



ROCHESTER
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

PRIDE IN EXCELLENCE

8TH GRADE COURSE CATALOG



2026-2027

OUR MISSION

To provide a quality education in a caring atmosphere for students to attain the necessary skills and knowledge to become lifelong learners and contribute to a diverse, interdependent, and changing world.



The teaching and learning at Rochester Community Schools is designed to develop innovative, self-directed learners who think critically, communicate effectively, and persevere to positively impact the world.

We challenge our learners through dynamic cultural experiences to be empowered global stewards and inspire them to take what they learn and have a positive impact on their community, country, and world.

All eighth-grade students are scheduled to take the following classes:

- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Electives

English Language Arts

Language Arts 8 - #01008

Language Arts 8 is based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for eighth-grade language arts. This course develops and implements interactive units of instruction that frame problems or questions to provide authentic purposes for students to read and write. Students deeply examine both narrative and informational texts, focusing on analyzing their structure and advanced literary and expository elements. Intentional efforts to build vocabulary and conceptual knowledge equip students with advanced strategies to understand and use sophisticated academic language. The writing process is critical, requiring students to produce polished narrative essays, detailed arguments, and a comprehensive research project. Essential writing mechanics (advanced sentence structure, grammar, and style) are continuously refined through revision, and speaking and listening skills are applied in focused, collaborative discussions and formal presentations.

Advanced Language Arts 8 - #01058

Based on the same Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and learning expectations as Language Arts 8, the Advanced Language Arts 8 course is designed for students who are proficient readers and writers. This course extends reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing of text to an advanced level. There is a summer reading requirement for this course. (When determining placement into Advanced Language Arts 8, families should consider a student's M-Step score, i-Ready scores, and mastery of 7th-grade content.)

Mathematics

Pre-Algebra - #04008

Pre-Algebra is based on the eighth-grade Michigan Math Standards. Students solve multi-step equations and systems of equations. Students graph linear equations to model relationships between quantities. Students evaluate powers with integer exponents. Students discover and apply the Pythagorean theorem to solve problems. In their study of geometry, students investigate congruence and similarity. Students also find the volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres. While studying statistics, students investigate patterns of association in bivariate data.

Algebra I - #04164 or #04164CT

Students will build upon the concepts learned in Pre-Algebra and apply them to solving and graphing multi-step linear equations and functions. Students solve and graph linear inequalities as well as linear and non-linear systems using a variety of methods. Students will solve quadratic equations in multiple ways. Radical equations will be explored including their connection to geometry. Students will learn to display and analyze data with measures of center and variation.

When determining placement into Algebra I, families should consider a student's m-step score, i-ready score, mastery of 8th grade content, and mathematical dispositions.

Science

Science 8 - #06008

Science 8 follows the Michigan Science Standards for grades 6–8, to engage students in problem-based learning that connects science to real-world issues. The course builds students' scientific knowledge and skills through hands-on investigations, collaboration, and critical thinking. Each unit begins with a real-world challenge that students explore through inquiry, reading, writing, and discussion. They are encouraged to draw on their own experiences, ask meaningful questions, and discover how science and engineering relate to their daily lives and communities. Through authentic investigations and design cycles, students learn to think, communicate, and problem-solve like scientists and engineers. Units focus on engaging topics such as astronomy, plate movement, climate/weather, climate change, and the quality of our local water systems.

Social Studies

United States History - #07008

Eighth-grade social studies explores U.S. history from the Revolutionary Era through Reconstruction, emphasizing the values and ideals of our constitutional republic. Using the Preamble to the Constitution as a guide, students examine how phrases like "We the People" and "to form a more perfect Union" have been reflected in historical events and inspired generations. The course highlights the experiences of

diverse Americans and considers the question, "How should we tell the stories of America?" Integrated geography, civics, and economics provide context, while students use research, inquiry, and analysis to understand historical issues and their relevance today.

Elective Courses

Eighth graders have two hours each day for elective classes. Each elective is identified as either a full-year or semester class. Students may choose either two year-long classes, four-semester classes, or a combination of a full-year class and two-semester classes.

