

# 2023-2024 Elective Course Catalog

## A message from Principal Scott Tatum

Welcome to Sierra Middle School! We are so excited you will be joining the Spartan Family!  
Please have your child complete the following items to ensure they select their electives.

### **The educational opportunities at Sierra are fabulous!**

For students to benefit from the program they must become engaged in the curriculum.

All students are enrolled in five periods of required coursework.

The sixth and seventh periods of instruction offer students an opportunity to select an area or areas of interest in which they would like to explore.

### ***Course content and title subject to change.***

Please take note of several things before you proceed  
in making your elective selections:

1. Some elective courses are identified as year-long courses. If you choose one and meet the prerequisites, you are essentially guaranteed a spot. Your schedule will be the same for the entire year.
2. Some elective courses are identified as semester-long courses. The options included within this catalog are courses the staff wants to teach, and which many students have expressed an interest in taking. We will ask you to select 4 electives that you would like to be enrolled in next year and then based on interest, we will determine which courses to offer.
3. Elective courses are offered at different times throughout the day. This means that we may run into difficulty trying to schedule students into only elective courses that they chose. It is very important that students and parents spend time making these selections. **We will do our best to allow students the opportunity to take those exploratory clusters that they choose, however, please understand that there will be instances where a student may be scheduled in a cluster that they didn't choose as their first choice.**
4. Some of our electives are required, targeted instruction classes. These classes are for students who need extra instruction in reading, mathematics, and/or study skills. A student is chosen for these classes by their performance on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress in school. The goal in these classes is to provide appropriate interventions so that students are successful in reading, mathematics and/or study skills.

### **SPARTAN COURSE OFFERINGS 7TH AND 8TH GRADE PROGRAM**

All 7th and 8th grade students are required to take the following courses:

English	1 period
Social Sciences/History	1 period
Math	1 period
Physical Education	1 period
Science	1 period
Electives	2 periods

Most 7<sup>th</sup> graders will take Math 7. Students who have successfully completed math 7 course work and have a teacher recommendation, may be enrolled in Math 8. 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be enrolled in Math 8, unless qualified to enroll in Math 9I/T.

## **SEMESTER-LONG ELECTIVES**

### **EXPLORATORY 1 - Woodworking, Pop-Culture, Speech/Debate and Foods (1101)**

#### **WOODWORKING-semester**

Woodworking teaches students about power tool safety, and students explore career information and manufacturing basics. Students will learn to use hand and power tools to craft projects that may include: baseball bats, bowls, lamps, rocking horses, cabinets and many other exciting projects.

#### **POP-CULTURE-semester**

This course will examine how music, movies / tv, sports, and current events have shaped the United States in the 20th and 21st centuries. The class will analyze commercials, movie lines, lyrics in songs, and famous sports plays to determine how these incidents have been presented in traditional print media and in social media today.

#### **SPEECH AND DEBATE-semester**

Speech and Debate allows students to develop critical thinking and public speaking skills. Students will learn how to develop and defend a logical argument using reason and evidence; point out logical flaws with their opponents' positions; and establish credibility (believability) with their audience by practicing eye contact, helpful body language, appropriate volume, and other presentation skills. The class will analyze historical speeches and determine the impact on making change in our society.

#### **FOODS-semester**

Foods class focuses on the foundational skills, concepts, and techniques related to basic cooking methods. Students investigate sanitary methods of food handling in the hospitality industry. Students demonstrate safe handling of tools and equipment, identify and use various ingredients, acquire basic culinary skills, and practice menu development. A donation of \$10.00 is appreciated.

### **EXPLORATORY 2- Wt. Training, Foods, Computer Programming, Fashions/Mixed Media (1102)**

#### **WEIGHT TRAINING-semester**

Students will learn appropriate techniques for lifting weights with an emphasis on developing strength for athletics. Students will also focus on building stamina and flexibility through proper conditioning.

#### **FOODS-semester**

Foods class focuses on the foundational skills, concepts, and techniques related to basic cooking methods. Students investigate sanitary methods of food handling in the hospitality industry. Students demonstrate safe handling of tools and equipment, identify and use various ingredients, acquire basic culinary skills, and practice menu development. A fee of \$10.00 is appreciated.

#### **COMPUTER PROGRAMMING-semester**

Computer Programming allows students to learn basic programming language and to create pictures, colors, and movement. Students will progress at their own pace through multiple programming platforms and work to create apps, games, and 3-D designs.

#### **FASHIONS/MIXED MEDIA-semester**

Students will learn the basics of fashions and designing clothing. The class will have the opportunity to create clothing outfits. Mixed Media teaches two dimensional and three dimensional design, using a variety of art media. Students design and create unique artwork, which may include drawing, painting, collage, and sculpture.

### **EXPLORATORY 3 - Team Games, Business, Multi Media/ Digital Journalism, and Foods(1103)**

#### **TEAM GAMES-semester**

Students will learn and play a variety of sports and outdoor games. The focus on this class will be team building, sportsmanship and fun.

