

# ***BADGER RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL***



**COURSE HANDBOOK**

**EIGHTH GRADE**

**2024 - 2025**

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students:

This handbook has been developed to provide information for parents, guardians, and students about the courses and curriculum at Badger Ridge Middle School.

The curriculum features a strong skills development program, experiences of an exploratory nature, and extensive use of inquiry and discovery. It is our aim that every student is put on a path to be college and career ready in order to thrive in a global, diverse society.

The middle school creates a learning environment that provides stability, promotes self-confidence and is sensitive to the needs of each child. Within this environment, we strive to provide an education that allows the student to be exposed to a wide variety of positive educational experiences.

Badger Ridge houses the Two-Way Immersion (TWI) program in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Students in TWI are a part of the house concept, and will learn social studies and science in Spanish with integrated Spanish Language Arts.

Additionally, school staff is working to provide more personalized experiences for students to access, engage in, and express knowledge, understanding, and application of expected learning.

We hope you will find the handbook to be a practical guide as you examine the required and elective course offerings.

If you do have any questions relating to our courses, please call Badger Ridge Middle School at 845-4400.

Sincerely,

Larry Love, Principal  
Shayla Glass Thompson, Associate Principal  
Paula Arango Tavera, Associate Principal

# **EIGHTH GRADE**

## **Required Classes**

Language Arts  
Math  
Science\* (TWI in Spanish)  
Social Studies: US History\* (TWI in Spanish)  
Physical Education  
Health

## **Elective Classes** (Full Year)

AVID (Invite Only)  
Band  
Orchestra  
Choir  
German 1, Spanish 1, or Mandarin 1  
VAIS Program only-Advanced Mandarin 8

## **Elective Classes** (Semester)

### **Art**

2D Art & Design Technology

3D Art & Design

### **Agriculture**

Exploring Agriculture

Exploring Plant Science

### **Family and Consumer Science**

KFC-Kids, Food and Cooking

Designs for Living

Aspiring Entrepreneurs – Kub's Closet

### **Technology Education**

Computer Science

Advanced Information Technology

### **Physical Education**

Fitness for life

# **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS – EIGHTH GRADE**

## **REQUIRED CLASSES**

### **English Language Arts**

The English Language Arts classroom is taught with an emphasis on writing and reading skills. Our units of study of writing include narrative, informational, and argumentative pieces. The instruction and practice of the writing process and the mechanics of writing are infused throughout each of these units. Our reading units are structured around independent choice reading, book clubs, and whole class reads that aim to include a diverse collection of texts and genres. Student choice, small group discussions, and speaking and listening skills are integral components of our English Language Arts classrooms. The Verona Area School District is in the process of adopting a new literacy curriculum. Course descriptions for the 2024-2025 school year will be updated upon completion of the renewal process.

### **Math**

The 8th grade math curriculum, Illustrative Mathematics, is built off of the Common Core Mathematics Standards. Topics include, but are not limited to the following: formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angles, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem. All students are also expected to practice and demonstrate the standards for mathematical practice.

### **Science and TWI Science**

The 8th grade science curriculum focuses on chemistry and physics concepts including energy, matter, and motion and forces. Skills emphasized include safely using laboratory equipment to perform both group and individual experimental inquiries, designing quality experiments, collecting and analyzing data, and communicating results with evidence and reasoning. Strategies to read, comprehend and analyze informational science text from a variety of sources are also incorporated throughout the school year. Standards addressed are: structure and properties of matter; chemical reactions; motion, forces and interactions; energy, waves and electromagnetic radiation; engineering and experimental design; human impacts on the world; and reading, comprehending, and analyzing informational text. Students in Two-Way Immersion will learn similar concepts with the content delivered in Spanish and integrated Spanish literacy.

### **Social Studies and TWI Social Studies**

The eighth-grade social studies course of study focuses on early US History with an emphasis on civics.