Art 8 - #05508

Length: Semester

Creativity and finding your artistic voice is an important part of this course, and originality and self-expression are emphasized. A variety of materials and techniques are used as students create more advanced works of art. Creating two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks that reflect knowledge of color, form, and shape, are the basis of the projects for this course. Students have opportunities to work in groups, critique their own work, and the artwork of others. Students recognize and apply the value of seeing the connection of art to designing, crafting, engineering, solving complex problems, deep learning concepts, and everyday life. Come build skills that can contribute to the two trillion dollar a year industry of the creative sector.

Band 8 - #05008

Length: Full Year

This course applies what has been learned previously to produce appropriate characteristic tone in all registers with an effective embouchure. When appropriate, students use vibrato. Students perform using proper phrasing, dynamics, and style of articulation. Students listen to and adjust pitch automatically. Students complete a compositional activity with specified guidelines. Using a variety of genres, students perform, listen, describe, and read music. Students learn and use accurate vocabulary to critique their own performance and the performances of others. Students are evaluated on performances that take place during class, after school, and at the MSBOA Band Festival.

Orchestra 8 (String Instruments) - #05228

Length: Full year

Eighth Grade Orchestra is an instrumental music class that builds from skills learned in Seventh Grade Orchestra. Seventh Grade Orchestra (or equivalent) is a pre-requisite for this course. While individual skills are still developed, ensemble skills are a focus of this course. Music skills, including tone production, posture, bow hold, bowing, note and rhythm reading, musical terms, intonation, and the performer's role in an ensemble are further developed. Students will learn shifting techniques to perform in new positions. Students will play a varied repertoire of music. There are several evening or weekend performances throughout the year. All performances are required and graded. Special concert attire may be required.

Choir 8 - #05108

Length: Full Year or Semester

This class is open to all eighth-grade students and is designed to develop vocal skills needed for group choral singing and performance. Students study proper vocal tone production, rhythmic accuracy, and melodic and rhythmic precision. A variety of choral literature is studied and performed, along with studies of music theory. Students participate in a variety of concerts.

Foods and Nutrition - #08008

Length: Semester

In this course, students learn about food safety, kitchen safety, nutrition, food preparation techniques, etiquette, and careers in the field of food science. Students investigate the causes of food-borne illnesses and review safety practices. My Plate is used as a foundation for the study of nutrients and nutritious food choices. Students learn and practice food preparation techniques. The importance of social skills and modern etiquette is emphasized. Students are introduced to careers related to the food and nutrition industry.

Introduction to Theater - #01509

Length: Semester

This class introduces students to the skills and techniques used by actors. Beginning with charades, students explore how meaning is conveyed through both oral and body language. Students learn how to speak with clarity and proper enunciation. Students learn and practice voice projection and how to breathe more effectively through the diaphragm. Students explore how voice and intonation convey meaning by reading poems aloud, participating in storytelling, and creating simulations that promote characterization and mood. Students practice memorization techniques by memorizing short skits and presenting them to the class. The semester culminates with students presenting a one-act play.

Multimedia - #08808

Length: Semester

Students will identify various media formats and the importance of targeting an audience and delivering an intended message. Proper rules of online etiquette, ethics, and copyright law will be embedded into the curriculum. Students will utilize applications such as Google Workspace for Education and other web-based tools to work collaboratively to design and create a variety of multimedia presentations based on research topics of choice. Students will broaden their research strategies and skills while acquiring video, audio, and photography editing skills to enhance presentations. Students will be exposed to current presentation formats as they become available. Presentation formats may include slides, video, websites, podcasts or blogs with the option to utilize technology resources such as stop motion animation, interactive video and audio, and green screen technology in addition to the creation of printed materials.

Physical Education 8 - #03008

Length: Semester

Students focus on health-related fitness activities. Students are assessed on strength, flexibility, and

endurance. Students set fitness goals and monitor their progress throughout the semester, aiming to meet the standards for their age group. Students participate in net games, such as tennis and volleyball, and invasion sports, such as soccer and basketball. Students develop the skills and the attitude needed to live a physically active life. Students learn and apply the skills, strategies, and rules for different group and individual sports that promote physical health. Students learn the importance of improving their flexibility, strength, and endurance. They also learn how improvement these areas for improving performance in any sport.

