



2024-2025  
ALTOONA MIDDLE SCHOOL

7TH GRADE

# COURSE DESCRIPTION HANDBOOK

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.

# *Altoona Middle School*

## **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Course Description Handbook**

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.

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### *Required Courses*

#### **Career Connections – Every other day for a semester**

Have you started to wonder what you will do for a future career? Determining what classes to take in high school, and what career path you may follow, can be a huge task. In Career Connections, students will identify their individual skills and interests and match those strengths to different career choices as well as continue to become more proficient in their keyboarding skills. As part of this class, students will explore their individual strengths and skills to determine what careers and career clusters might be a good match for them. They will also begin looking at education options for high school classes and beyond. All this exploration will help to give students a jumpstart in their journey for high school and career success.

#### **Health – Every other day for a semester**

In Health class we will discuss what it takes to be an all-around healthy person. Students will develop decision making skills that will help them when making healthy choices that range from what they eat to standing up to peer pressure. We will learn about the bones and muscles of the body and how to perform hands-only CPR. Other topics that we will discuss include mental illness, why drugs and alcohol are bad for the developing brain, and human growth and development, and many more.

#### **English Language Arts – Every day all year**

Students will become more avid and diverse readers while building comprehension and vocabulary skills through root studies and working with a variety of historical fiction and nonfiction text. Students will develop the skills of a critical thinker, learning to challenge the credibility of sources and construct new opinions. Another goal of the course is to learn how to communicate well through speaking and writing. Students will engage in the entire writing process: planning, revising, editing and rewriting, acquiring strategies to publish clear and coherent writing.

#### **Math – Every day all year**

Math 7 uses an investigative approach to introduce students to operations with positive and negative rational numbers along with an emphasis on expressions and equations (algebraic problem solving) involving variables to represent unknown quantities in various real-life context type problems. Students will build on their understanding of ratios, proportional relationships and probability. Students will also begin to explore surface area and volume of select geometric figures.

## *Required Courses, cont.*

### **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. PE is every other day all year. Students will be required to wear a PE shirt and will be given a PE locker. PE shirts are \$10 and can be purchased through the PE teachers on registration day.

### **PIE (Prevention/Intervention/Enrichment)**

This non-graded course provides students an opportunity for additional instruction in the areas of math and ELA helping meet their needs. This course also provides an array of enrichment and school-community activities. Students are selected for the intervention or enrichment options based on how their teachers feel they can best be supported. These courses change throughout the year. Elective courses are assigned randomly, giving students various experiences.

### **SCIENCE – 2.5 Block Classes per week all year**

Science in 7<sup>th</sup> grade concentrates on the study of physical and life science. Throughout the semester, students will have opportunities to work alone and collaboratively while conducting investigations. Students will discover and practice the skills young scientists need when learning about physical and chemical changes, forms of energy, motion and forces, and organization and function of living things. Emphasis is placed on hands-on learning with the development of skills such as observing, inferring, data collection, graphing, analysis, and writing by using an interactive science binder throughout the year.

### **SOCIAL STUDIES – 2.5 Block Classes per week all year**

Grade seven Social Studies is an inquiry-based survey of people and events that shape the development of human cultures around the world. Students will learn and apply mapping skills and understand how to use different maps for specialized purposes. Students will use Document Based Questions (DBQ's) to learn to use primary and reliable secondary sources to examine current events and events in history that shape the world as they know it. Students will practice critical thinking to analyze the conflicts caused by differences in cultures, make a claim in writing, and support that claim with evidence, then propose possible solutions to those problems. Students will also investigate Native American tribes, the effects of Europeans coming to the Americas, and both current and historical aspects of Native American cultures in the United States. Finally, students will learn about economics via the international Chocolate Trade.

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# ***Elective Courses*** - Every other day all year

## **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.

## **Chaos & Cash: Middle Schoolers' Guide to Business & Tech ELECTIVE**

In this course, you will learn about the basics of business before even getting to high school. You'll also explore different business concepts and how technology is important in all careers. It helps you think about your future career options. Join us to discover the world of business and the many possibilities it offers!

## **Choir ELECTIVE**

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? Seventh and eighth 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. In choir, students will continue to learn the skills to maintain vocal health, master reading music, and understanding the many different elements of 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. Two evening performances are required for this course.