#### **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT-semester**

Business Management/Financial Literacy teaches students how to make wise financial decisions to promote financial well-being throughout their lifetimes. Business Management empowers students to effectively set financial goals, prepare for career opportunities, and manage their financial future through interactive, real-life scenarios.

#### **MULTIMEDIA/ DIGITAL JOURNALISM-semester**

Students will have the opportunity to create weekly video announcements for the school. Students will video, broadcast and edit videos for the school. Multi media is a course designed to provide students with hands-on skills involving graphic design, digital photography, web publishing, and social media. Students use various hardware peripherals and software for completing documents.

#### **FOODS-semester**

Foods class focuses on the foundational skills, concepts, and techniques related to basic cooking methods. Students investigate sanitary methods of food handling in the hospitality industry. Students demonstrate safe handling of tools and equipment, identify and use various ingredients, acquire basic culinary skills, and practice menu development.

A donation of \$10.00 is appreciated.

### **EXPLORATORY 4 - Business, Weight Training, Film Studies, Visual Art(1105)**

#### **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT-semester**

Business Management/Financial Literacy teaches students how to make wise financial decisions to promote financial well-being throughout their lifetimes. Business Management empowers students to effectively set financial goals, prepare for career opportunities, and manage their financial future through interactive, real-life scenarios.

#### **WEIGHT TRAINING-semester**

Students will learn appropriate techniques for lifting weights with an emphasis on developing strength for athletics. Students will also focus on building stamina and flexibility through proper conditioning.

#### **FILM STUDIES-semester**

Film Studies students develop the skills to recognize, analyze, describe and enjoy film as an art and entertainment form. Students learn about the basic “building blocks” and formal elements that make up films as well as some fundamental principles of analysis, genre, style, performance and storytelling. Film Studies includes weekly screenings and short writing assignments. A complete list of films will be provided and may include all genres of film: Movies, documentaries, mockumentaries, Ted Talks, etc.

#### **VISUAL ART-semester**

Art allows students experiences with painting, drawing, photography, working with alternative materials or digital art. This course may include teaching design elements and principles needed to create a work of art, explore artistic inspirations, and look at art from different cultures.

## **EXPLORATORY 6 - Team Games, Film Studies, Wellness Workouts (1106)**

### **TEAM GAMES-semester**

Students will learn and play a variety of sports and outdoor games. The focus in this class will be team building, sportsmanship, and fun.

### **FILM STUDIES-semester**

Film Studies students develop the skills to recognize, analyze, describe and enjoy film as an art and entertainment form. Students learn about the basic “building blocks” and formal elements that make up films as well as some fundamental principles of analysis, genre, style, performance and storytelling. Film Studies includes weekly screenings and short writing assignments. A complete list of films will be provided and may include all genres of film: Movies, shorts, documentaries, mockumentaries, Ted Talks, etc.

### **WELLNESS WORKOUTS-semester**

Wellness Workouts provides an enhanced fitness and wellness experience. The content includes the assessment of present fitness levels and the development and practice of a balanced, individualized physical fitness program including yoga and/or pilates. Students will explore stress management and the roles of stress and exercise on wellness.

## **EXPLORATORY 7 - STEM/Balloons/Planes and Rockets, Drama/Theater, Forensics, Theater (1107)**

### **STEM BALLOONS/ROCKETS/PLANES-semester**

Explore aerodynamics with balloons, planes and rockets. You will build paper airplanes, tissue hot air balloons and model rockets. Learn about flight while doing. STEM focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Students will have the opportunity to explore and have hands-on experiences with in-class projects. This class will be an introduction for students to be creative and problem-solve as they learn more about integrating these topics.

### **FORENSICS-semester**

Forensics allows students to explore a hypothetical crime scene. Students will use chemical, biological, photographic, and other means to study the evidence and draw logical conclusions. Students will experience the methodical nature of forensic science as they deeply examine a case. Specifically, students will be introduced to fingerprinting, hair analysis, rudimentary DNA analysis, blood typing, and other basic forensic techniques.

### **DRAMA-semester**

Theater class focuses on aspects of theater such as acting, musical theater, costuming, and production. Students will also explore theater literature, performance, historical and cultural connections, and technical requirements. Improvisation, creative dramatics, and beginning scene work are used to introduce students to acting and character development. Drama elective will focus solely on IMPROVISATION. That is, acting without scripts or memorizing lines. Think "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" Each day will begin with a class warm-up, followed by improv games. In order to be a part of this class, you need to be a team player and be willing to jump in and think quickly on your feet!

### **THEATER-semester**

This is a class that examines what motivates people to choose kindness, what choices and strategies people make to increase joy, laughter and stronger relationships in their lives. We take an honest and careful look at why we get angry, mean, and sometimes seek out drama and conflict. Though the whole range of human emotion is necessary and confusing, we also need to use the tools we have to understand where they are coming from and how to handle them. We will use movies, music, skits, role playing, and loads of physical and computer games to drive the discussion of human behavior and our desire to live stress free and HAPPY!