Unified PE - #73009

Length: Semester

This Physical Education course combines 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students of all abilities to create an inclusive environment for students with and without disabilities. This class is intended to help students develop fitness and sports skills in a non-competitive setting. Students will participate in developmentally appropriate activities, including lifetime skills and activities, physical fitness, and sports. Students will work together to increase competence and confidence in a variety of physical activities. Through ongoing leadership opportunities, members of this course will be empowered to help create a more inclusive and accepting school environment for all students.

STEM 8 - #08408

Length: Semester

This STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) course exposes students to the fundamentals of modern CAD (computer-aided design), physical computing, mechanical engineering, and transportation through hands-on activities, technology-based problem-solving, demonstrations, and discussion. Using the engineering design process, students imagine, plan, create, test, and re-design solutions for given challenges such as constructing catapults, designing an aerodynamic CO² car, coding a physical prototype as well as other student-created/driven projects in order to build a deeper understanding of how STEM systems apply to their everyday lives.

World Language Level 1 (French #02314, German #02414, Spanish, #02814)

Length: Full Year

In this introductory course, students will comprehend and interact at a survival level in everyday contexts with other people in and from other cultures using the target language and appropriate rehearsed behaviors. Students will develop basic proficiency across the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. By the end of the course, students are able to inform, narrate, and express preferences and opinions to communicate using a variety of practiced or familiar words, phrases, and simple sentences through written or spoken language. Students will identify typical products and practices to help understand perspectives of native and other cultures using the target language. Upon successful completion of this course, students will reach the Novice-mid proficiency level on the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#).

(Students taking a Level 1 World Language course receive one credit towards the high school World Language graduation requirement.)

World Language Level 2 (French #02324, German #02424, Spanish, #02824)

Length: Full Year

PREREQUISITE: Level 1

This course is designed for students who have successfully completed level 1. Students will continue to develop their proficiency across the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. Students will be able to request and provide information using a variety of practiced familiar words, phrases, simple sentences, and questions. By the end of the course, students cultivate their communication skills from using simple sentences to more complex structures. Students will compare the target language cultures with their native culture in a variety of contexts. Upon successful completion of this course, students will reach the Novice-high proficiency level on the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#).

(Students taking a Level 2 World Language course receive one credit towards the high school World Language graduation requirement.)

Peer-to-Peer (Anchors) - #09610

Length: Semester

PREREQUISITE: Must complete an application and receive approval from a counselor/classroom teacher. This class will be graded as Credit (G) or No Credit (H).

Classroom peer mentor students will participate in a hands-on classroom experience to help increase inclusion opportunities in the general education setting for students with special needs. Peer mentors will model positive communication, socialization, participation, and behavior strategies that help to engage students in a variety of school settings which may include, the general education core academic courses, elective area courses, lunch experiences, and after school social activities. Peer (Anchors) will receive ongoing training and support to ensure a successful experience for themselves and for the students in which they will be supporting. Peer (Anchors) will be required to complete assignments assigned by the teacher that may include, but are not limited to: reflective journal and article writing, reflective personal journal entries, meeting with the teacher to learn about various disabilities and research based strategies, creating projects that promote social interaction with students, and a project. This class may be taken more than one semester with approval.

Supervised Study - #09598 or #09599

Length: Semester

Supervised Study is a course in place of an elective that supports students with academic and executive functioning deficits. Students are placed in the course based on the previous semester's data. An individual plan is created to increase math, ELA, and/or executive functioning skills through small group/whole group instruction and support.

English Language Development

Language Arts 1 - #41015EL

This English Language Arts class is designed for multilingual students at the overall WIDA proficiency level 1.0-2.0. This course interweaves the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards with the Common Core State Standards and offers sheltered instruction, allowing students to focus on ELA concepts and language acquisition content. Students receive direct instruction pertaining to all four domains of language development: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Students participate in group discussions with support, write simple sentences and paragraphs, develop high-frequency and academic vocabulary, and read narrative and expository texts. This course takes the place of the general education ELA course, and students will be in this course for an entire academic year.