The class is designed to give students a basic appreciation of US History prior to 1876. The units studied include the process of inquiry and service learning, as well as the discovery, exploration, and the founding of a new nation, its growth and expansion, developing sectionalism, the Civil War, reconstruction, and industrialization. The civics component aims to give students a fundamental understanding of US Government structure based on the US Constitution, the continuing development of the political system, and the rights and responsibilities of American citizens. In addition, the class is structured to build on basic social studies concepts and skills involving charts, graphs, map skills, and research methods; as well as developing higher level thinking skills such as translation, interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Students in Two-Way Immersion will learn similar concepts with the content delivered in Spanish and integrated Spanish literacy. The Verona Area School District is in the process of adopting a new Social Studies curriculum. Course descriptions for the 2024-2025 school year will be updated upon completion of the renewal process.

### **Physical Education**

The main emphasis of the middle school physical education program is developing healthy bodies and healthy minds. Cardiovascular fitness and the development of lifelong fitness skills are a main focus at all grade levels. Instructors strive to boost student self-image through positive reinforcement.

Activities include: Softball, fitness testing, team sports, individual sports, adventure education, racquet sports, cooperative games, speed & acceleration, and eclipse ball.

### **Health**

Health class is a required comprehensive nine-week class. It encourages skills for living by preparing the individual to make healthy, proactive, choices now and in the future. Issues concerning human growth and development are included in the curriculum. Parent/guardian permission is required for this section of the curriculum. All curriculum is available for preview by contacting the school office or the instructor.

### **WIN- What I Need**

Students will use this time to build skills they need to develop based on their academic data. Interventions will be offered and students may be invited to participate to increase academic skills and/or social-emotional skills. Other options may include enrichment opportunities to extend their learning.

## **ELECTIVE CLASSES**

**Every effort is made to accommodate elective course requests. However, due to budget constraints, student enrollment in courses is subject to change. Elective class changes must be made only during the first three days of that semester through the recommendation of the counselor.**

### **Full Year Classes**

#### **AVID**

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is a national program aimed to prepare students for success in high school, college and beyond. The AVID curriculum centers on building students' writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading skills, in addition to student-led tutorials. AVID students are expected to be school leaders, and learn more about college and career options through guest speakers and field trips. *Students can elect AVID only by an invitation and interview process.* Criteria we consider when selecting AVID students include: first generation to attend college, historically underserved in four-year colleges, low income, average to high test scores, consistently meets academic expectations, college potential with support, desire, and determination and/or have special circumstances. Students are identified and recruited to apply for the AVID program during the 2nd semester of their 7th grade year based on a comprehensive data review of qualifying indicators.

#### **Band**

Students who learned a band instrument in seventh grade can continue their learning in eighth grade band. Eighth grade band is an academic class that meets every day during the school year. Through listening to and performing music from many styles and genres, students will increase their performance skills on their instrument, but will also grow as critical thinkers, expert noticers, and overall well-rounded learners. Throughout the school year, students will perform, create, connect, and respond to music, while growing their technical skills on their instrument and increasing their music literacy.

Students will demonstrate their learning at three to four evening performances each year. Students who participated in 7th grade band are HIGHLY encouraged to continue their musical learning in 8th grade band.

### **Orchestra**

Students who learned a string instrument in seventh grade can continue their learning in eighth grade orchestra. Eighth grade orchestra is an academic class that meets every day during the school year. Through listening to and performing music from many styles and genres, students will increase their performance skills on their instrument, but will also grow as critical thinkers, expert noticers, and overall well-rounded learners. Throughout the school year, students will perform, create, connect, and respond to music, while growing their technical skills on their instrument and increasing their music literacy. Students will demonstrate their learning at three to four evening performances each year. Students who participated in 7th grade orchestra are HIGHLY encouraged to continue their musical learning in 8th grade orchestra.

### **Choir**

#### **8th Grade Treble Choir**

Students who learned vocal music in seventh grade can continue their learning in eighth-grade choir. Eighth-grade choir is an academic class that meets every day during the school year. This course is for treble (female) voices. Through listening to and performing music from many styles and genres, students will increase their performance skills on their vocal instrument, but will also grow as critical thinkers, expert noticers, and overall well-rounded learners. Throughout the school year, students will perform, create, connect, and respond to music, while growing their vocal skills and increasing their music literacy. Students will demonstrate their learning at three to four evening performances each year. Students who participated in 7th grade choir are HIGHLY encouraged to continue their musical learning in 8th grade choir.

