



Altoona Middle School

7th Grade Course Description Handbook

2020-2021

Required Classes

Career Connections – Every other day for a semester

Have you started to wonder what you will do for a career when you grow up? Determining what classes to take in high school and what career path to follow can be a huge task. In Career Connections, students will identify their individual skills and interests and match those strengths to different careers choices. As part of the class, students will research high school class options, careers and career clusters, college choices, personal finance basics, job hunting skills and much more. Students will discover a career that is suitable for them and create a plan that incorporates their research, interests, intelligences and strengths using Google Slides. Students will also create smart goals to jumpstart the 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. We will talk about topics such as personal health, nutrition, mental health, drugs and alcohol, CPR/First Aid and human growth and development.

Literature/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 also begin to explore surface area and volume of select geometric figures.

Math Compacted – Every day all year

Math 7/8 compacted math is a course where students finish the 2nd half of 7th-grade material along with all of the 8th-grade material. The content encompasses the Common Core Standards of ratios and proportional relationships, the number system (fractions and decimals), linear and nonlinear equations (algebra), volume and surface area (geometry), and statistics and probability. We focus on relating math concepts to real-world applications.

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.

PIE (Prevention/Intervention/Enrichment)

This non-graded daily course provides students an opportunity for additional review and instruction in the areas of math and ELA helping them stay on track. This time also serves as an opportunity to work on homework and receive additional assistance from teachers. In addition, this course also provides our students an array of enrichment and school-community activities helping stretch the minds of our students in unique ways as well as continuing to teach and review what it means to have great character and be a good citizen.

SCIENCE – Every day for a semester

Science in 7th grade concentrates on the study of physical and life science. Throughout the year, students will have opportunities to work alone and collaboratively while conducting investigations. Students will discover and practice the skills young scientists need in the measurement, data collection, and density units. In the motion and forces unit, students will learn about the different types of forces, how they affect movement, and Newton's Laws. For life science, students will learn about the characteristics of life, cells, different types of organisms, systems, and animal kingdoms with dissections at the end of the year. 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 notebook throughout the year.

SOCIAL STUDIES – Every day for a semester

Grade seven Social Studies is an Inquiry based survey of people and events that have shaped 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. In collaborative units with ELA, students will read novels and then learn to use primary and reliable secondary sources to examine events in their books and in history that have shaped the world as they know it. Students will use this information to analyze the conflicts caused by differences in cultures as well as possible solutions to those problems. In a second collaborative unit, students will use their research skills to investigate a natural disaster, the history surrounding it, consequences of the disaster, and people's efforts to survive, rebuild, and improve society so they become stronger and more resilient.

TRANSMATH

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 the college preparatory mathematics courses in high school. 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 Classes – every other day for the year

Band ELECTIVE

How can students develop the 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. In this course, students will further develop their technical and musical skills on their instruments. A strong emphasis on fundamental skills and technique 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 performance skills and enhance the cultural life of the community.

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? 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 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!

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 the basic materials 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, tempa 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

What better way to enjoy music than by learning to play the guitar! In this introductory course, students will identify the parts of the guitar and learn how to tune a guitar. Along with that, students will learn how to read guitar sheet music and transcribe tablature into music. By the end of this course, students will have learned the basic skills needed to play the guitar. Guitars will be provided, but students may choose to bring their own. (Please no amplifiers.) Some additional fees may be required for registration.

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

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 the Media Production 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.

Spanish I A

Are you ready to learn Spanish? In Spanish I A 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 Hispanic cultural traditions through research, project-based learning 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. 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 I A and I B is the same course as High School Spanish I, 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 I A in 7th Grade, is the prerequisite to Spanish I B in 8th Grade.
- Students who enroll in Spanish I A, will automatically be enrolled in Spanish I B unless otherwise requested by a parent.

Why Wellness?

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.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The following Clubs/Activities/Athletics are available to 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:

Mathcounts, In Training Show Choir, Yearbook, Art Club, Forensics, Student Council, Dungeon & Dragons