



# CONNELLSVILLE AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Course Descriptions 2025-2026 School Year GRADE 8

All students entering eighth grade in August are assigned four **CORE COURSES**: English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science and Social Studies. They will be assigned an 8th grade rotation (Geographical History 8, Reading and Writing Like a Historian, Tech Ed Manufacturing, and Career Readiness), ELA Enrichment, and Math Enrichment. Eighth grade students need to select three **ELECTIVE COURSES** to complete their school schedule. (*Note: If taking Spanish I, only select two electives*)

A separate selection sheet will be provided to each student to establish their schedule for the 2024-2025 school year.

### **CORE COURSES**

#### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCELERATED ELA 8**

Students will read a variety of distinguished fiction and nonfiction pieces including short stories, poetry and drama. The increased complexity of the text will allow students to incorporate insightful thoughts in analytic responses (TDA). Abundant writing opportunities to develop mastery of 8<sup>th</sup> grade language arts skills that include control of organization, grammar and word usage will be given. The course expectations will include a focus on higher-level thinking and critical problem-solving skills as students engage in the process of research, using modern MLA guidelines to cite information, and oral arguments to strengthen their listening and speaking skills.

**ELA 8**  
Students will read a variety of fiction including short stories, poetry, and drama as well as informational articles with a combined emphasis on reading skills and proficient writing. This course emphasizes reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and grammar as tools to master increasingly complex texts. Writing, speaking, and listening skills will be developed through journaling, discussion, and essays including those that demonstrate analytical thinking (TDA).

**ELA 8 Co-Teaching**  
With the assistance of a co-teacher, students will read a variety of fiction including short stories, poetry, and drama as well as information articles with a combined emphasis on reading skills and proficient writing this course emphasizes reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and grammar as tools to master increasingly complex text. Writing, speaking, and listening skills will be developed through journaling, discussion, and essays including those that demonstrate analytical thinking (TDA)

**MATHEMATICS  
ALGEBRA I**  
Algebra I focuses on linear relationships. Investigations will include expressions, equations, functions, linear equations, linear functions and linear inequalities. It will include a review of operations with rational and real numbers and focus on linear relationships based on data. Also, systems of linear equations and inequalities, exponents and exponential functions, quadratic expressions and equations, radical functions, geometry and data and statistics will be explored.

**MATH 8**  
Algebra I Part 1 focuses primarily on linear relationships. Investigations will include an emphasis on expressions, equations, functions, linear equations, linear functions and inequalities, and linear relationships based on data. Geometry and data and statistics will be covered as well as including a review of operations with rational and real numbers.

**MATH 8 Co-Teaching**  
Algebra I Part 1 focuses primarily on linear relationships. Investigations will include an emphasis on expressions, equations, functions, linear equations, linear functions and inequalities, and linear relationships based on data. Geometry and data and statistics will be covered as well as including a review of operations with rational and real numbers. This will be a co-taught class.

**SCIENCE 8**  
Science 8 expands on the interdisciplinary approach to the Biological, Environmental, Earth Space, and Physical Science disciplines begun in Science 6 and 7. The course will have students using scientific reasoning, scientific inquiry, data analysis, and critical thinking, while investigating concepts such as: Force & Motion; Diversity; Space; and Waves. Students, both independently and collaboratively, will study the effects of human involvement on these processes, along with the uses and effects of technology and engineering.

## **U.S. HISTORY 8**

US History sequentially explores the historical interpretations and analysis of events that shaped the course of our nation's history. Students will develop an in-depth understanding of the historical significance of the development of our nation and events in the state of Pennsylvania from the time of settlement in the New World (circa 1500) to the early stages of the Progressive Era (circa 1910). Students will explore concepts through readings, student investigation, and projects and will include oral and written content topic reports, library research, and reading inside and outside of the classroom.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY 8 Rotation 9 Weeks**

Connect history and geography by answering the "why?" What impact does geography have on borders and the developments of civilizations? Students will investigate the impact geography has on cultures, political boundaries, and why the current water crisis in some areas of the world deserves more attention. Connecting ELA, geography, and history, this course aims to make students better readers, writers, and critical thinkers by examining borders, understanding mapping, and connecting the world with the human race.

## **SCIENCE ENRICHMENT Rotation 9 Weeks**

This course will focus on science basics such as work etymology, metric measurements and units, variables in experiments, and creating and reading graphs and charts. This course will also focus skills on being able to compare and contrast effectively. Topics used to address these ideas include: the five kingdoms, with an expansion into the common characteristics of living organisms: reviewing the structure of life, extending from atoms through the biosphere; and renewable/nonrenewable energy sources.

## **READING AND WRITING LIKE A HISTORIAN Semester**

Engage with primary documents through the eyes of a historian! Students will investigate historical questions through reading strategies such as sourcing, contextualizing, corroboration, and close reading. Instead of memorizing historical facts, students will evaluate source reliability, inspect possible bias, and make historical claims backed by documentary evidence.