#### **7th and 8th Cambiata Choir**

Students who learned vocal music in seventh grade can continue their learning in eighth-grade choir. Eighth-grade choir is an academic class that meets every day during the school year. This course is for bass (male) voices. Through listening to and performing music from many styles and genres, students will increase their performance skills on their vocal instrument, but will also grow as critical thinkers, expert noticers, and overall well-rounded learners. Throughout the school year, students will perform, create, connect, and respond to music, while growing their vocal skills and increasing their music literacy. Students will demonstrate their learning at three to four evening performances each year. Students who participated in 7th grade choir are HIGHLY encouraged to continue their musical learning in 8th grade choir.

## **World Language Classes**

\*Eighth grade World Language classes meet every day for the entire year. After successfully completing the eighth grade course, students will have completed the equivalent of one year of world language at the high school.

### **Spanish 1**

Eighth grade classes focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing in Spanish. We cover topics such as school, leisure activities, family, cities, and food. As students continue growing their vocabulary through these various thematic units, there is more emphasis on the structure and grammar of the Spanish language. Students will also learn about the cultures of the people who speak Spanish and become more knowledgeable of the world around us.

### **German 1**

Eighth-grade students will continue to expand their knowledge of the German language and culture. Topics covered throughout the year include: geography, telling time, family and friends, house and cities, hobbies and free-time activities. As students build their vocabulary, we take a closer look at the structure and grammar of the language. Students focus on four main areas of communication: listening, speaking, reading and writing in German. Students will also be exposed to a variety of German musicians, follow the German soccer league, and compare and contrast the German and American cultures. Through language learning, students become more knowledgeable of themselves and the world around them.

### **Mandarin 1**

This introductory course is for eighth-grade students who are interested in learning Mandarin 1. Students will develop basic listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and acquire a basic understanding of the structure and sound of Mandarin Chinese while learning about Chinese culture and heritage.

### **Advanced Mandarin 8**

Prerequisites include participation in the Verona Area International School, completion of Mandarin in 6th and 7th graders, or a similar Mandarin immersion program from another school district.

## **SEMESTER ELECTIVE CLASSES**

### **AGRICULTURE**

#### **Exploring Plant Science**

Discover the fascinating world of Plant Science! This course offers students an exciting chance to learn new skills surrounding plants. Through engaging hands-on labs, we'll explore the diverse plant life on our school grounds and in our greenhouse. Throughout the course, students can expect to cover a range of captivating topics, including plant parts and functions, the plant lifecycle, plant reproduction, plant nutrition, and even tree identification. But that's not all – students will also have the opportunity to develop essential skills such as leadership, teamwork, data analysis, and organization as they collaborate with their classmates. Join us on this educational journey where curiosity meets hands-on exploration in the vibrant world of Plant Science!

#### **Exploring Agriculture**

In the Exploring Agriculture course, students will have the exciting chance to delve into the diverse field of agriculture. This class covers a wide range of important topics related to agriculture, providing a glimpse into some of the fascinating subjects offered at the high school level in the agriculture department. Throughout the course, students will explore small animal science, large animal science, food science, environmental science, agriculture careers, and FFA. This hands-on class will allow students to gain valuable insights into the world of agriculture. Moreover, participating in this course will not only expand students' knowledge but also help them develop essential skills. They will have the opportunity to enhance their leadership, collaboration, and organizational skills, preparing them for future academic and professional endeavors.

### **ART**

## **2-D Art & Design Technology**

In 2-D Art & Design Technology, students will work in a creative, hands-on environment to explore drawing and painting materials, digital photography, and design apps. Students will create unique works of art using: ink, charcoal, pastels, scratchboard, colored pencil, watercolor paint, acrylic paint, etc. They will also learn about a variety of artists and their particular styles of art-making. In addition, students will learn about commercial art, graphic design and digital photography.

## **3-D Art & Design**

If you enjoy hands-on projects and building 3-D forms, then this is the class for you! In this class, students will creatively problem solve and construct multiple clay projects using their hands, clay tools, and the potter's wheel. Students may construct sculptures with wood, wire, papier mache, found objects, and metals. Students will learn about past and present artists and their styles.

