SUTTER MIDDLE SCHOOL
Elective Course Descriptions

Disclaimer – Courses listed in this course description booklet are offered at the discretion of the Principal and are based on the master schedule/staffing needs and limitations.

ELECTIVE BLOCK

Students who choose the Elective Block participate in two semester long electives over the school year. Courses listed in the Elective Block **may** include the semester long courses below and will be ***assigned randomly***. Students ***do not*** choose which two classes they want, as it will be assigned based on scheduling. Requests for changing classes will **not** be honored.

EXPLORATORY ART (GRADES 6 & 7), Semester
Exploratory Art will expose students to the fundamentals of fine art including the elements of art and principles of design. We will use a variety of mediums and art-making techniques to create artworks that allow students to explore and express their own identities. The projects will challenge students to use creative expression to create artworks that are uniquely individual.

EXPLORATORY CREATIVE WRITING (GRADES 6, 7 & 8), Semester
Exploratory Creative Writing is an introductory writing course where students will be reflective and self-motivated to apply techniques and strategies discussed and modeled in class to draw on unique creativity to improve writing and define their own style and personal voice. Students will work in pairs or small group workshops designed to strengthen skills and inspire creativity and develop enhanced awareness of self and of the roles that collaboration, creativity and communication play in the world around us.

EXPLORATORY DRAMA (GRADES 6, 7 & 8), Semester
Drama is a course that allows students to explore the theater arts at a very introductory level. Drama will enhance their speech and communication skills, as well as teach them appropriate listening skills. This class is designed to expose them to the fundamental components of stage performance, vocal expression, and improvisation. During the course they will develop skills that will enhance their overall comfort level for performing and/or speaking in front of an audience. They will be active participants in the audience as well.

EXPLORATORY SPANISH (GRADES 6, 7 & 8), Semester
This course is designed with an expressed goal to make learning Spanish enjoyable. The goals and student objectives were designed specifically to give the middle school student a positive experience and to enhance their endeavors in taking a high school Spanish course. There is no main textbook that is used.

CURRICULAR SUPPORT & STUDY SKILLS (GRADES 6, 7, & 8), Semester
This class is designed to provide students with academic support and strategies for building good study habits.

GARDEN AND FOREST (GRADES 6, 7, & 8), Semester
This course is designed to be a "hands-on" introduction to two topics: plant biology and forest ecosystems. Both topics act as extensions and enrichment of NGSS science standards for 6th-8th grade. While learning plant biology, students will utilize the campus garden. The course will be project-based, with a variety of lessons centered around students growing plants in the garden. As not all times of the year are conducive for students doing activities outdoors, the second major topic of the course is forest ecosystems. Students will do research-based projects to learn about forest ecosystems around the world.

REEL to REEL (GRADES 6, 7, & 8), Semester
Film Studies is a course that allows students to explore the best of film. During this course, students will develop skills that will enhance their overall comfort level with the history, production, editing, acting, and critiquing of the various aspects of each film they see. The class will focus on the films culture and people of the era.

BIOTECHNOLOGY: Exploring the Blueprint of Life (GRADES 6, 7, & 8), Semester
Biotechnology is a dynamic and rapidly evolving field that harnesses biological processes and organisms to develop innovative solutions for a wide range of applications, from healthcare and agriculture to environmental conservation and industrial processes. This introductory course provides a comprehensive overview of the fundamental principles and techniques that underpin the field of biotechnology. Students will explore the exciting intersection of biology, chemistry, genetics, and engineering that drives advances in biotechnology

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGIES (GRADES 6, 7, & 8), Semester
Students will delve into the fascinating world of medical diagnostics, innovative medical technologies and forensic investigations. This course equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and apply cutting edge techniques in the fields of medicine and forensics, with a focus on their practical applications in solving real-world challenges

YEARLONG ELECTIVES

ART (GRADES 7 & 8), Yearlong
Students will be introduced and familiarized with a variety of art mediums (drawing, painting, 3D art, jewelry, and clay), techniques, critical concepts, and self-reflective and peer critiques. Not only will students have the opportunity to explore the arts hands-on, but they will also build a strong artistic foundation to help them have a voice. Students will also gain an understanding of how the arts are essential in the cultural and intellectual life of a society.

CURRICULAR SUPPORT & STUDY SKILLS (GRADES 6, 7, & 8), Yearlong
Placement at Counselor's discretion
This class is designed to provide students with academic support and strategies for building good study habits.

COMPUTER GAME DESIGN (GRADES 7 & 8), Yearlong

Students learn to create exciting games of their own design using a variety of tools, including Game Maker, which was used to create the hit game Undertale. Students will create a variety of games including platformers, puzzles, action games and much more. By the end of this class, students will have the skills needed to make simple games that can be played with friends.