## **TECH ED MANUFACTURING Rotation 9 Weeks**

In this course, students will first review machine safety, machine applications, and measuring with a scale or ruler. In the wood production lab, students will then use common tools, the CNC machine, and the laser engraver to manufacture a wooden clock or a wooden top.

## **CAREER READINESS Rotation 9 Weeks**

Students will engage in career readiness lessons and activities addressing the 4 areas of knowledge of the Career Education Workforce Standards established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, including Career Awareness and Preparation, Career Acquisition (Getting a Job), Career Retention and Advancement, and Entrepreneurship. Students will also utilize the SmartFutures career education website with the goal of creating an informed education/career plan that supports career choices based on personal interests, abilities and aptitudes.

## **WELLNESS 8 A/B**

During the students' time in middle school, they will be exposed to the following individual and team sports on a three-year rotational schedule: jump rope, backyard games, individual aerobic/anaerobic and cardiovascular training, pickleball, badminton, hockey, speedball, football, soccer, basketball, volleyball, softball, ultimate frisbee and nitroball. Wellness will continue to use Fitnessgram® testing as students work toward their personal fitness goals. Human growth and development, personal hygiene, nutrition, drug awareness, and STD/HIV will be integrated into the wellness curriculum throughout the year.

## **MATH ENRICHMENT A/B**

This course will provide students with a review of the main reporting categories for their math class. It will provide enrichment for students as well as remediation. If students are taking Algebra I, they will be placed into an Algebra I Enrichment course.

## **ELA ENRICHMENT ( or SPANISH 1)**

Students will read a variety of fiction as well as nonfiction with a combined emphasis on reading skills. This course emphasizes reading comprehension and vocabulary development to master increasingly complex texts. Reading and listening skills will be developed through discussion and written responses.

## **SPANISH I\*\* (or ELA ENRICHMENT)**

Students will learn the foundations of communicating in Spanish by studying the basic grammar and vocabulary through reading, writing, listening, and speaking as they explore interesting topics and Spanish culture. In the end, students will become aware of the Spanish influence in real life settings.

**\*\*NOTE: THIS IS A YEAR-LONG COURSE - MEETING EVERY DAY. THE STUDENT MAY CHOOSE TWO MORE ELECTIVES.**

## **ELECTIVE COURSES**

### **ACADEMIC WORD ENRICHMENT 1 or 2 Semester**

Academic Word Enrichment is an introduction to an in-depth study of the Latin and Greek elements that make up nearly three quarters of the vocabulary of the English language. This course will focus on the study and application of the derivation of English words and word families from their roots in ancient and modern languages by examining roots, prefixes, and suffixes. The connotative and denotative meanings of words in a variety of contexts and the reasons for language change are also analyzed. This course is designed to improve vocabulary skills, promote precision of expression in writing and speaking.

### **AROUND THE WORLD IN 90 DAYS 2 Semester**

You can EAT your way around the World! This World Cultures elective course is an interactive class which uses all kinds of online resources and hands-on projects selected by YOU. You'll answer questions like- "Why do we eat that? Who wore this? What is this holiday about?" You'll have fun demonstrating your knowledge of how ethnic backgrounds, social classes and current events have affected the meals, fashions, and activities of people in different countries and times around the world. After researching, you'll get to create and try samples of different foods, make costumes and celebrate world holidays. The goal of this class is to give you the opportunity to relate information learned in History class to real life situations. One area of focus will be the unique foods and social activities which began with your relatives who came to our area of Southwestern Pennsylvania a long time ago in order to give you a sense of pride in your family and this place we call home.

### **ART 8 Semester**

Art 8 expands on art concepts, processes, and techniques. It focuses on the Principles of Design through 2-D and 3-D media and encourages students to become more detailed in their work. Students will use problem solving and critical thinking skills while creating individual as well as collaborative projects. Through lectures and demonstrations, students will gain a greater understanding of art history, process, and aesthetics. Art appreciation and criticism are woven into the framework of this course.

### **APP CREATORS 2 Semester**

Students continue to explore computer science and the concept of creating interactive apps for computers, tablets and cellular phones. Students will design, code, and test fun interactive games and other applications featuring a variety of media and animated objects.

### **CAMS AVENGERS 7 / 8 Semester**

**C**ommunity **A**ctivists in **M**iddle **S**chool - Pursue your inner activist by participating in Community Service projects on the local, national, and international level. Students will explain how common problems are addressed by organizations and governments and explore the history of the social and political groups affecting change in the world. Recycling, clean water, animal shelters: which is your passion? In service learning, students learn educational standards through tackling real-life problems in their community. This class will provide students with skills needed to understand the responsibilities of citizenship to become world leaders and global citizens. You CAN save the world!

### **CHAOS - THE BEGINNINGS 7 / 8 Semester**

America! The wild history of America can appropriately be summed up as CHAOS! The **Cool History of America's Obvious Stuff** is designed to introduce you to what America was, is, and how being an American affects your everyday life. From the Wild Wild West and pop culture icons of today and our past, to the weapons that made us undefeated in World Wars. From the homerun king, to the technology that you use in your home today. From the food you eat to the shoes on your feet. This class will dig into history like no class has done before. Bring your energy, your interests, and your excitement to experience the CHAOS that is American history.

