

SONORAN TRAILS



MIDDLE SCHOOL



2024-2025

COURSE GUIDE

Sonoran Trails Middle School

Middle School Course Guide
Grades 7-8
2024-2025

Governing Board

Janet Busbee, President
Scott Brown, Vice President
Jeff Fortney, Member
Jackie Ulmer, Member
Brianna Walker, Member

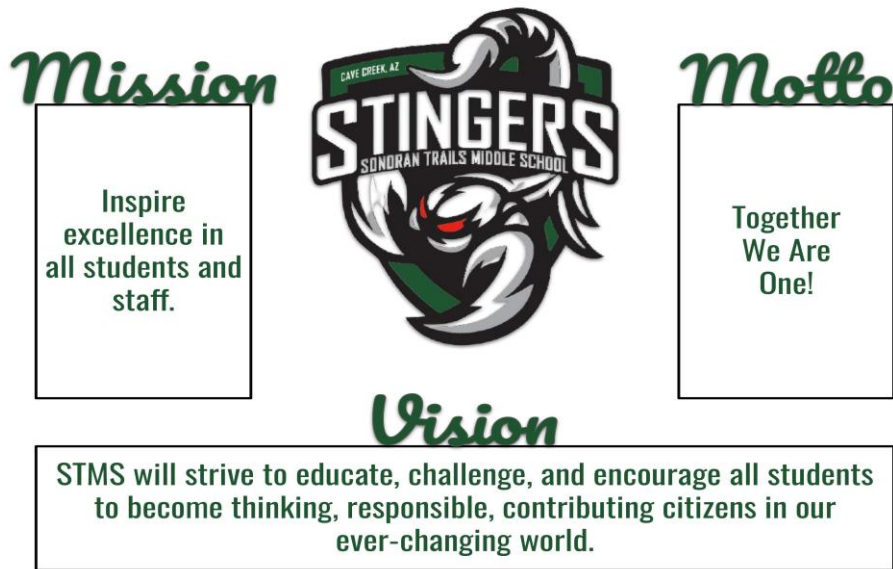
District Administration

Mr. Bill Dolezal, Interim Superintendent
Dr. Patty Jensen, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services
Dr. Frank Hendricsen, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
Ms. Marcie Rodriguez, Chief Financial Officer

Sonoran Trails Middle School

Mrs. Jill Sarraino, Principal
Mr. David Boggs, Assistant Principal

5555 East Pinnacle Vista
Phoenix, AZ 85054
www.ccusd93.org



The core beliefs that shape our educational philosophy are extremely important and what we live by here at Sonoran Trails Middle School. At the heart of our approach is a commitment to fostering a supportive and enriching environment that nurtures the intellectual, social, and emotional growth of your children.

Individualized Learning:

- We recognize that every student is unique, possessing distinct strengths, interests, and learning styles. Our dedicated team of educators is committed to providing individualized attention to ensure that each child reaches their full potential. Through differentiated instruction and personalized support, we aim to inspire a lifelong love for learning.

Holistic Development:

- Education extends beyond the classroom, and we embrace a holistic approach to nurturing your child. In addition to academic excellence, we emphasize character development, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Our goal is to prepare students not only for academic success but also for the challenges and opportunities, they will encounter in life.

Inclusive Community:

- At STMS, we celebrate diversity and promote an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and respected. We believe that a diverse community enriches the educational experience and prepares students to thrive in a global society. Our commitment to inclusivity extends to collaboration with parents, ensuring that the school-home partnership is strong and supportive.

Social and Emotional Well-being:

- Middle school is a pivotal time in a child's life, and we prioritize their social and emotional well-being. Our comprehensive approach includes social-emotional learning programs, counseling services, and a positive school culture that fosters empathy, resilience, and a sense of belonging. We strive to create an environment where students feel safe expressing themselves and developing strong interpersonal skills.

Table of Contents

Mission/Vision Statement	3
Registration	5
Courses Offered	5
Explanation of Grades/Honor Roll	11
Exceptional Student Services	12

Registration

Pre-registration is conducted each spring for the following school year. Students then come to school during late summer “Trail Days” to pick up their schedules. Administration will contact families via email or autodial to notify parent/guardians when schedules are available online. We need parent help to ensure that your annual update is completed in the student information system (SIS). PowerSchool is the Cave Creek Unified School District SIS. This will allow you to see your child’s schedule and to get them a bus route.

Courses Offered

This booklet lists the course available at Sonoran Trails Middle School. Although a course is listed it may not be offered every semester if the registration is not sufficient to hold the class. Courses offered may have limited enrollment and can reach capacity. Student requests determine whether a specific course will be offered. Requests do not guarantee placement in a specific class.