ROBOTICS (GRADES 7 & 8), Yearlong

This course is designed for students to learn how to create and program robots, such as a drag racer or an automated bridge, using the VEX V5 system. Students will learn how to design and build a variety of mechanical devices and then program them using a block-based language. Students will also learn basic programming techniques and mechanical systems including gears, cams, chain drives and more! This is a very design focused class, and, on many assignments, students will be given a problem that will require them to create a device to solve.

SPANISH 1A (GRADE 7) and SPANISH 1B (GRADE 8) , Yearlong

These courses are designed for students seeking to learn a world language. Students will develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing Spanish. Students will also explore the cultural aspects of various Spanish-speaking countries. These cultural components may include literature, art, history, food, traditions, music, architecture, and holidays. These electives are rigorous and will add to student workload. Completion of Spanish 1A and Spanish 1B is equivalent to completing Spanish 1 at the high school.

STEM ACADEMY ELECTIVES (GRADES 6 & 7)

STEM (Science Technology Engineering, Math) students participate in 2 electives over the school year. Only students in the STEM program will be placed in the electives below:

STEM 6th GRADE:

Product Innovation & Design (Semester 1)

The Product Innovation and Design course offers students the opportunity to use the design process to create imaginative solutions for various challenges. Students will be presented with a central issue at the beginning of the course and are encouraged to keep that problem in mind as they progress through the lessons. They acquire and apply techniques for conveying design concepts through drawings, explanations, and three-dimensional models. They also grasp the idea of simulating models to replicate real-world scenarios and collect data for in-depth analysis and insights. Working collaboratively, students identify the specific demands of a design, conduct thorough research on the subject, and involve relevant stakeholders.

Aeronautics & Space Exploration (Semester 2)

The dynamic field of aerospace ignites within the Aeronautics and Space Exploration class, where students assume the roles of engineers, conceptualizing, building prototypes, and conducting experiments to grasp the fundamental principles of flight and the essentials of interstellar travel and habitation. They tackle authentic aviation and space-related hurdles, culminating in the development of a comprehensive mission plan for a journey to Mars.

STEM 7th GRADE:

Sparks & Circuits (Semester 1)

In the Sparks and Circuits course, students delve into the intricacies of electricity, investigating the behavior and components of atoms, alongside the mechanics of sensing devices, all through interactive and immersive projects. They gain comprehensive knowledge and skills in fundamental circuitry design and explore the profound impact of electricity on the surrounding world.

Computer Science: Physical Computing (Semester 2)

The Computer Science: Physical Computing course introduces students to the concept that programming extends beyond virtual environments and into the tangible world. It encourages students to explore the imaginative use of sensors and actuators in creating systems that engage with the physical environment. Alongside formulating algorithms and applying computational thinking principles, students write and transfer programs to microcontrollers capable of executing various real-world functions. This unit aims to enhance students' grasp of computer science fundamentals by emphasizing practical implementations.

STUDENT BODY LEADERSHIP (GRADES 7 & 8), Yearlong

Leadership is designed to help students discover and develop their talents as leaders. Students will be actively engaged in activities such as group discussions, writing thoughts, planning school dances, fundraisers, spirit days, school and community involvement projects, and the governing process of our school. As students learn how to integrate their leadership skills into their everyday lives, they will become more confident in their potential, and their abilities as leaders. Students must submit an application to be considered for this elective.

TEACHERS ASSISTANT (GRADE 8), Yearlong

A student may request to be an assistant for a teacher, Library, or the Office. Students will be required to demonstrate skills and abilities needed to fulfill duties as determined by the teacher or staff member. Students who request to work in the office or library will learn life skills about working in an office environment such as filing, organizing, communication, as well as working with the public.

TRAINING & FITNESS (GRADES 7 & 8), Yearlong

This course is designed for students who are interested in learning more about strengthening exercises, how to improve their athletic performance, and improve their conditioning. The focus is to help students learn the proper techniques for a variety of exercises, and get better and be more confident at the end of the year. This class will develop the skills to improve your strength, conditioning, speed and agility.

YEARBOOK (GRADES 6, 7 & 8), Yearlong

Students are responsible for creating the yearbook for Sutter Middle School. As a yearbook staff member, students learn about and develop skills in writing, layout design, photography, technology, business, organization, communication, management and leadership. (By application only)

MUSIC

BEGINNING BAND (GRADES 6, 7) Yearlong
(Flute, Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Trumpet, Baritone, Trombone, Percussion)

The middle school band program is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn to play instruments in a group setting and to lead a student to acquire the skills needed for satisfactory individual performance. This course offers the student playing experiences through which he/she may achieve a proficiency in the basic fundamentals of musicianship and technique on his/her instrument. One of the goals of this course is to prepare the student to play in the high school program. Students are required to attend the scheduled public performances. Beginning Band placement does not require previous instruction with the instrument.

