

8TH

GRADE

2026-2027

COURSE DESCRIPTION GUIDE

REQUIRED COURSES

Core Teams

Eighth graders will be assigned to a team of teachers for the core instructional subjects of **English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies**. Core teams share the same students, the same schedule and the same part of the building. This provides for close personal contact between the student and his/her teachers. Core team teachers have a daily common planning period, which is used to discuss student academic and behavioral progress, to plan interdisciplinary units, and to meet with students, parents, the team counselor or the principals. Students who earn a passing grade in Algebra or Geometry will receive 1 high school math credit. The grade earned in either class will be included on their high school transcript.

Wellness

The Eighth Grade Wellness Program covers the skills and objectives of physical education, fitness, and health. This year-long course will focus on allowing students to become intrinsically motivated to pursue a life that involves health and wellness. Furthermore, students will be required to develop behaviors that value inclusion, self advocacy and empathy for others while fostering an appreciation for fitness, nutrition and overall well-being. This is accomplished through team/individual sports, fitness training and conditioning, and establishing positive health behaviors. Students will fitness test quarterly in order to set fitness goals and mark progress throughout the year.

Health instruction is also a vital and integral part of the total school curriculum and is designed to help each child understand him/herself as a physical, mental, and social being. It provides the opportunity for students to develop attitudes and good health habits. Students will be in the Health classroom for two 4-week rotations as part of their Wellness rotation. Eighth grade content strands are lifetime growth and development, reproductive health, and substance education.

ELECTIVE COURSES

Encore/Electives

Eighth graders have 2 periods for Encore/Electives. Students requesting Band/Orchestra and/or World Language will be enrolled in those classes. They will be scheduled in the remaining Encore/Electives(s) based on the availability of the highest ranked course.

8300	Art 8	7618	Great Outdoors
8370	Automation & Robotics	7614	History Thru Lit and Film
8500	Band 8	7620	Intro. to FACS
8424	Broadcast Journalism 8	8426	Leaders Among Us
7311	Choir	8428	Mind & Body
8429	Coding/Tech Time	7310	Music
7613	Creative Writing	8313	Musical Theater
7615	Debate	8550	Orchestra 8
8320	Drama 8	8350	Spanish I
8330	French I	8434	Yearbook 8
8340	German I	7616	Zoology

ENCORE/ELECTIVE – FULL YEAR

8th Grade Band/Orchestra:

8th Grade Band/Orchestra members must successfully complete 7th grade Band/Orchestra and meet director approval based on musical aptitude and rehearsal skills prior to enrollment. Students will develop skills that lead to advanced levels of proficiency in technique on their instrument. Students will gain an understanding of music theory as it pertains to their instrument and continue to experience a variety of literature for the modern band/orchestra. Members of the ensemble will have opportunities to perform solos and small ensemble literature as well as large ensemble selections to be performed at required concerts and festivals.

French I:

In the French classroom, students will develop basic French language skills and gain an understanding of the French speaking culture. Students will be able to introduce themselves and others, ask and answer questions about familiar topics, share likes and dislikes, and exchange descriptions of people and places. Students will be introduced to concepts such as sentence structures, verb conjugations, pronunciation, adjective agreements, and vocabulary acquisition. The emphasis in the class is on proficiency in the spoken language; therefore, daily participation in class is strongly encouraged. Students who complete this course with proficiency will receive high school credit and be recommended to take French II in 9th grade.

German I:
Students will continue communicating in German using basic grammatical structures and vocabulary in social situations such as shopping, going out, entertainment, past times, holidays, eating and tourist "survival" by means of interviews, role-plays, skits, listening-comprehension activities, weekly quizzes, short written assignments, and unit tests. Students will also explore German history, songs, idioms, poetry and the Grimm Fairy Tales. Students who complete this course with proficiency will receive high school credit and be recommended to take German II in 9th grade.

Spanish I:
This course is a study of the language and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. The course focuses on the four components of learning a language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students will be expected to master basic sentence structures, subject-verb agreement, and regular and irregular verb conjugations in the present tense. Students will practice Spanish through storytelling, music, writing activities, skits, tests, and projects. Students who complete this course with proficiency will receive high school credit and be recommended to take Spanish II in 9th grade. The grade earned in Spanish 1 will be included on the student's high school transcript.

Yearbook 8
Yearbook is a journalism class where the students are responsible for creating the NKMS yearbook. This consists of creating a theme and designing a cover, covering school events (both inside and outside of the school day), designing layouts and spreads, interviewing sources, writing copy and captions, and publishing a fully edited book. This class will also include the basics of yearbook marketing, advertising, and sales.

ENCORE/ELECTIVE – SEMESTER

Art 8
The content of this semester-long course is derived from four art disciplines: aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production. The focus of this semester-long course is refining techniques, exploring more advanced art mediums and concepts, and continuing to build on foundational skills. Students will interpret and explain the elements and principles of art and design through hands-on activities that involve various media techniques in both two and three-dimensional design. Students will deepen their artistic skills through projects including: advanced drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, fiber arts, mixed media, and ceramics.