Course Descriptions

Core classes at Sonoran Trails Middle School are aligned with the State of Arizona’s College and Career Readiness Standards. To read about the College and Career Readiness Standards Initiative or see a copy of the CCRS, please visit the Arizona Department of Education website:

<https://www.azed.gov/standards-practices>

English

English 7 and English 8

Seventh and eighth grade Language Arts classes raise expectations for students to build higher levels of proficiency in reading, writing, language, and speaking and listening. Skills are taught in an integrated approach with a focus on three types of writing: informative/explanatory, argumentation, and narrative. There is a focus on various text structures, (i.e. descriptive, compare/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) as well as a practical application of language skills as they relate to secondary school requirements. Students will demonstrate mastery of basic paragraph structure, sentence patterns, and usage and will use 21st Century technology applications for word-processing, research, and enhanced multimedia presentations.

Students build higher levels of proficiency in inferential comprehension of reading material. Writing and discussions that focus on creative and critical thinking lead to a deeper understanding of informative and literary texts. Socratic Seminar may be used to help bring students to a deeper understanding of both literary and primary source documents. Reading cross-curricular novels, applying comprehension strategies, vocabulary building, identifying word parts and utilizing reader-response journals provide a measure of student understanding and achievement. Coursework will support the use of technology in word processing, on-line research, and enhanced presentations.

Honors English 7

Honors English 7 is designed to provide high performing students with complexity and rigor best suited to their needs. Students placed in this class will work with seventh grade standards and objectives but at a deeper, more complex, and more rigorous level. Students will closely examine the decisions that writers, novelists, poets, and playwrights make within a text as they relate to plot, characters, setting, and theme. Reading and writing homework may occur nightly, as well as on the weekends. Students will also study narrative, argument, and research writing techniques. Students can expect

to actively participate in academic discussions and make presentations. Honors ELA students are expected to be self-guided learners who are willing to maintain a strong work ethic and diligent study habits. Students will be expected to show initiative and a desire to experiment with new forms of writing, speaking, and presenting. Students enrolled in Honors English have previously demonstrated strengths in literary comprehension and analysis as well as in written expression and techniques. Therefore, students should be willing to move beyond those areas of proven accomplishment if they are to develop new skills and confidence. Everyone matures at a different rate, so this class should be for those who have “gotten it” by the time they’ve finished the 6th grade.

Honors English 8

Honors English 8 is designed to provide high performing students with complexity and rigor best suited to their needs. Students placed in this class will work with seventh grade standards and objectives but at a deeper, more complex, and more rigorous level. Students will closely examine the decisions that writers, novelists, poets, and playwrights make within a text as they relate to plot, characters, setting, and theme. Reading and writing homework may occur nightly, as well as on the weekends. Students will also study narrative, argument, and research writing techniques. Students can expect to actively participate in academic discussions and make presentations. Honors ELA students are expected to be self-guided learners who are willing to maintain a strong work ethic and diligent study habits. Students will be expected to show initiative and a desire to experiment with new forms of writing, speaking, and presenting. Students enrolled in Honors English have previously demonstrated strengths in literary comprehension and analysis as well as in written expression and techniques. Therefore, students should be willing to move beyond those areas of proven accomplishment if they are to develop new skills and confidence. Everyone matures at a different rate, so this class should be for those who have “gotten it” by the time they’ve finished the 7th grade.

Science

Science 7

7th grade science emphasizes the following major concepts: Observations, Questions and Hypotheses, Scientific Testing, Analysis/Conclusions, Communication, Nature of Scientific Knowledge, Changes in Environment, Science and Technology, Interdependence of Organisms, Structure of the Earth, Earth’s Processes and Systems, and Earth in the Solar System and Universe. Students continue to improve their own understanding through an inquiry-based approach. Assessment activities are varied and will evaluate comprehension and performance.

Honors Science 7

An honors science course includes a challenging curriculum that requires students to ask scientific questions and develop, test, and refine ideas through laboratory investigations. Students will analyze and interpret data to support and defend scientific claims that reflect a high level of comprehension. Rigorous assessments will include application of knowledge to real-life situations. Emphasis is placed on scientific research projects.

Science 8

8th grade science continues to build on student concepts and skill development with a balance of chemical, physical, biological, and environmental science topics. The major scientific topics for this course are: The Scientific Method, History and Nature of Science, Science in Personal and Social Perspectives, Reproduction and Heredity, Diversity, Adaptation and Behavior, Properties of Matter, Physical and Chemical Changes, Forces and Motion. Again, assessment activities are varied and they will evaluate comprehension and performance.