INTERMEDIATE BAND (GRADES 7, & 8), Yearlong
Prerequisite: Beginning Band or Teacher Discretion.
(Flute, Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Trumpet, Baritone, Trombone, Percussion, French Horn, Tuba, Tenor Sax, Bari Sax, Bass Clarinet, Oboe)

The middle school band program is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn to play instruments in a group setting and to lead a student to acquire the skills needed for satisfactory individual performance. This course offers the student playing experiences through which he/she may achieve a proficiency in the basic fundamentals of musicianship and technique on his/her instrument. One of the goals of this course is to prepare the student to play in the high school program. Students are required to attend the scheduled public performances.

ADVANCED BAND (GRADES 8), Yearlong
Prerequisite: Intermediate Band or admitted by audition or Teacher Discretion.
(Flute, Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Trumpet, Baritone, Trombone, Percussion, French Horn, Tuba, Tenor Sax, Bari Sax, Bass Clarinet, Oboe)

The middle school band program is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn to play instruments in a group setting and to lead a student to acquire the skills needed for satisfactory individual performance. This course offers the student playing experiences through which he/she may achieve a proficiency in the basic fundamentals of musicianship and technique on his/her instrument. One of the goals of this course is to prepare the student to play in the high school program. Students are required to attend the scheduled public performances.

JAZZ BAND (GRADES 6, 7 & 8), Yearlong
Prerequisites: Jazz Band students must be concurrently enrolled in a band or orchestra class and are only admitted by audition at teacher's discretion.
(*Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Bari Saxophone, Trombone, Trumpet, Flute, Guitar, Drum set, Double Bass, Piano)*

The middle school band program is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn to play instruments in a group setting and to lead a student to acquire the skills needed for satisfactory individual performance. This course offers playing experiences through which students will achieve a high level of proficiency in the fundamentals of musicianship and technique on their instruments. One of the goals of this course is to prepare students to play in the high school program. Students are required to attend the scheduled public performances.

BEGINNING ORCHESTRA (GRADES 6, 7), Yearlong
(Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass)

This course provides the student with an opportunity to learn, review, and expand the fundamentals of reading music and the production of musical tone on the violin, viola, cello, or string bass. Music listening skills, care of the instrument and music appreciation will be included. Musical heritage will be explored. Emphasis is placed on individual and group performance. Local performances are an important component of the grade for the course. Beginning Orchestra placement does not require previous instruction with the instrument.

INTERMEDIATE ORCHESTRA (GRADES 7, 8), Yearlong
Prerequisite: Beginning Orchestra or Teacher Discretion.
(Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass)

This course provides the student with an opportunity to learn, review, and expand the fundamentals of reading music and the production of musical tone on the violin, viola, cello, or string bass. Music listening skills, care of the instrument and music appreciation will be included. Musical heritage will be explored. Emphasis is placed on individual and group performance. Local performances are an important component of the grade for the course.

ADVANCED ORCHESTRA (GRADE 8), Yearlong
Prerequisite: Intermediate Orchestra or Teacher Discretion
(Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass)

This course provides the student with an opportunity to review and expand technique and music reading as well as the production of musical tone on the violin, viola, cello, or string bass. Music listening skills, care of the instrument, and music appreciation will be included. Musical heritage will be explored. Emphasis is placed on individual and group performance. Local performances are an important component of the grade for the course.

CHORUS (GRADES 6 & 7), Yearlong
This course is for students interested in singing. It is designed to provide vocal instruction and general musicianship skills for all choral students. Emphasis will be placed on ensemble singing skills such as pitch matching, tone production, reading rhythms and ear training. Students may be required to attend local performances during the year as audience members. Course requirements could include at least two evening concerts and one adjudicated festival per year. Students will perform unison and two part songs.

ADVANCED CHORUS (GRADES 7 & 8), Yearlong
Prerequisite: Beginning Chorus or Teacher Discretion

Students should have at least one year experience in a chorus class. Auditions may be required. This course is designed to provide vocal instruction and general musicianship skills for all choral students. Emphasis will be placed on ensemble singing skills such as pitch matching, tone production, reading rhythms and ear training. Students may be required to attend local performances during the year as audience members. Course requirements may include at least two evening concerts and one adjudicated festival per year. Students will perform unison and two part songs.

*******NOTE – Course offerings subject to change based on student enrollment, staffing, and master schedule.**