### **CHORUS 8 A/B**

Chorus 8 Members will learn to sing with expression and memorize music from various musical time periods and cultures. Students will learn proper breathing techniques and how to sing using the diaphragm, correct posture for singing, how to pronounce words with correct vowels and clear consonants, knowledge of basic music signs and terms. Students will strive to sing in tune and blend with others by developing sight-reading skills.

### **CS DISCOVERIES (COMPUTER SCIENCE DISCOVERIES) 8 Semester**

Computer Science Discoveries (CS Discoveries) is a fun course for students to build and explore a variety of programming software using block coding, HTML, CSS and Javascript. Students will learn web page design and development, then create sprite-based games while developing creativity, communication and problem solving skills.

### **DESIGN 8 Semester**

The FabLab features advanced computer software and contemporary tools for cutting, milling, engraving, printing, and other processes of rapid and automated prototyping, allowing students to design, develop,

fabricate and test objects. This course enables students to use their skills with software associated with each machine in the CAMS FabLab to create various independent projects. The Lab is designed to explore interests in graphic design, visual arts, business, computer-assisted design, physical and natural science, and mathematics, as well as engineering and other advanced technologies.

### **DIGITAL MEDIA 1 Semester**

Students will use video and sound equipment to create and edit their own electronic media. This includes video projects, photo editing, website creation, and digital portfolios to showcase student edits. Students will gain knowledge and troubleshooting skills on school recording equipment. This includes video cameras, SD cards, tripods, microphones, green screen software and various recording and editing platforms. This course will prepare students to create their own media content for school news and classroom projects. Through project-based learning activities, students will work both individually and in teams to create digital content.

### **Digital Media 2 A/B**

This is an advanced continuation of Digital Media 1 (previously known as Digital Media 7). Students will use video and sound equipment to create and edit their own electronic media. This includes video projects, photo editing, website creation, and digital portfolios to showcase student edits. Students will gain in-depth knowledge and troubleshooting skills for school news equipment and streaming software. This includes video cameras, SD cards, tripods, microphone, green screen software and various recording and editing platforms. This course is an advanced workshop for students to film and edit their own media content for school news and classroom projects. Through project-based learning activities, students will work both individually and in teams to create digital content.

*Prerequisite: Digital Media 7*

### **FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE 8 Semester**

8th grade students will build on the techniques and refine skills that were taught in grade 6 sewing and grade 7 foods. The Food portion of class will explore food and culture, the impact of media and technology on the food industry, eating disorders and new food choices, such as insects and plant-based meats. Students will participate in food competitions and challenges (like cookie and cupcake wars) and practice making recipes using kitchen equipment. During the sewing portion of class students will also build in the basic skills they learned in 6th grade. They will make a more advanced sewing project. Students will also learn about finances such as writing checks, balancing a checkbook, and credit. Students will also be introduced to some basic home maintenance techniques used in the kitchen, bathroom etc.

### **INTRO TO SPANISH 7 / 8 Semester**

Students will learn the foundations of communicating in Spanish by studying the basic grammar and vocabulary through reading, writing, listening, and speaking as they explore interesting topics and Spanish culture. In the end, students will become aware of the Spanish influence in real life settings.

### **INTRO TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP 8 Semester**

This course provides students with a creative space to complete a multidisciplinary project, where students define a problem and use the design process to fix it. Students will explore topics of their own passion and utilize other spaces in the building to research and create new innovations. Student choice enhances student voice while also building important soft skills such as collaboration, peer review and problem-solving.

### **SYMPHONIC BAND 8 A/B**

The Connellsville Area Middle School Symphonic Band is a performance-based instrumental music course that explores classical and contemporary concert band literature with a difficulty level of 3 to 4 on a scale of 1 to 6. In addition to the concert band repertoire, students will perform in a marching band setting. The small ensemble study portion of the course includes group lessons that will be offered using a pull-out rotational schedule.

### **TECH ED/ ROBOTICS 8 Semester**

This course has two parts: Tech Ed and Robotics. While working in the CAMS FabLab, students demonstrate personal design and creativity as they build on previously mastered Tech Ed skills. Use of a laser engraver/cutter and a CND router to fabricate projects provides the student more flexibility in choosing and completing projects. In the Robotics segment of this course, students will learn advanced programming and problem-solving strategies by building a Lego EV3 robot. Students will be assigned challenges and tasks for the robot to accomplish as they work collaboratively to design, build, program, and document their progress.

### **MAGIC OF ELECTRONS (PLTW) Semester**

Through hands-on projects, students explore electricity, the behavior and parts of atoms, and sensing devices in the Magic of Electrons (ME) unit. They learn knowledge and skills in basic circuitry design and examine the impact of electricity on the world around them.

