Sawgrass Springs Middle School
ELECTIVE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026

MUSIC

BAND: This yearlong course is for students who have little or no experience in instrumental instruction. Students will choose instruments with the aid of the band director at the beginning of the year. They will participate in school concerts/events and may perform at district/state levels. Thirty minutes a day of home practice is expected. There will be a limited amount of school instruments available for rent.

CHORUS: This yearlong course is offered to students interested in learning vocal techniques, proper breathing, and articulation. Students will learn the fundamentals of music, sing a variety of repertoire, and learn how to read music. They will perform in school concerts/events and may perform at district/state levels.

KEYBOARDING/PIANO: No prior music experience needed. Students will learn the fundamentals of piano and electronic keyboards. Instruction will focus on proper technique and encompass a variety of musical styles. We will study reading lead sheets, staff notation, music theory and song writing. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals. Students may be required to attend and/or participate in rehearsals and performances outside the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom.

ORCHESTRA: Students who have little or no orchestral experience study and perform high-quality beginning orchestra literature of diverse times and styles. Rehearsals focus on the development of critical listening skills, rudimentary string techniques, music literacy, ensemble skills, and aesthetic awareness. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals. Students may be required to attend and/or participate in rehearsals and performances outside the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom.

THE ARTS

ART: This yearlong course is for students who have little or no experience. This course will introduce the elements and principles of Art. Students will be engaged in hands-on projects developing their creative skills while experimenting with various art media. They will create works of art which will be displayed at school. Students will develop basic artistic skills and techniques.

THEATRE: This yearlong course is where the students will learn the foundations of drama using acting, role-playing improvisation and group work. Students will work towards the annual production/play. They may also participate at district and state levels.

YEARBOOK: The purpose of this course is to publish a journalistic, graphic and photographic history of the school year using knowledge gained of terms, ideas and concepts. Students will produce a culmination publication of school events following a designed & organized plan to develop a permanent piece of school memorabilia. Concepts that are emphasized are the use of technology via computers, internet, and digital photography. Students will also value the use of teamwork and organizational skills.

ATHLETICS

DANCE - Dance is all about expressing yourself through movement. This course explores the art of dance in physical practice as well as in theory. Students will study dance technique, choreography, improvisation, dance history, and performance. Students will be challenged to develop their own personal artistry, improve their physicality, increase their knowledge of dance, communicate meaning through movement, and develop habits of self-discipline, positive self-esteem and motivation. Dance is a universal language, an expressive and vibrant art with the capacity to unify the physical, mental, social, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects of the human being. Teaching and learning is a shared experience, so students will be expected to take responsibility for their education and success in this class.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE): This yearlong course is for students to participate in various physical activities focusing on teamwork, sportsmanship and skill building while focusing on fitness concepts and learning about a healthy lifestyle.

TECHNOLOGY

TV Production: The Art of Movie Making at SSMS. Students serve as the information communications/school spirit hub for the entire school community. Students use a variety of technology platforms including our fully equipped television studio to anchor school announcements, write, direct, act and produce movies on all school activities and educate/entertain the student population.

E-SPORTS: Esports in education provides new opportunities for students to engage in their school community and foster teamwork. The popularity of Esports continues to grow nationwide. Research shows it helps to build spatial reasoning skills, which assist students in STEM. It is also an inclusive sport, creating a sense of belonging and shared purpose to support social and emotional growth.

LIVING ONLINE / DIGITAL TOOLS CERTIFCATION - 6th grade: This course is designed to help students understand how to effectively use the Internet or work in a networked environment and maximize communication, education, collaboration, and social interactions in a safe and ethical way.

NETWORK SECURITY & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY - 7TH Grade (Industry Certification): Students will learn about the practices of preventing unauthorized users from accessing computer networks and their associated devices. They will also learn about physically protecting network servers and devices from external threats, as well as taking steps to secure the digital network. In an age of increasingly sophisticated and frequent cyberattacks, network security matters more now than ever before.

DIGITAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY - 8th Grade (High School Credit): Students will learn about Windows installation and configuration, network connections, application and peripheral device management, data access and management, and basic device security in a Windows business environment.

ROBOTICS: The purpose of this course is to give students an opportunity to explore robotics technology and its associated careers. Students will solve technological problems using a variety of tools, materials, processes and systems while gaining an understanding of the effects of robotics technology on their everyday lives. Students will expand their robotics skills by possibly competing in district Vex Robotics Competitions.

Computer Science Progression: This is a 3-year program which will prepare students to get a strong understanding of software programming for a strong technical foundation for any future career path. Each year, students will take a professional Certification Exam sanctioned by the District and the Florida Department of Education. Students who pass the exam will receive a Professional Industry Certificate. During the program, students can earn up to 3 Industry Certifications in Python, HTML and Java programming, plus one HS credit.

Students enrolled in this program will automatically be registered for the next year class. In 9th grade (HS), they meet the prerequisite for Cambridge and AP Computer Science Classes (College Level CS classes).

INTRODUCTION TO TECHNOLOGY (Pre-Computer Science):

This course is open to all students of all grade levels who are interested in programming. It does not include a certification exam. This is an all-year course. Students will have a basic understanding of how computers work and how programming languages are used to make computers do intelligent tasks. Students will be exposed to some level of programming. After this course, students can elect to register in any of the programming classes offered for their grade level for the next school year. No programming experience is required.