## **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, 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, sound effects, and music videos. There are no required performances. A love of music is all that is required!

## *Elective Courses, cont.*

### **Digital Art 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: stop motion, green screen, video editing, pixel art in correlation with video game design, infographics, digital graphics/marketing, social media and more.

### **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.

### **Manufacturing & Design ELECTIVE**

Get ready to dive into an exciting course where you'll explore both traditional manufacturing methods like cutting and drilling, and modern automated production machines such as laser engraving and CNC routers. Learn hands-on skills while also discovering how to use software and communicate your ideas effectively. From safety basics to problem-solving, this class will spark your creativity and teach you valuable technical know-how.

### **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.

## *Elective Courses, cont.*

### **MS Coding 1a ELECTIVE**

Do you find yourself wondering how your favorite apps, websites, and games were made? Maybe you want to try building your own. Well, now you can! In Middle School Coding 1a, you will get an introduction to the basics of computer science, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Python. You'll leave the course with a portfolio of work you can show off.

**This class is an online self guided course provided through Wisconsin Virtual School. The teacher for this course is not present in the classroom, students will be supervised by an Altoona staff member during class period. Students who have a successful completion of MS Coding 1a may be allowed to move onto MS Coding 1b during the school year.** Students who take this course should feel comfortable:

- Working independently on classwork
- Typing for all assignments independently
- Reading through coursework independently
- Advocating for their learning and asking questions

### **Spanish I A ELECTIVE**

Are you ready to learn Spanish? In Spanish 1A for 7th grade, students will experience a general introduction to the Spanish language. This includes pronunciation, grammatical structures, and vocabulary related to everyday life used in the listening, speaking, reading and writing of the Spanish language. Students will also experience an introduction to cultural traditions through research, project-based learning, reading literature and much more! Middle school students signing up for Spanish I A must realize that the curriculum is at the same rigorous pace that it is for high school students. **Students are only eligible for this advanced course if they received a 3 or a 4 in their reading and listening standards during their 6th grade Spanish exploration course.** If not eligible yet, students will have this opportunity in high school. It is a fun, yet fast-paced learning atmosphere. Get ready to learn new and exciting things as a student in Spanish I A! ¡Olé!

### **Please note for Spanish 1A, 1B:**

- 7th and 8th grade Spanish 1A and 1B is the same course as High School Spanish 1, split over two years.
- Students will take the first half of the high school course in 7th grade, and the 2nd half of the high school class in 8th grade.
- Spanish 1A in 7th Grade, is the prerequisite to Spanish 1B in 8th Grade. If a student does not pass (by earning a D or F) 7<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish 1A, they will not be eligible for 1B and will have to take Spanish I in high school.
- Students who enroll in Spanish 1A, will automatically be enrolled in Spanish 1B (when in 8th grade) unless otherwise requested by a parent.



# Altoona Middle School *Co-Curriculars*

We strongly advocate that fostering socially active and responsible students is intertwined with engaging in school-sponsored activities. Participation offers students the chance to acquire valuable skills, understand the significance of teamwork, sportsmanship, and fair play, and recognize that a positive attitude, dedication, and hard work are crucial for achieving success in life.

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## *Clubs & Activities*

**Art Club** is an activity where students gather to explore various artistic mediums and techniques. Through guided sessions and collaborative projects, members have the opportunity to express their creativity, develop their skills, and foster a deeper appreciation for the visual arts.

**Drama Club** is a student organization focused on exploring and celebrating the art of theater through rehearsals, performances, and workshops. The club provides a supportive environment for students to express themselves, build confidence, and foster a passion for the performing arts.

**Fitness Club** is a program designed to promote physical, mental, and emotional wellness among students through exercise and strength training. Participants engage in regular sessions focusing on fitness activities, weightlifting, and team-building exercises, fostering a supportive community and healthy lifestyle habits.

**Forensics** is an activity focused on developing students' public speaking and communication skills. Participants typically compete in speech events such as persuasive speaking and storytelling, gaining confidence and proficiency in presenting in front of an audience.