Honors Science 8

An honors science course includes a challenging curriculum that requires students to ask scientific questions and develop, test, and refine ideas through laboratory investigations. Students will analyze and interpret data to support and defend scientific claims that reflect a high level of comprehension. Rigorous assessments will include application of knowledge to real-life situations. Emphasis is placed on scientific research projects.

Mathematics

Math 7

This course is designed to teach students the skills necessary to be successful in 8th grade math (pre-algebra). Emphasis is on writing and solving expressions and algebraic equations, proportional relationships, ratios, geometry, data analysis, and probability. Students will apply mathematical concepts in real-world situations using technology and the rigorous Arizona College and Career Readiness curriculum.

Math 8 (Pre-Algebra)

Students continue to develop higher levels of math proficiency through the study of algebraic equations, Pythagorean Theorem, inequalities, exponents and scientific notation, writing and solving linear equations and systems. Students will apply mathematical concepts in real-world situations using technology and the rigorous Arizona College and Career Readiness curriculum.

Algebra I

This course introduces students to the use of variables as a tool in the study of functions. Emphasis is placed on the development of equation solving and graphing techniques for both linear and quadratic equations. Additional concepts introduced at this level include exponents, polynomials, radicals, and rational functions. Applications are integrated throughout the course. Curriculum is aligned with both national and state math standards.

Honors Geometry

This is a course in the development of logical thinking, deductive reasoning, and applications for two and three-dimensional geometric figures. All concepts are presented as tools to be used in either algebraic or geometric applications. Topics include lines and angles, triangles, polygons, circles, similarity, congruence, area, volume, perimeter, coordinate geometry, and an introduction to trigonometry. The use of algebraic equation solving techniques is integrated throughout the course work. Students that qualify for this course take Honors Geometry at Cactus Shadows High School during CSHS's first period. At the end of the period the students are driven by school bus to STMS. Completion of this honors high school Geometry course earns the student one (1) high school math credit and it does count toward the student's high school GPA (because the course is honors level, the grade is weighted to a 5.0 point scale).

Social Studies

Social Studies 7

This course presents our nation's geography, history, economics, sociology and politics, from early Colonial America through the 19th Century. Major units of study include the American Revolution, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Imperialism, Industrialization and Immigration. Additionally, this course

looks at the foundations of government, and the concept of citizenship. Students will study the foundations and explore the inner workings of American government. Additionally, students will develop an understanding of the Constitution and the role of government. Students focus on thinking critically about issues, communicating responses effectively, and applying past information to current situations. Coursework will foster the use of technology in word processing, on-line research, and enhanced presentations.

Honors Social Studies 7

7th Grade Honors Social Studies is designed to provide high performing students with the complexity and rigor best suited to their needs. Students placed in this class will work with seventh grade standards and objectives but at a deeper, more complex, and more rigorous level. Students will closely examine the decisions the historical figures made, while also analyzing events throughout history. Reading and writing homework may occur nightly, as well as on the weekends. Students can expect to actively participate in academic discussions and make presentations. Honors Social Studies students are expected to be self-guided learners who are willing to maintain a strong work ethic and diligent study habits. Students enrolled in Honors Social Studies have previously demonstrated strengths in literary comprehension, understanding primary and secondary sources and analysis as well as in written expression and techniques. Therefore, students should be willing to move beyond those areas of proven accomplishment if they are to develop new skills and confidence.

Social Studies 8

The focus of the eighth grade curriculum is US history in the 20th Century including World War I through present day. Students will gain knowledge of the conflicts, both domestic and international; the United States has been involved in since WWI. They will analyze the impact of those conflicts and the civil rights movement on the evolution of our society. Students will be asked to develop their own opinions and support them with evidence. Opportunities for the use of technology will include word processing, on-line research, and enhanced presentations. In addition, geography, economics and government are embedded into the curriculum as students learn throughout the year.

Honors Social Studies 8

8th Grade Honors Social Studies is designed to provide high performing students with the complexity and rigor best suited to their needs. Students placed in this class will work with eighth grade standards and objectives but at a deeper, more complex, and more rigorous level. The focus of the eighth grade curriculum is US history in the 20th Century including World War I through present day. Students will gain knowledge of the conflicts, both domestic and international; the United States has been involved in since WWI. They will analyze the impact of those conflicts and the civil rights movement on the evolution of our society. Students will be asked to develop their own opinions and support them with evidence. Students can expect to actively participate in academic discussions and may have work to do on a nightly basis. Honors Social Studies students are expected to be self-guided learners who are willing to maintain a strong work ethic and diligent study habits. Students enrolled in Honors Social Studies have previously demonstrated strengths in analyzing primary and secondary sources as well as in written expression and techniques.