## **FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE**

### **KFC – 'Kids, Food and Cooking**

Do you like children? Does cooking sound like fun to you? Then here is a class for you! The first nine weeks you will learn how children grow and develop. You'll experience being a parent by taking care of a chick for 11 days. The remaining weeks you'll become an expert in the kitchen with lots of cooking and baking labs. A mass quantity food sale is one of the many learning experiences you will have in KFC.

### **Designs For Living**

Do you have a passion for fashion and interior design, and architecture? Do you like to sew or up-cycle clothing? Do you like to make, build, design, create or all of these above? Do you like to work independently and at a pace that is comfortable for you? Designs For Living just might be the class for you! In this class, you will sew projects of your choice and build/design dream homes.

### **Aspiring Entrepreneurs – (Kub's Closet)**

Have you ever considered starting your own business? Do you like talking with students and staff at the middle school? Then Aspiring Entrepreneurs is the class for you! You will organize, run and manage the school store. You will choose, order, and price products to sell. As an entrepreneur, you will market new items at the store and create your own business.

## **Technology Education**

### **Computer Science–(Coding and Robotics)**

Want to code your own games? Are you interested in building and coding your own robot? This course provides the opportunity to gain a more in-depth knowledge of JavaScript and Computer Science skills. Students will



also be introduced to common computer languages for coding robots (Robotics). Currently, 100,000 of the highest paying and rewarding careers are not being filled per year because of a shortage of people qualified to do this important work. By completing this course, you will have fun creating and gain a real sense of if computer science and robotics could be for you.

### **Advanced Information Technology**-(3D Design and Build)

Do you love creating and building your own projects? Does the idea of building your own dragster sound fun? How about designing your dream home? Do you have something you would like to build? Students will also be introduced to measurement techniques, safe use and technique with common hand and power tools, and how to create scaled drawings as part of the design process in creating unique projects out of various materials. There are several fun projects that will apply these skills throughout the semester. The integration of **3-D design** software and printing will also be part of this course.

## **Physical Education**

### **Fitness for Life**

Students will be able to develop an understanding of fitness concepts while developing an individualized level of health-related activities to complete assessments of their health-related fitness. Students will learn the relationships between physical activity, physical fitness, group interaction, cooperation, an appreciation for the abilities and limitations of self and others and various health-related outcomes. Through the course, students will gain knowledge and skills needed to develop a lifelong pattern of physical activity. By the end of the course students will: improve their physical fitness by participating in group fitness classes, weight training, walking, jogging, nutrition and other activities.

\*\*\* Ball sports will not be part of this class. \*\*\*

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

The middle school offers programs that meet the needs of all of our students. Special education services address the individual needs of any student who meets state eligibility criteria for special education. Our special education program follows a cross-categorical service delivery model which includes planning with regular education teachers. This model provides specially designed services for students with learning, speech, behavioral, physical, health, hearing, visual, developmental and/or intellectual disabilities. Each student identified as having special education needs has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) as determined by an IEP team. Students may receive services on an individual basis, in small groups, and/or in the classroom.

## **RESOURCE AREAS**

We believe strongly in providing additional resources beyond the classroom materials to facilitate the learning of our students. The Library Media Center ( LMC), which includes our library staff and technology staff, is a functional and

integral part of instruction, and is used on a regular basis by all students. Additional resource areas are available for small group instruction, collaborative projects, and homework assistance.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **School Counselors**

The counseling program is designed to help develop academic success, emotional awareness, social development, and career exploration as students grow and develop throughout middle school. Counselors address these issues in classrooms, small groups, individual meetings, and parent conferences. The school counselors at BRMS work closely with the Student Services team to collaborate with staff and parents to create a safe and respectful learning environment where students can maximize personal and academic growth. They work to support students to set informed career goals, acquire healthy emotional health, and realize their full potential to discover their gifts and thrive in the world community.