Grade 6: Python programming (Computer Science 1)

This course covers Python, a very versatile programming language which is used to develop some of the widely used applications today by world class companies. This is also an excellent course for someone new to programming. Many of the topics covered are basic programming concepts which will carry over well to other programming languages providing a solid programming foundation to students. They also will be prepared to take the Python Industry Certification Exam. Pre-requisite: None but interest in programming encouraged

Grade 7 / ALL GRADES: HTML/CSS Programming (Computer Science 2)

This course will teach students looking to gain employability skills in the area of Web page development. Specifically, the course has two distinct parts: Web page programming (HTML) and Web page Styling (CSS). Web concepts used to power very well-known web sites will be learned. Students will code their own Web site and get ready for the HTML Industry Certification Exam. Pre-requisite: None but interest in programming encouraged

Grade 8: Java Programming (HS Credit) (Computer Science 3):

This course will teach students how to code in Java, a programming language that powers many today's powerful and widely used applications. Students will also be introduced to the powerful programming concept of object-oriented programming. Students will code applications and get prepared for their Java Industry Certification exam. They will also earn One HS credit. Prerequisite: None but some prior coding exposure preferrable

LIBERAL ARTS

CHESS: Did you know there are more possible chess games than atoms in the known universe? We say yes to chess! Executive functions including memory, self-control and problem solving are all used and practiced in a game of chess. Essential skills of focus, choices and planning are all taught and then played out at a chess board. Players have the unique opportunity to build their mental stamina as well as recover from a mistake and show persistence. Practice makes progress and that a loss is an opportunity to learn. Along with the skills of decision making and persistence, positive life skills are encouraged at a chess board. Goal setting, respect, and sportsmanship are just a few of the positive life skills that are woven into the chess curriculum.

CULINARY - This is a fun and informative course that will explain and demonstrate goal setting, teamwork, careers in culinary, meal and budget planning, kitchen safety, the art of preparation and cooking. Students will be taught baking and cooking techniques which can be used in a variety of dishes, including how to use spices and sauces to enhance the different dishes. Students in this program gain experience through practice and will understand the difference between at home cooking and cooking/baking in the culinary industry.

ECO-EDVENTURES: Eco-Edventures is an environmental elective providing opportunities for learning and discovery about current and relative environmental concerns impacting our community. Students participate in experimental learning from the approach of a casual exploration of the negative effects of human activity on nature and begin a quest for positive steps to reduce the human carbon footprint. The course also covers topics such as biodiversity, global warming/climate change, renewable energy, and so much more. Students participate in engaging activities such as labs, field trips, and crafts that allow student's learning to truly come alive and prepare them to be responsible citizens of our community.

LATINOS IN ACTION & LEADERSHIP: (Latinos in Action - LIA) is a leadership class offered to sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. Empowering Latino youth to lead and strengthen their communities through career and college readiness, service, social and professional assistance. Latinos In Action addresses the student, tying academics, leadership, and self-development into a single program.

LIFE SKILLS: is designed to increase student knowledge and skills necessary for everyday living. The course emphasizes goal setting, decision making and problem solving, communication, financial literacy, healthy lifestyles and relationships, nutrition, personal safety, citizenship, and consumerism. This course will also include an introduction to culinary.

MEDICAL SKILLS - In this class we will be following the high school units, although, it is an *overview* of the high school credit course Medical Skills. At this level it is NOT a high school credit. *The curriculum will not be the exact activities, more of a general overview of the program; an idea of what to expect on a deeper level when students pursue it in high school and beyond.* In this class students will be introduced to medical terms, concepts and skills related to many of the health care decisions made in our lifetime. Students will learn and get CPR certified in this course. Students will also be introduced to a variety of different health related careers including radiology, nursing, general medicine, dentistry, animal health, holistic medicine, and more.

PEER COUNSELING - The purpose of the Peer Counseling class is to enable students to develop basic knowledge and skills in communication, leadership skills, meeting human needs, and conflict resolution. 7th and 8th graders only – Application required

SPANISH (Middle Grades) - M/J Spanish Beginning introduces students to the target language and its culture. Students will learn beginning skills in listening and speaking and an introduction to basic skills in reading and writing. Also, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities are included in this one-year course. This course helps lay the foundation for Spanish 1 and Spanish 2, which are High School credits.

SPANISH 1 & 2 (High School Credit)– This course includes the studies of customs, history, and art forms of the culture. Students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills for a variety of informal and formal interactions. The course of study also focuses on an understanding of sentence construction, nuances, and rules of grammar in the target language.

SPANISH for SPEAKERS - The purpose of this course is to enable students whose heritage language is Spanish to develop, maintain, and enhance proficiency in their heritage language by reinforcing and acquiring skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, including the fundamentals of Spanish grammar. Language Arts Standards are also included in this course to enable students to become literate in the Spanish language and gain a better understanding of the nature of their own language as well as other languages to be acquired.

MS SPEECH & DEBATE / DEBATE 1 & 2 - This yearlong course is for students to form worldly ideas, supporting those ideas while arguing their side and the side that contradicts theirs. Debate teaches students that their voice matters and should be heard. Young debaters will learn writing and speaking skills in order to compete in debate competitions, and the HS Credit courses, in 7th and 8th grade. This course may require after-school and weekend participation and fees.

CREATIVE WRITING – This course will allow students to engage in novel studies, including the Hunger Games series, and the creativity that can come with the English Language.