World Languages

Mandarin 8; French 7, 8; Spanish 7, 8

This class introduces the students to daily use of the target language with a focus on oral proficiency – listening and speaking. Various methods are used which emphasize communication – TPR (total physical response), dialog, videos, skits, etc. The goal is to work toward 90% of class time interaction

in the target language by the end of the year. Although emphasizing speaking, the 7th grade students begin to develop skills in other areas of communication – reading, writing and grammar. Cultural aspects of the Mandarin/French/Spanish speaking communities around the world are integrated naturally throughout the curriculum. STMS students also communicate with international students through our Sister School Programs.

Honors Spanish 7,8

Immersion World Language classes are unique opportunities at STMS for students with high proficiency levels in a second language. The class is taught in 100% target language for both 7th and 8th grade students. Students matriculating from a CCUSD Immersion program may enroll in Honors. Students demonstrate proficiency for honors through listening, speaking, reading and writing tests. The final placement decision is made by STMS World Language teachers.

Elective Courses

Art

This course delves into a comprehensive array of artistic techniques spanning both 2D and 3D dimensions. Beginning with foundational exercises and projects, student will explore drawing, painting, sculpture, and 2D/3D design. The curriculum covers a wide spectrum, including fundamentals such as perspective, composition, color theory, and various mediums like color pencil, watercolor, acrylic, clay, wood, and more. Emphasis is placed on fostering creativity through independent “out-of-the box” projects. Topics include self-portraiture, still life, graphic design, sculptural forms, architectural drawing, and mixed media concepts. Integrated throughout are elements of art history, design principles, and color theory to enrich the creative process.

Band

Students learn the fundamentals of instruments. Instruction emphasizes elements of style, musicianship, sight-reading and performance techniques. A variety of formal and informal performances provide opportunities for students to showcase musical skills.

Chorus

This course is open to all students who like to sing, regardless of experience. Students will learn how to read music, beginner music theory, sight-reading, and use proper vocal production. This course is design to develop quality singers and to enjoy music. There are evening performances at the end of each semester in December and May.

Drama

This course is designed to introduce students to the basics of dramatic performance and developing new skills for students’ future. It will help students develop self-confidence, enhance public speaking skills, and to understand the power of what happens when students learn to work as a team. Students will be exposed to the vocabulary of acting, styles of dramatic performance, and various practice techniques. Students will participate in class performances, writing scripts, improvisation, voice and movement.

Stinger Guitar

This course is open to all students at all levels who desire to learn and/or improve their guitar playing. The students will learn the basics of music theory, reading music, rhythm, tablature and playing skills. Guitars are available for students at school. Students may bring their own guitar; however, the school

district takes no liability for the care or security of the instrument. Students will be evaluated on written and performance exams. There are no formal performances outside of school.

Physical Education

Students' build higher levels of proficiency in each of the basic team sports, individual sports, and leisure sports explored throughout the course. Instruction focuses on the natural connection between increased athletic skill development and the promotion of fitness and good health. Coursework will support appropriate integration of technology into curriculum instruction. Health Education will be taught within Physical Education.

Recreational Physical Education

Students build higher levels of proficiency in each of the individual sports, recreational sports, and fitness activities explored throughout the course. Instruction focuses on the natural connection between increased athletic skill development and the promotion of fitness and good health. Coursework will support appropriate integration of technology into curriculum instruction.

Team Sports

Students build higher levels of proficiency in each of the basic team sports and fitness activities explored throughout the course. Instruction focuses on the natural connection between increased athletic skill development and the promotion of fitness and good health. Coursework will support appropriate integration of technology into curriculum instruction.

Digital Future

This course is designed to allow students to explore digital careers and utilize essential skills necessary for work and communication in today's society. Students will learn safety, security, and ethical issues in computing and social networking. Students work with an integrated office software: Google and Microsoft. Students will learn intermediate Word Processing, Presentation, and Spreadsheet skills. Students learn the basics of Database Management Systems as well as Personal Information Management software. Students will learn basic research skills that support other content areas.

Sci-Tech Action Lab

Students that take Sci-Tech will have the opportunity to complete four (4) of twelve (12) interactive education labs. Labs include Alternative Energy, Computer Aided Drafting, Computer Graphics and Animation, Electricity and Electronics, Flight Technology, Forensic Science, Laser Technology, Structural Engineering, Nursing, Sports Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Science in the Kitchen. Learning is student-centered, guided, hands-on, and aligned with national and state education standards. The labs also include formative assessment and address all types of learning styles. Each lab is a 10 day exploration unit where students practically apply Math, Science, Language Arts and Technology skills in real world situations.