**Fuel Up to Play** Participation in Fuel Up to Play offers students various leadership and engagement opportunities. By managing activities like the Snack Shack, students cultivate essential entrepreneurial and teamwork abilities while advocating for healthy eating habits and physical fitness within their school community.

**In Training (Show Choir)** "In Training" is a program where students engage in singing and dancing to musical selections. Through dedicated rehearsals and performances, participants refine their vocal skills, enhance stage presence, and cultivate teamwork while delighting audiences with their musical expression.

**Mathcounts** is a competitive mathematics program designed for middle school students. Participants engage in individual and team problem-solving challenges, fostering critical thinking and mathematical skills in a supportive and collaborative environment.

**Racquet Club** The club provides an opportunity for students to improve their skills, stay physically active, and socialize with peers who share an interest in racquet sports such as badminton, pickleball and tennis.

## *Clubs & Activities, cont.*

**S.A.F.E. (Students Advocating For Excellence)** is a student-led organization dedicated to promoting positive values, behaviors, and academic excellence within the school community. Members work together to organize events, workshops, and campaigns that focus on issues such as mental health awareness, diversity and inclusion.

### **Student Council**

Consisting of student representatives who advocate for their peers within the school community, they strive to cultivate a positive school environment, encourage student participation, and spearhead projects benefiting the entire student body through their leadership roles.

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## **Altoona Middle School** *Athletics*

### *7th & 8th Grade Fall Athletics*

Opportunities include Coed Cross Country, Football, Boys Soccer, Girls Tennis, Girls Volleyball. The Fall season begins on September 3rd and concludes October 16th.

### *7th & 8th Grade Winter Athletics*

Winter athletic opportunities consist of Boys Basketball, which runs from October 21st to December 20th, as well as Girls Basketball and Coed Wrestling, beginning on January 2nd and concluding on February 28th.

### *7th & 8th Grade Spring Athletics*

In the spring, 7th & 8th grade students can participate in Girls Soccer, Boys Tennis, and Coed Track & Field. The season begins on March 31st and concludes on May 16th.

*For co-curricular information, go to:*  Co-Curricular AMS Information



## **7th Grade Middle School Elective Planning Guide**

### **Instructions for Elective Planning Sheet:**

- 1. Read through each course description.**
- 2. Rank your choices for all electives. Rank “1” as your first choice, “2” as your second choice, etc.**
  - a. 7th grade students rank all electives.
  - b. Indicate YES or NO for Band. If yes, also choose your section
  - c. Indicate YES or NO for Spanish
  - d. 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.
  - e. Due to scheduling constraints, students will be expected to remain in their elective choices throughout the course time or year.
  - f. Students who do not turn in an elective ranking sheet will be assigned to electives and will not be able choose different electives once scheduled.
- 3. Obtain a parent signature on the Course Planning Sheet.**

**7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS WILL HAVE HEALTH/CAREERS, PE  
AND 2 ADDITIONAL ELECTIVE CLASSES.**

# 7th Grade Middle School Elective Planning Guide

## 7th Grade Course Planning Guide

✓ Health/Careers

✓ Physical Education

I would like to take Band ☐ YES ☐ NO (if yes, select group below)

\_\_\_\_\_ Woodwind/Percussion

\_\_\_\_\_ Brass

I would like to take Spanish 1A ☐ YES ☐ NO

Students are only eligible for this advanced course if they received a 3 or a 4 in their reading and listening standards during their 6th grade Spanish exploration course.

### Electives: (rank from 1 to 10)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ceramics and Sculpture

\_\_\_\_\_ Chaos & Cash: Middle Schoolers' Guide to Business & Tech

\_\_\_\_\_ Choir

\_\_\_\_\_ Creative Entertainment and Pop Culture

\_\_\_\_\_ Digital Art (Media Production)

\_\_\_\_\_ Drawing and Painting

\_\_\_\_\_ Fabulous FabLab

\_\_\_\_\_ Manufacturing and Design

\_\_\_\_\_ Mixed Media and Fun with Fibers

\_\_\_\_\_ MS Coding

### Can I change my elective classes during the school year?

We cannot make changes during the year as this helps us keep balanced sections. While students may not have received all of the classes they were hoping for, all of our courses provide our students with amazing opportunities.

**STUDENT FIRST NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT LAST NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature** \_\_\_\_\_