### **School Social Worker**

The primary function of the school social worker is to promote the emotional, social and mental well-being and adjustment of students. The school social worker provides direct and indirect services to students, parents and school staff. Services may include counseling and family intervention, groups, consultation with staff or parents, liaison with community agencies, classroom instruction, and coordination and implementation of district programs. The school social worker role includes advocacy for children and families in the school system and community programs.

### **School Psychologist**

The school psychologist at the middle school is an integral team member in helping to determine the educational needs of students who are experiencing difficulty finding success at school. The psychologist conducts formal evaluations of students to determine placement in special education programs and informal evaluations of students to determine learning and/or behavioral difficulties. Other services provided by the school psychologist include teacher consultation, parent consultation, individual counseling sessions with students, and small groups focused on social/emotional/academic development.

### **PBIS Coach/Dean of Students**

The PBIS Coach/Dean of Students role at the middle school level provides leadership, assistance, support, and training for students, teachers, and the school level PBIS team to build and sustain the PBIS framework to meet the social emotional needs of all students. This role also serves to coordinate school level professional development in all three tiers of PBIS as well as the positive behavioral approaches such as functional behavioral analysis, Restorative Practices, and other evidence based methods. The PBIS internal coach also serves as a behavioral consultant on individual student cases and provides coaching to individual classroom teachers at the school level.

### **Restorative Practices and Student Engagement Specialist**

The Restorative Practices and Student Engagement Specialist role is a resource for all BRMS students, staff, and families in support of problem solving and resolving conflicts. This specialist leads school wide implementation of restorative practices, supports student-student, student-staff, and family-school conflict resolution through restorative conversations and/or restorative circles. The person in this role also works closely with the school administration and the student services team to provide support and implement social-emotional learning strategies. Finally, this specialist supports classroom management, small groups, behavior interventions, and other ways to make student connections. This role is predicated on building relationships with all students and staff.

### **Curriculum and Learning Specialist**

It is the philosophy of the Verona Area School District that, given time and resources, every child can learn. The purpose of **Curriculum and Learning Specialist** is to ensure that students receive instruction based on their individual learning styles, needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Some of the tasks associated with this position include, but are not limited to:

- Collecting and disseminating information about programmatic needs of students
- Consulting with teams to develop strategies to meet individual student needs
- Facilitating the administration and scheduling of required state and local standardized assessments
- Facilitating curriculum development, revision, and articulation
- Providing professional staff development

### **School Interventionist Support**

A resource to help support students who have traditionally struggled in the school setting--academically, socially, and/or emotionally. It services students in sixth, seventh and eighth grade with the greatest need. Staff provides additional support in classrooms, student check-ins, small group support, and finding opportunities to connect with students during the day.

### **Reading Support Services**

Badger Ridge Middle School is committed to enhancing the reading performance of all students. To address the varying needs of middle school readers, a variety of approaches are used within the regular and resource classrooms. Each student's progress in reading is monitored through formal and informal assessments and observations. Students are identified for reading support based on multiple measures including standardized assessments and fifth grade teacher recommendations. Our Reading Specialist collaborates, plans and co-teaches with teaching staff, and is an integral part of universal classroom and best practices in literacy instruction.

## **Programs for English Learners**

We welcome students from all cultures and backgrounds. In addition to learning science, math, social studies, language arts, and other academic content, English learners (ELs) must also become proficient in English (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). In order to meet students' needs and follow federal and state laws, Badger Ridge provides the following programs which allow EL students to learn grade level content and English.

### **ESL and Bilingual in-class support**

An English as a Second Language or Bilingual certified teacher works in collaboration with the classroom teacher in general education classes. The teacher works with students within the classroom, supporting individuals or small groups. Classroom teachers also implement accommodations and use teaching strategies suggested in each English learners Language Development Plan to facilitate learning.

### **Accommodations made by the Grade Level and Encore Teachers**

Grade-level teachers modify the way they teach to make the content more understandable. They use visuals, realia (objects from real life used in the classroom), pacing (slower, explain difficult vocabulary), provide more individual help, repeat directions, use visual representations, post content and language objectives, etc. These accommodations are designed to ensure that EL students receive the same content as native speakers.

**Assessment** In December and January, all English learners take the ACCESS for ELs standardized assessment.