SPARKS MIDDLE SCHOOL

COURSE CATALOG

2026-2027

6th Grade Course Selections

6th Grade Success

All 6th graders will take this semester long class. This class will allow you to work on a variety of skills that are essential for success in 6th grade and beyond. Some of the things you will work on include:

- Typing Skills
- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Good Digital Citizenship
- Successfully using digital tools
- Productivity and Organization

Robotics- Introduction to STEM

This is a 6th grade class that is one semester long introducing students to Automation and Robotics. This course will teach students the basics of building robots, hands on STEM projects, and the basics of coding and computer programming.

Sparks Middle School Music Department

Beginning (6th grade) Band

Are you a 6th grader interested in learning an instrument like trumpet, trombone, saxophone, flute, or clarinet? Are you interested in learning new and exciting music? Then this is the course for you! This 1-year long class will cover and explore the basics of instrumental band music including: 1) proper instrumental sound production, 2) breath, posture, and body control, 3) music reading, 4) instrument care, 5) music making. We will have several performances throughout the year to demonstrate your skills. This class is for 6th grade students only, no previous band experience required.

Beginner (6th grade) Orchestra

Beginner Orchestra is open to all 6th grade students interested in playing the violin, viola, cello, or bass. Previous knowledge or experience is not required. Students will be learning the basics of their instrument, the beginning fundamentals of playing music, and reading music notation. Several performances will be a part of the class as well. At-home practice is an essential part of success on learning and playing music and is an expectation of the class. School instruments are available for rental.

Sparks Middle School Physical Education

Physical Education 6

The purpose of this course is to develop the physical skills necessary to be competent in many forms of movement including body awareness and body management, knowledge of team and individual sports concepts and appropriate social behaviors within a team or group setting. All 6th Graders will take one full year of PE.

6th Grade Leadership

6th Grade Leadership introduces students to essential academic, leadership, and career readiness skills that support success in middle school and beyond. Students will develop strong study habits, organization strategies, and goal-setting skills while learning how to take ownership of their learning and contribute positively to the school community.

7th and 8th Grade Elective Options

Sparks Middle School Leadership, Yearbook and Student Aide

(APPLICATIONS REQUIRED)

Leadership

APPLICATION REQUIRED

This is a year-long class open to all 7th and 8th grade students. Leadership class introduces leadership skills to students and allows students to practice them by building an engaging and inclusive culture at Sparks Middle School.

- All students chosen to be in leadership class are required to come to school 4 days early for training and 6th grade orientation.

- You will learn about: What it means to be a leader, leadership skills, social skills, organizing events like dances and food drives to improve student and family engagement, social etiquette, and more!
- You will plan and run presentations, meetings, and social lunches for 6th grade students to help them transition from elementary to middle school.
- You will be required to participate in community volunteer work and log your hours.
- Leadership students have a significant role on campus that must be taken seriously. **As student role models, you will be responsible, respectful, and safe always.**

Yearbook

APPLICATION REQUIRED

Want to be a part of something exciting!? Consider enrolling in the 1st edition of the Sparks Middle School Yearbook! It will be an opportunity to be part of the team that records the opening of our school by documenting the memories and events throughout the year. This course will cover the practice of yearbook publication and production, as well as other journalism assignments. This class requires creativity, responsibility, and dedication. Assignments include photography, news writing, reporting, interviewing, and deadlines. Students will develop their writing, photography, computer, and life/career readiness skills throughout this course.

Student Aide

APPLICATION REQUIRED

Students at Sparks Middle School Middle School enrolled in 8th grade can apply to be a student aide in various positions (library, office, or teacher aide) as one of their electives. A student aide position will take the place of one of the three elective classes. To apply, students must complete all components of the application. We will be looking for students who are helpful, respectful, and trustworthy. Student aides must have a positive attitude and be willing and eager to help others. Student aides should be good role models for their peers, respectful to students, staff, parents, and visitors to our school, and should also follow all school policies and procedures. Oftentimes, our student aides are the first impression people have of our school, so it is very important that we have students who are welcoming and polite to our visitors.

Sparks Middle School Art and Design

Art and Design 7/8

This Art and Design course is designed to provide students with the foundations of visual/artistic expression. Students will begin to develop their visual voice through the creation of a variety of problem-based learning engagements. Utilizing the exploration

of materials, media, context, and histories of art and design, students will develop a method of visual communication. The methods used will be unique to their work, ideas, and point of view.

Sparks Middle School Physical Education

Physical Education 6/7/8

The purpose of this course is to develop the physical skills necessary to be competent in many forms of movement including body awareness and body management, knowledge of team and individual sports concepts and appropriate social behaviors within a team or group setting.