## **YEAR LONG ELECTIVES**

### **AIDE (LIBRARY) (5050)**

Library aides are essential to the smooth, efficient operation of the Library Media Center. They help the library media teacher and assistants with a variety of jobs such as checking materials in and out, filing magazines, and running errands. They put books back and straighten bookshelves, process magazines, help with library displays, and keep the library neat and orderly. An ability to alphabetize and an understanding of decimal numbers are desirable. A positive attitude and a willingness to help others is a must. **PRINCIPAL AND LIBRARY APPROVAL IS REQUIRED. 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS ONLY.**

### **AIDE (OFFICE) (5051)**

Under the direction of the office supervisor and the secretary, office aides routinely do general office work in the school office. Tasks include filing, message delivery, marquee updates and housekeeping chores as assigned. Some phone answering may be required. A neat appearance and a positive attitude are essential. **PRINCIPAL AND OFFICE APPROVAL IS REQUIRED. 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS ONLY.**

### **AIDE (TEACHER) (5052)**

Teacher Aide is a position of responsibility that offers students an opportunity to work closely with a teacher. Tasks will vary depending upon the teacher to whom a student is assigned. Tasks will include entering data into a Macintosh computer, preparing instructional materials, offering classroom tutoring, and other tasks as assigned. **PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER APPROVAL IS REQUIRED. 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS ONLY.**

### **7<sup>th</sup> GRADE CHOIR (7036)**

Students will learn to use their singing voice to its fullest potential as they prepare to perform a full spectrum of music. There are at least three evening performances each year. There are also opportunities for solos, honor choirs, and field trips.

### **8<sup>th</sup> GRADE CHOIR (7037)**

Students will learn to use their singing voice to its fullest potential as they prepare to perform a full spectrum of music. There are at least three evening performances each year. There are also opportunities for solos, honor choirs, and field trips.

### **LEADERSHIP (1066)**

Our award winning Leadership Class teaches students to be responsible effective leaders through a variety of experiences. Students will develop personal leadership skills, learn how to make large group presentations to a variety of audiences, put on school wide activities, and organize/participate in a number of community service projects. Students must be positive role models, love being involved with school activities, and commit

their time before, during, and after school. **PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER APPROVAL REQUIRED OPEN TO 7TH AND 8TH GRADE STUDENTS.**

### **ORCHESTRA (7000)**

This class is for students who have played a string instrument for at least one year. This orchestra has consistently received command performance ratings at the Festival. They perform many times at school concerts, district festivals, community service, and a tour of local elementary schools. They also have special opportunities such as honor orchestra and solo/ensemble festivals. They wear classy uniforms and have traveled to exotic places such as Disneyland.

### **PERSONAL HEALTH / PEER MEDIATION (J1536)**

Students learn about different topics that may include personal health; mental, emotional, and social health; injury prevention and safety; nutrition and physical activity; and alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Students practice journaling, breathing techniques, weekly stretching, and walking.

### **SIERRA 7TH GRADE BAND (7008)**

The Concert Band is generally geared towards students who have played 1-3 years on their instrument. It is the band that most 6th graders will sign up for. It is a full year elective. Typical instrumentation is trumpet, trombone, tuba, baritone, French horn, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, oboe, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, and percussion. The Concert Band concentrates on teaching students the many aspects of performance and playing in a band on a daily basis, and improves student musicianship through the use of method books and appropriate literature. Students have several performance opportunities during the year.

### **SIERRA 8TH GRADE BAND (7009)**

Symphonic Band is an advanced concert band class generally geared towards students who have played 2-4 years on their instrument. It is a full year elective. Typical instrumentation is trumpet, trombone, tuba, baritone, French horn, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, oboe, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, and percussion. Students have several performance opportunities during the year.

### **SIERRA BEGINNING BAND (7&8 Grade) (7016)**

This class offers the band experience at the beginning level. The instruments taught are flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, tuba and percussion. No experience is necessary – only the will and desire to play an instrument. Musical topics are introduced such as reading, music notation, analyzing and evaluating music, as well as composing and improvising simple melodies. The students present a Winter and Spring Concert.

### **YEARBOOK (J1027)**

This class is responsible for producing Sierra's yearbook. Students will photograph campus activities, students, and events for inclusion in the yearbook. Students will work with software applications such as Photoshop to

create the yearbook by specified deadlines. Students will complete each spread from start to finish: taking photos, writing captions and headlines, completing layout, proofreading, and deciding which photos to include. Students are also responsible for selling ad space. Our yearbook is produced using the same software as Lincoln High School, so if taking photos and being a part of producing your school's yearbook is something you want to learn to do, then this is the class for you! The yearbook is distributed the last week of school. Computer knowledge is helpful but not at all necessary.