history of the time that shaped the artist's work. Students will complete their own works of art using a variety of techniques and problem solving skills. Techniques that may be used to create these works of art may include modeling, carving, assemblage and paper folding. Materials to complete the projects may include clay, plaster, wood, Paper Mache, plastics, Styrofoam, paper, and other materials depending on the three-dimensional art project. A field trip to the Minneapolis Art Institute culminates this class.

Choir ELECTIVE *Required if participating in Show Choir

We've all heard talented singers, but did you know much of this talent boils down to hard work and an understanding of how the voice works? 7th and 8th grade choir is the next step in the journey as a choral musician. Building off of musical skills from 6th grade choir as well as the other music offerings, this choir learns and performs more advanced music and sings different types of music from around the world. In choir, students will continue to learn the skills to improve vocal health, master reading music, and understanding the many different aspects of music through game-based learning. In this choir, students will begin to work on music literature with three to four voice parts and place a greater emphasis on acapella (singing without accompaniment) music. Small group and solo opportunities are available as well. All students are welcome, regardless of previous experience, though previous experience in choir is preferred. Some evening performances are required for this course to support the development and enjoyment of music not only as a listener, but also as a performer.

Creative Entertainment in Pop Culture ELECTIVE

Music is a vital part of American culture. In this class, students will look at the popular music that we listen to in our country, including rock, pop, country, and rap. Students will learn how to mix their own music, as well as create a podcast. Students will also analyze music in movies and television, and create our own soundtracks and music videos. There are no required performances. A love of music on the radio is all that is required!

Digital Art (formerly Media Production) ELECTIVE

In today's world, media has become an essential part of our lives. It plays an incredible role in shaping the information and knowledge that is shared every day and everywhere. In this digital art class, students will continue to develop the skills of empowered learners by being innovative and creative designers, problem solvers and communicators. The learning and application of a variety of media production skills could include: podcasts, stop motion, green screen, video editing, website design, infographics, digital graphics/marketing, social media and more. In culmination, students will develop a project in partnership with an organization that is school or community-based. The goal of this project is to assist this organization in sharing their message and information through media production and social media.

Drawing and Painting ELECTIVE

Two-dimensional art consists of a composition which occupies length and width such as paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs. Students will learn about the artists and cultures that contribute to our rich global artistic heritage and the two-dimensional works of art that they have created. Students will learn to use multiple media and techniques for creating two-dimensional works of art. Students will also learn to analyze and critique the works of art and the artists who made them to develop an appreciation and love for art.

Techniques students may use are printmaking, collage and many other exciting mediums. Materials used to complete the projects may include acrylic, tempera and watercolor paints, oil and chalk pastels, colored pencils, or pen and ink. A field trip to the Minneapolis Art Institute culminates this class.

FABulous FabLab ELECTIVE

Utilize the awesome software and machines in the FabLab, along with your creativity and hard work, to create unique projects. We will be learning to create projects in a solid modeling program to 3D print or to create sliced cardboard creations using the laser engraver. We will create stickers and vinyl heat press t-shirts as well as posters. We will also use machines and equipment to design and create a LED night light and your own personal stamp.

Introduction to Guitar ELECTIVE

Have you always wanted to learn guitar but don't know where to start? Have you just started lessons with a private teacher and want to have another place to practice your skills? Introduction to Guitar is a class for those at the beginner skill level that are enthusiastic about learning the instrument. Classical guitars are provided for the students to use in class as well as our method book. It is a benefit but not required to have a guitar at home to practice when outside of school. We will learn the parts of the guitar, the string names, simple melodies, and simple chords to develop a good foundation for further study.

Manufacturing & Design ELECTIVE

Create hands on projects using the awesome machines in the FabLab as well as the traditional shop machines such as band saws and drill presses. We will design and create CO2 cars, model rockets, 3D models, triangle golf tee game, Superclip, and learn about inventions.

Mixed Media and Fun with Fibers ELECTIVE

Come explore the world of mixed media and be introduced to a new way of breaking the boundaries between different art forms. This class is designed to expose the student to various processes, techniques and methods related to crafts. The student will not only explore art history as it relates to various crafts and cultures, but will also learn the processes used to create art. Students will utilize more than one medium in a single piece of art and may include paint, glitter, crayons, fabric and wool, magazine/book images/quotes, found objects, ink, watercolor, oil pastel, chalk pastel, colored pencils, etc. This art form is perfect for all those who are beginners as well as those who are not very good at drawing but still want to make something to fulfill their inner need of creativity.