Sparks Middle School Robotics

7/8 Automation & Robotics

In this yearlong course, students will learn how creative thinking and problem solving can change their world through technology and robotics. Students will learn through problem-based learning how to apply computational thinking and technical knowledge, to solve existing problems, to build VEX robots and understand robotics programming. Students will utilize 21st Century Learning skills as they work collaboratively through the engineering design process to invent and innovate various robot builds. Students will trace the history, development, and influence of automation and robotics as they learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems and block coding. Students will finalize the year with a competition using VEX playgrounds to compete against other robot builds. Second year students will have an opportunity to use the V5 Vex robots.

Advanced Robotics

Students who have already completed one year in robotics and automation have the opportunity to continue using their 21st Century Learning skills as they work collaboratively through the engineering design process to invent and innovate various robot builds. Students will finalize the year with a competition using VEX playgrounds to compete against other robot builds. Second year students will have an opportunity to use the V5 Vex robots. This class runs in collaboration with the Sparks Middle School robotics team as well.

Other Elective Options:

Sparks Middle School Creative Writing

In this Creative Writing course, students will engage in each step of the writing process with special attention paid to the publication of their work. Students will craft myriad

written works ranging from opinion pieces and researched articles to short stories and poetry. They will work from the brainstorming phase of the writing process all the way to revision and publication, working iteratively to refine and reshape their writing with attention to audience before publishing. This course is designed to help students build habits of strong writers—writing consistently and emphasizing revision."

7th or 8th grade History of Music

History of Music explores how music reflects and shapes societies throughout history. In this course, students examine the development of music from ancient cultures to modern genres while studying the historical events, cultures, and technologies that influenced musical styles. Students investigate how music has served as a form of expression, communication, protest, and celebration across different civilizations and time periods. Students will analyze major musical eras, influential artists, and cultural movements connected to them. Special emphasis is placed on the evolution of modern music beginning in the 1920s, including the rise of jazz, blues, rock and roll, R&B, hip hop, and the global influence of contemporary genres such as K-Pop. The course also explores how music interacts with social change, identity, and global traditions.

7th or 8th grade

Human Body Structure and Function

Introduction to the Structure and Function of the Human Body is a middle school elective that explores how the human body is organized and how its systems work together to support movement, health, and physical activity. Students will learn the basic structure of the body, including major organs, muscles, bones, and body systems, and how these systems function to keep the body healthy and active.

Sociology of Sport 8th Grade ONLY

Introduces middle school students to the powerful role sports play in society and culture. Students explore how athletics influence communities, identity, teamwork, leadership, and social change. Through discussions, projects, and real-world examples, students examine topics such as sportsmanship, equity in athletics, and the impact of media and technology on sports, as well as the history of sports in society. Students will also explore how athletes serve as leaders and role models, the importance of health and fitness, and connections between sports, education, and future careers. Activities may include analyzing sporting events, examining access and inclusion in athletics, and participating in collaborative projects about sports culture.

8th grade ONLY

Sports Medicine

Introduction to Sports Medicine provides middle school students with an overview of how the human body moves, performs, and recovers in sports and physical activity. Students will explore basic principles of athletic training, injury prevention, fitness, nutrition, and overall athlete health.

SPARKS MIDDLE SCHOOL 7th and 8th grade MUSIC

Intermediate Band

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Beginning Band, equivalent, or audition

This year-long course is the follow-up and continuation of Beginning Band; however, we will expand our musical skills to include more fundamentals of music making, musical literacy, and instrumental technique. We will have several performances throughout the year including an out-of-state performance.

Incoming 8th graders who have 2 or more years on their primary instrument may join to learn a secondary instrument.

Advanced Band

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Intermediate Band, equivalent, or audition

This year-long course is a follow-up and continuation of Intermediate Band. This course is designed to prepare 8th graders for music in high-school and beyond through increasingly challenging band music, musical theory, and more performance opportunities. We will have several performances throughout the school year including out-of-state and regional performances.

Jazz Band

Prerequisite: Audition only – Please see Mr. Ramirez for audition information

This year-long, zero period class is designed to both introduce and develop an understanding of the wonderful world of jazz. Throughout the course, we will explore jazz concepts such as swing/Latin/funk/rock music, jazz theory, and improvisation. We will have several performance opportunities throughout the year including local and regional competitions.

This class is available, **by audition only,** to 7th and 8th grade students who have 1 or more years of experience on the following instruments: saxophone (alto, tenor, or baritone), trumpet, trombone, guitar, piano, bass, drum set. **Students who enroll in jazz band may also register for another music class (Intermediate/Advanced Band, Orchestra, etc.)**. Jazz Band will also function as students' advisory class.