Language Arts 2 - #41016EL

This English Language Arts class is designed for multilingual students at the overall WIDA proficiency level 2.0-3.0. This course interweaves the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards with the Common Core State Standards and offers sheltered instruction, allowing students to focus on ELA concepts and language acquisition content. Students receive direct instruction pertaining to all four domains of language development: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Students participate in group discussions with support, write compound and complex sentences and longer paragraphs, develop academic vocabulary, and read narrative and expository texts. This course takes the place of the general education ELA course, and students will be in this course for an entire academic year.

Language Arts 3 - #41017EL

This English Language Arts class is designed for multilingual students at the overall WIDA proficiency level 3.0-4.0. This course interweaves the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards with the Common Core State Standards and offers sheltered instruction, allowing students to focus on ELA concepts and language acquisition content. Students receive direct instruction pertaining to all four domains of language development: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Students participate in group discussions and argumentation, write compound and complex forms of sentences and multi-paragraph essays, develop academic vocabulary with context clues, and read narrative, expository, and argumentative texts. This course takes the place of the general education ELA course, and students will be in this course for an entire academic year.

Academic Support - #41011EL

This course emphasizes academic support for multilingual students who are taking content courses. Students receive support in academic vocabulary relevant to their content area, along with content-specific reading and writing instruction. Students also develop focused literacy skills through mini-lessons designed

to enhance their comprehension and communication abilities. Additionally, students are provided with extra time to complete classroom assignments and assessments, ensuring they can engage fully with the material. Finally, this class integrates cultural studies into the class through readings, videos, and classroom discussions. This course replaces an elective. This course may be repeated with instructor approval.

Special Education

Math 3 - #21003R

This course provides systematic, explicit instruction based on conceptual development, procedural skills, and fluency practice aligned to grade-level Common Core Standards based on student need. Students are engaged in hands-on learning, differentiation, and extension opportunities. Students are directly taught strategies to build math reasoning, algebraic thinking, and problem-solving, which accelerates math learning.

Language Arts 3 - #21006R

Language Arts 3 is based on the Common Core State Standards for eighth grade. This course integrates listening, speaking, writing, and reading. With a blended approach, instruction reinforces the literacy foundation students need while strategically using authentic narrative and informational text to engage readers. This intensive instruction integrates the key foundational literacy skills necessary for both reading and writing. Vocabulary strategies are taught and reinforced through a variety of literature. The mechanics of writing, including sentence structure, spelling, and grammar, are explicitly taught and reinforced through student writing. Acquisition of rich comprehension, language, and vocabulary skills occurs by exposing students to complex text and collaborative discussions. The development of skills necessary to effectively express ideas orally and in writing are explicitly taught. This course is offered for each grade level of middle school with increasing focus on literacy and writing skills.

Learning Strategies 8 - #21048R

Middle School Learning Strategies classes focus on five pillars: executive functioning skills, supporting core content, intervention, test taking/study skills strategies, mindfulness, and real-world application. Through a series of mini-lessons and work with current assignments, students acquire strategies to become life and career-ready. Grades are based on pass or fail.

Categorical - #39001/#79001

This course provides explicit instruction for students who are working on English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies skills that align with state alternate standards (Essential Elements). Guided reading, self-selected reading, writing, and working with words are integrated into reading instruction, using a balanced literacy framework. Emphasis will be placed on building individual basic skills, as well as the practical application of reading and writing as it relates to daily living, community participation, and personal enjoyment.

Using a multisensory, systematic progression of instruction, with a problem-solving focus, math instruction allows students to be successful math learners. Emphasis is on building individual skills, as well as the practical application of mathematics as it relates to daily living and community participation. Student learning is reinforced with accessible math routines that build on the math concepts taught in class.

Life Skills incorporates a range of skills that rotate on a daily basis with the focus on building pre-employment skills (cooking, campus/classroom jobs, assembling items, and health lessons).

Science and Social Studies unit lesson plans define three levels of differentiated tasks to accommodate diverse learners. Instruction is both systematic and with a progressive learning process. The thematic units for both science and social studies are themed and include comprehensive activities for all five core competencies: reading, writing, math, science, and social studies.