Automation & Robotics 8
This is a class for students who like to use their hands and minds to investigate, create and build. Students trace the history, development, and influence of automation and robotics as they learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Students use the VEX Robotics® platform to design, build, and program a

variety of devices that offer real world challenges. The construction of the projects will require accurate measurement skills in both English Standard and Metric systems, an understanding of applied mathematics and physics, and excellent communication skills. This course is being offered in partnership with Project Lead the Way.

Broadcast Journalism 8

Students will learn the aspects of a news broadcast. They will first learn what is newsworthy. Then students will learn how to research a story, how to conduct interviews, and how to position a camera to convey the best message. Students will also learn how to write copy for a news broadcast and how to edit video in iMovie and other applications. All students will be on camera throughout the semester as part of the morning announcements.

Choir

Students will develop skills in both performance and music literacy. They will learn the fundamentals of good tone production, rhythm, diction, musicianship, and ensemble. Students will have performance opportunities both in and out of the classroom, participate in competitions, and learn music from a wide variety of genres.

Creative Writing

The Creative Writing class is focused on the types of writing that are not heavily emphasized in the traditional ELA classroom. This class offers many opportunities for students to explore writing that strays from the academic assignments provided in the ELA curriculum. This class will expand upon previous writing techniques taught in the classroom, and it will deepen a student's knowledge and understanding of creative writing techniques. Classroom activities will include writing poems, a children's book, a short story, and various other types of writing that explore the boundaries of narrative and personal reflection. Students will ultimately embrace the creative process and learn the power of words while they work to find their own unique voice.

Coding & Tech Time

Students learn about programming for the physical world by blending hardware design and software development. Using microcontrollers with inputs and outputs, they develop code that brings their physical designs to life. It's time to become an innovator and maker using physical computing!

Debate

This Debate course focuses on the essential skills of research, evidence gathering, organization, and public speaking. Students will develop their abilities to construct and present arguments through structured debates, congressional simulations, and persuasive speeches. Students will enhance their critical thinking, research, and communication skills by engaging with contemporary issues and participating in various debate formats.

Drama 8

This course continues to develop acting and performance skills using more advanced scene work, improvisational exercises, and games. A wider variety of dramatic literature is studied using an active approach. Dramatic structure and character and script analysis are emphasized. Students study character history, motivation, and relationships using materials from a variety of genres and styles. Students advance their understanding of theatrical design by designing costumes, lights, and/or sets for a show.

Great Outdoors

Great Outdoors students will read, examine and discuss human impact on the natural world. In addition to our classroom learning, students will have the opportunity to work with beehives, gardens, chickens, greenhouse, seed library, plant sale, vermicompost, birdhouse gourds, and pollinator hotels. Students considering this course should have a passion for the “Great Outdoors” and anticipate an academically and physically rigorous class.

History Through Literature and Film

In this skills-centered class, students choose which historical topics to explore through literature and film. Students will read short stories, poems, novels, and primary sources and view historical films, feature films, and documentaries to learn, explore, investigate, and discuss history from multiple perspectives.

Intro to Family & Consumer Sciences

This course introduces students to the diverse topics within Family and Consumer Sciences. Through hands-on activities, they will develop important life skills while exploring career opportunities in fields such as nutrition, culinary arts, fashion, interior design, child development, and financial literacy.

Leaders Among Us

"Leaders Among Us" is a middle school course focused on leadership essentials. Students will explore different leadership styles, recognize their own traits, and learn how to work well in groups. Through service learning projects and discussions, they'll understand values like honesty and teamwork, and how leaders can make a difference in their communities.

Mind and Body

In Mind and Body, students will focus on physical and emotional wellness on a daily basis. They will engage in a variety of activities that will help them learn about self-care and overall wellness strategies to feel balanced physically, mentally and socially. We will explore the brain and body connection behind strategies like journaling, yoga, mindfulness, and meditation.

Music

Students will explore music as a form of communication through listening activities, instruments (voice, percussion, ukulele & guitar), movement, and technology. Students will learn songs from a variety of cultures, countries, and time periods, while theory and composition are examined.

Musical Theatre

This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of Musical Theatre, including acting, singing, and dancing through exploration of various musicals and performance techniques. Students will look at the history and evolution of musical theatre from its early beginnings to contemporary trends as they explore productions from different time periods, develop characters, and gain insight into the behind-the-scenes aspects of stage production. Each unit will be tailored around a particular musical from the time period being studied, with a minimum of two performances per semester.

Zoology

Zoology seminar will explore the amazing world of animals. This semester-long class will focus on the following items: animal taxonomy and classification, characteristics and structure of animals, animal behavior and adaptations, animal habitats, invasive species, and student topics of interest.