Intermediate (7th grade) Orchestra

Intermediate Orchestra is open to all 7th grade students interested in playing the violin, viola, cello, or bass. Previous knowledge or experience is not required, though most students will be continuing from the previous 6th grade music class. Students will continue to learn the basics of playing music, while adding new technique and abilities. Performances will occur throughout the school year. At-home practice is an essential part of success on learning and playing music and is an expectation of the class. School instruments are available for rental.

Advanced (8th grade) Orchestra

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Intermediate Orchestra, equivalent, or audition

Advanced Orchestra consists of 8th grade students playing the violin, viola, cello, or bass. These students will be our top-level performance class, so students will have a prerequisite of having taken the intermediate level class or equivalent, or audition to be accepted into the ensemble. Higher ability and technique will be implemented as part of the music class. Frequent performances will occur throughout the school year. At-home practice is an essential part of success on learning and playing music and is an expectation of the class. School instruments are available for rental.

Sparks Middle School 7th and 8th grade

Advanced Mathematics

Advanced Math 6

This is an accelerated math 6 class that brings in 6th grade math skills as well as extension courses and prepares students for the advanced math track. Students are recommended by Elementary teachers, qualifying IREADY scores and qualifying SBAC scores.

Math 7-8

This is an accelerated math class that combines 7th and 8th grade curriculum to prepare students for Algebra in 8th grade.
Students must maintain a C or higher for each quarter and have excellent work ethic with 95% homework completion on time. Students must also have good attendance throughout the school year. Students are required to retake tests that fall below 75%. Participation, small group or partner work is crucial to be successful.

Requirements:

3.5 or higher GPA in 6th grade math
Retake of any tests below an 80%
Qualifying score on district placement tests
SBAC 3 or 4

Algebra

A rigorous course that will benefit students with a high interest in mathematics and plan to pursue courses such as AP Calculus or AP Statistics their senior year. This course is offered for High School placement but **not for credit,** enabling students to begin their High School careers in Formal Geometry their freshman year.
Students must maintain a C or higher for each quarter and have excellent work ethic with 95% homework completion in this class. Students must have good attendance throughout the school year. Participation, small group or partner work is crucial to be successful. A district final is given at the end of the first semester, which students must pass with a 70% or higher. In addition, they must maintain a C average to remain in Algebra.

Those who are accepted into this class must be committed to attending all Algebra final review study sessions at the end of each semester.

Requirements:
Successful completion of Math 7-8 or equivalent (B or higher)
Qualifying score on district placement tests
SBAC 3 or 4
Students must maintain a B or higher in first semester Algebra to remain in the class.

SPARKS MIDDLE SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL COURSE OFFERRINGS

(8th Grade Only)

Computer Science

Opportunity to earn 0.5 High School Computer Science Credit by exam at end of course (Passing score on final)
Computer Science introduces students to the basics of com-puter science through a series of Python® programming projects that encourage creativity and experimentation. Students create a diverse portfolio of projects as they learn commands and functions, values and variables, Graphical User Interface, modular and object-oriented programming, and events and event-driven processes. Students learn loops, debugging techniques, and software development processes including iterative and incremental models. Students explore careers in programming, including profiles from a wide variety of programming professionals.

Health

Opportunity to earn 0.5 High School Health Credit by exam at end of course (Passing score on final)
Encouraging students to make responsible, respectful, informed, and capable decisions about topics that affect the well-being of themselves and others, this course is a one-semester course that provides students with comprehensive information they can use to develop healthy attitudes and behavior patterns. Designed for high school students, this informative and engaging course encourages students to recognize that they have the power to choose healthy behaviors to reduce risks.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Grades 6, 7, 8

The goal of the Sparks Middle School ELL program is to provide an opportunity for non- and limited speaking English students to learn English acquired skills necessary to participate in mainstream classes, achieve grade level equivalency credits and experience a successful school experience. It is also the goal of the program to develop awareness and respect for cultural differences. Students qualify for placement in the ELL classes following appropriate language assessments by SMS staff.
ELL courses provide English language development in four basic areas; Communication (listening and speaking); Reading; Writing; and Mechanics. The identification of courses and curriculum materials will support the goals of English language development in the ELL program.
ELL Students enrolled in the designated ELL English or Grammar classes, and Reading will receive a maximum of two English credits to be applied to the SMS transcript requirements. Additional ELL English credits will be awarded elective credit. *See course description for more specifics!