Instructional Assistant

8th Grade Students are introduced to skills used in clerical, teaching, library and technology careers. Emphasis is on work situations within a school setting where students work in the office, library or in the classroom. Applications to be an Instructional Assistant will be available after the start of the school year.

Instructional Assistant - Peer Mentor

7th and 8th grade students have opportunities for peer mentoring that are also provided within our PALS program. Students are selected through an application and interview process. Applications to

be an Instructional Assistant will be available after the start of the school year.

English Language Learning Lab

This course will provide students with an identified English language need with access to high quality education and the supports for success to include, at a minimum, integrated and targeted English Language Development as well as providing extracurricular academic support, and adopting a program focused on postsecondary readiness. This course will provide competency in academic subjects such as mathematics, science, and social studies.

Math Lab

Math Lab will provide more instruction time using a hands-on approach for the student who needs additional mathematics support. Students will be placed in Math Lab according to teacher recommendations and/or test results. Students must be enrolled in Math 7 or Math 8 concurrently with Math Lab.

Explanation of Grades/Honor Roll

Percentage	Letter Grade Equivalent	Grade Point Average
100-90	A	4
89-80	B	3
79-70	C	2
69-60	D	1
59 and below	F	0

Honor Roll and Principal's List

Sonoran Trails Middle School takes pride in its high academic standards and honors students who achieve success. Placement on the academic Honor Roll is awarded to all students who have attained a semester average of 90-94.99%. Placement on the Principal's List is awarded to all students who have attained a semester average of 95% - 100%. This is determined by adding all grades during the semester and dividing by six. This is the score and results to not round up.

Honors Courses

Honors classes are for students identified as academically talented as well as for students who display high achievement, work ethic and/or interest in specific areas. These in-depth classes provide a more challenging program with a focus on critical thinking. Students may request honors classes each year through the regular registration process. Students may be required to complete an Honors contract, which includes state assessment scores and teacher recommendations for consideration of appropriate placement.

Honors level course are for students who:

1. Possess a high degree of proficiency prior to enrollment in the class.
2. Want more challenge and rigor in their classes.
3. Take responsibility for their education.
4. Are skilled in reading and writing.

Factors to be considered for inclusion in Honors include:

1. Previous coursework
2. Grades/grade point average (GPA)
3. Achievement test scores (proficient, highly proficient)
4. Summer work successfully completed by the class due date.
5. Teacher recommendation regarding ability, aptitude, and attitude.

All Honors students will:

1. Commit to learning.
2. Read extensive and challenging text.
3. Arrive prepared with materials and completed work.
4. Show initiative for learning.
5. Display utmost respect for the learning environment.
6. Present ideas in front of an audience, share in class discussions, speak eloquently, and contribute to the classroom community.
7. Go above and beyond what is expected - additional work and effort is required beyond the classroom.
8. Maintain a grade of "C" or higher.
9. Remain in the class for the entire academic year.
10. Function at higher cognitive levels and an accelerated pace.
11. Demonstrate exemplary behavior.
12. Seek out resources and additional assistance when needed.

Exceptional Student Services

The Cave Creek School District provides a full range of special education services for students with disabilities. The Cave Creek Unified School District, as required by the Office of Special Education (OSEP) and Arizona Department of Education (ADE), is responsible for ensuring that all children with disabilities age three (3) through twenty-one (21) years be located, identified, and evaluated for a potential need for special education and related services. A full and individual evaluation encompassing existing and additional data, shall be conducted for each child to determine if the child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child before the initial provision of a special education and related services. If eligible for special education, a team will develop an appropriate Individual Education Plan (IEP). The intent of the IEP is to provide specially designed instruction in the least restrictive environment. Related service staff (i.e. nurses, counselors, physical therapists, vision consultants, etc.) aid in the identification and remediation process. If you believe that a student is eligible for special education services, contact the school psychologist to obtain more information.

Special Education Resource Program

Special education resource is a cross curriculum program that provides a continuum of services in the general education classroom or resource room in the areas of reading, mathematics, written expression, behavior support and study skills based on the student's needs.

Special Education Life Skills Program

Self-Contained I and Self-Contained II (9-12) are programs that provide students an opportunity to learn academics, socialization, communication skills, pre-vocational/vocational skills, community based instruction, and daily living skills, enabling student to function at their most independent level.

Note: Case managers will work with students for placement in suitable courses.