Spanish I B ELECTIVE

Students who completed Spanish I A in 7th grade will take Spanish I B in 8th grade. Students who pass the course will be allowed to take Spanish II as freshman! Spanish I B will build upon content from Spanish I A. Students will continue to participate in reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities to improve their language proficiency. Students will continue to research, complete projects, presentations, and in-class activities to practice Spanish and learn more about cultural traditions from around the world. Middle school students signing up for Spanish I B must realize the curriculum is at the same rigorous pace as it is for high school students. It is a fun, yet fast-paced learning atmosphere. Get ready to learn new and exciting things as a student in Spanish I B! ¡Olé!

Why Wellness? ELECTIVE

This is a hands-on, project-based course digging deeper into the topics of mental health, alcohol and other drug abuse, nutrition, and healthy relationships. We will apply the concept of wellness to each topic. This course is for those who wish to grow deeper in their wellness journey.

Altoona Middle School

Extra/Co-Curricular Activities

The School District of Altoona recognizes the importance of extra/co-curricular activities as an integral part of the total educational experience. We believe the development of socially active and responsible students goes hand-in-hand with participation in school sponsored activities. Involvement will provide each student with the opportunity to learn useful skills; the awareness of the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, fair play and the realization that a positive attitude, dedication and hard work are essential for success in life. It also challenges students by providing opportunities to attain the skills and knowledge to be mentally and physically active as part of a healthy lifestyle. In order to receive these benefits, each student must meet certain expectations for the privilege of participating in athletics and activities at Altoona Middle School.



Extra/Co-Curricular Offerings

7th Grade Students

Fall Athletics: Cross Country, Girls Tennis, Football, Volleyball, Boys Soccer

Winter Athletics: Wrestling, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball

Spring Athletics: Boys Tennis, Track & Field, Girls Soccer

Clubs/Activities: Art Club, Best Buddies, Creative Writing, Diversity Club, Fitness Club, Fuel Up to Play 60, Mathcounts, Railroader Club, In-Training Show Choir, Student Council, Yearbook

6th Grade Students

Fall Athletics: Cross Country, Girls Tennis

Winter Athletics: Wrestling

Spring Athletics: Boys Tennis

Clubs/Activities: Art Club, Best Buddies, Creative Writing, Diversity Club, Fitness Club, Fuel Up to Play 60, Mathcounts, Railroader Club, In-Training Show Choir, Student Council, Yearbook

8th Grade Students

Fall Athletics: Cross Country, Girls Tennis, Football, Volleyball, Boys Soccer

Winter Athletics: Wrestling, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball

Spring Athletics: Boys Tennis, Track & Field, Girls Soccer

Clubs/Activities: Art Club, Best Buddies, Creative Writing, Diversity Club, Fitness Club, Fuel Up to Play 60, Mathcounts, Railroader Club, In-Training Show Choir, Student Council, Yearbook, 8th Grade Mentors

Instructions:

- 1. Read through each course description.**
- 2. Rank your choices for electives. Rank “1” as your first choice.**
 - a. Incoming 8th grade students rank all electives. **DO NOT** include the electives taken in 7th grade.
 - b. If you would like to be in band check the Band line and choose your section
 - c. Band, Guitar and Choir can be ranked as an elective for both the 7th and 8th Grade year.
 - d. Choir must be an elective in order to be in Show Choir.
 - e. If two electives are chosen from the same field, such as Art or Technology, both of those electives may not be granted in order to give opportunity to other students.
 - f. Due to scheduling constraints, students will be expected to remain in their elective choices throughout the course time or year.
- 3. Obtain a parent signature on Elective Planning Sheet.**

8th Grade Middle School Elective Planning Guide

8th grade students will have physical education and 3 electives. Rank all electives.

✓ **Physical Education**

_____ **I would like to take Band (select group below)**

_____ **Woodwind/Percussion**

_____ **Brass**

_____ **Spanish I B (Must have taken Spanish 1A)**

Electives: (rank from 1 to 11)

_____ **Advanced Tech Ed**

_____ **Ceramics and Sculpture**

_____ **Choir **Required for Show Choir participants****

_____ **Creative Entertainment and Pop Culture**

_____ **Digital Arts (Media Production)**

_____ **Drawing and Painting**

_____ **Fabulous FabLab**

_____ **Guitar**

_____ **Manufacturing and Design**

_____ **Mixed Media and Fun with Fibers**

_____ **Why Wellness**

STUDENT NAME _____

***STUDENT SIGNATURE** _____

***PARENT SIGNATURE** _____