*EL Beginning for English Language Learners

Course Number: 716

This course is for students who enter school more than a quarter into a semester. At semester change this student should be evaluated and placed into the appropriate course. This course may precede EL Beginning English* in some students' EL course sequence. The purpose of this course is to provide certain students, as determined by EL staff, with additional time for acquiring sufficient English to advance to Intermediate EL English and beyond. In most cases, students will remain in the same classroom and period and study the same curriculum as EL Beginning English, but will receive elective credit and may be graded on a growth rather than mastery basis. Students who demonstrate accelerated English acquisition may be moved to EL Beginning English or EL Intermediate English at the appropriate time as determined by assessment results and the instructor.

EL Beginning level of English Literacy

Course Number: 251/253

This course is for students who enter school more than a quarter into a semester. At semester change this student should be evaluated and placed into the appropriate course. This course may precede EL Beginning Reading/Composition* in some students' EL course sequence. The purpose of this course is to provide certain students, as determined by EL staff, with additional time for acquiring sufficient English to advance to Intermediate EL English and beyond. In most cases, students will remain in the same classroom and period and study the same curriculum as EL Beginning Reading/Composition but will receive elective credit and may be graded on a growth rather than mastery basis. Students who demonstrate accelerated English acquisition may be moved to EL Beginning Reading/Composition or EL Intermediate Reading/Composition at the appropriate time as determined by assessment results and the instructor.

EL Intermediate English

Course Number: 252

Prerequisites: EL assessment results; Instructor approval
This one-year course provides an introduction to English language structure and communication. The course addresses language skills such as commonly used vocabulary and syntax to help students understand basic conversations. Students will be expected to apply this knowledge when asking or answering questions and in oral and written assignments. Students will have the opportunity to practice oral communication in different educational and social settings. Students will read short selections and answer oral and written questions to practice basic writing skills. The vocabulary development in this course includes frequently used words in content-area classes as well as expressions and high frequency words in daily conversation.

EL Intermediate Reading/Composition

Course Number: 254

This one-year course provides instruction to develop reading and composition skills in English. This course is intended to be taken in conjunction with 7611-7612, EL Beginning English. The central focus is to integrate reading and writing as important academic skills. Emphasis is placed on reading a variety of simple reading selections and to respond in writing. Different aspects of writing are presented including word order, organization, sequencing, and basic mechanics and spelling. Writing at this level will incorporate vocabulary development and will include describing, giving directions, responding to simple fiction and non-fiction reading selections, and composing simple multi-paragraph stories.

EL Advanced English

Course Number: 7613

This one-year course focuses on expanding and improving basic English language skills including a variety of communication and comprehension strategies. The focus is on using more elaborate word order structures and more complex verb tenses. The expanded vocabulary will include more specific and specialized words commonly used in the content area and mainstream classes. Students will be introduced to a variety of fiction and non-fiction and will respond to questions orally as well as in writing. The course also introduces students to basic note-taking skills including summarizing main ideas. Students will be expected to participate in classroom discussions and to ask and answer questions for clarification.

EL Advanced Reading/Composition

Course Number: 7614

This one-year course expands the composition and reading objectives introduced at the beginning level and is intended for intermediate level ELs who are enrolled in EL 7613-7614. The approach is to integrate reading and writing skills as important academic skills in mainstream classes. Students will read a variety of fiction and non-fiction and will be introduced to different writing styles and writing purposes. Students will be asked to summarize essential information from text, write paragraphs using clear transitions, and practice use of different tenses, word order structures and conjunctions. Students will also be expected to use more specific and expanded vocabulary.

ELD Mainstream Support

Course Number: 765

EL Mainstream Support is intended to address difficulties and/or growth with language and/or study skills that may be impacting short- and long-term ELs' access to ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, and other academic content. Specific learning goals in this course will vary based on students' individual linguistic needs, academic skills, and mainstream course content; following identification of needs, the instructor must develop a syllabus and final exam based on Nevada English Language Development Standards; grade- level Nevada Academic Content Standards may also be appropriate. Note that while students may be required to bring assignments and texts from their mainstream classes, the course may not consist of simply study hall and tutoring. Instructors will receive resource materials and guidance from the Department of ELD for developing details of their course.

Schools may also choose to offer sections of the course based on specific mainstream courses or disciplines and proficiency levels such as Mainstream Support for Short Term ELs and Mainstream Support for Long-Term ELs or content focused such as EL Mainstream Support [Science] or EL Mainstream Support [Math]. In the case of a

Mainstream Support Content Specific Course, the instructor of the course may be a general education teacher in the discipline who holds a TESL/ELAD endorsement.