Grades 5-8

Middle School
PLANNING GUIDE

MARICOPA
Unified School District
Dream. Learn. Become.

2026-2027

MUSD Middle School
Course Catalog
2026-2027

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GENERAL INFORMATION:

This course guide contains a list of 5th-8th grade courses offered at Alma Ferrall Innovation Academy . Graduation requirements, course prerequisites, and other pertinent information are included in this guide. Students need to carefully review their options in order to make informed decisions about the courses they will take to prepare them for opportunities in high school. When selecting courses, it is important to make sure that prerequisite requirements have been met. Student selections of courses are used to develop classes as well as assign and hire teachers to meet student requests. Courses may not be available if sufficient registration requests are not received.

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

As part of the educational team, the counselors work in a variety of capacities to assist each student with academic advisement and counseling needs. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the many services offered through the counseling department. Students may sign up for an appointment in the counseling office before school, after school, or during lunch.

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are placed into a comprehensive fifth/sixth or seventh/eighth grade Academy cohort for up to two years, where a team of teachers deliver daily core instruction in Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. Students are automatically assigned two engaging, industry-relevant elective rotations tied to their Academy's theme. For personalization, parents and students may opt out of **one** industry-relevant elective slot to select a year-long traditional elective, such as Band or Physical Education.

Failure to pass both language arts and math may result in retention. Additionally, if students fail to pass one or more of the other core academic classes (science or social studies) they may either be retained or required to attend summer school.

High School Program Planning

During the spring of the eighth-grade year, all students in consultation with their families, will develop a four-year high school plan of studies in order to prepare the student for college, vocational or technical studies, or for the job market. Proper planning ensures that students meet all the requirements for high school graduation. To assist with this planning, review the chart below that lists the course requirements for high school graduation. In addition to the requirements listed below, students are required to pass the state-mandated Civics test in order to graduate. Special Education students are required to complete the course of study as prescribed in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Maricopa Unified School District High School Graduation Requirements

COURSES	AZ State Mandated	DSHS - MHS	Arizona University Requirements
English	4	4	4
Math	4	4	4th year Mathematics (Above Algebra 2)
Science	3 (including Biology)	3 (including Biology)	3 Lab Science One credit in at least three of the four areas (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Earth Science). An advanced level or honors course in a lab science completed previously can be used for a third unit.
Social Sciences			2
World Studies	1	1	
US American History	1	1	
American Government	0.5	0.5	
Economics	0.5	0.5	
Physical Education		0.5	
Fine Arts	1 Fine Arts or 1 CTE	1 Fine Arts or 1 CTE	1 Fine Arts or 1 CTE
Foreign Language			2 (of the same language)
Career & Technical Education	1 Fine Arts or 1 CTE	1 CTE or 1 Fine Arts	1 Fine Arts or 1 CTE
Electives	7	6.5	
Civics Exam	Required	Required	
Total	22	22	16

COURSE SELECTION AND SCHEDULE CHANGES

Selecting courses is an important process that involves students, parents, and school personnel. After reviewing course offerings and considering a student's long-term goals, a full schedule of classes is selected. Although there is no guarantee that a student will receive a schedule with all of the requested choices, every attempt is made to ensure a schedule is correct and accurate. If a mistake is made, school personnel will correct the situation. Keep in mind that schedule changes will only be made if an error has been made or it is in the best interest of the student. There will be no course changes after the 10th day of each semester. Course changes may require parent and administrative permission. We expect that students will thoroughly discuss their desires in changing their schedule with parents/guardians and staff keeping in mind the possible consequences for graduation, class rank, career preparation or college admission. Athletes and students involved in other extra-curricular activities should pay special attention to the consequences of dropping a class and its effect on eligibility.

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE CREDIT

District policy allows students to receive high school credit for some middle school courses under specific provisions. Students desiring to earn Algebra 1 math credit for coursework completed at a MUSD middle school will need an A or B and a 70% on the final exam. Students wishing to receive credit for a World Language course will need to schedule a test out for both semesters scoring at least an 80% on the assessment. Credit will be given in the form of a P (pass) on the transcript (this grade will not be calculated into the GPA).

ENGLISH TRANSITION

English transition is provided for students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The program offers two hour blocks of instruction that complement other coursework in required and elective courses. LEP students are tested for proper placement in this program.

ACCOUNTABILITY

MUSD middle schools are committed to providing an environment that expands personal and academic success, focusing on the unique learning needs of young adolescent learners. All Maricopa middle schools provide curriculum that is relevant and rigorous, support meaningful relationships, and ensure assessment and evaluation processes that promote quality learning. Successful completion of middle school coursework is expected. Students who experience challenges in core classes may be offered specified academic support occurring during the school day, after school or in the summer. The structure of the academic support will be site-based, utilizing available resources. The intent of this support is to provide targeted, structured intervention to students requiring ongoing support in the core classes (language arts, math, science, social studies).

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT SERVICES (Special Education)

Alma Ferrall Innovation Academy provides a variety of services to support all exceptional students, including those who are gifted and those who have a disability.

SPECIAL EDUCATION CHILD FIND

It is the Maricopa Unified School District's responsibility to inform the general public and all parents within our boundaries of our responsibility to make available special education services for students with disabilities aged 3 through 21 years and how to access those services. In addition, we have a responsibility to provide information regarding early intervention services for children birth through 2.6 years. We are responsible for identifying, locating, and evaluating all children with disabilities; including, children aged 3 through 21 and for referring children from birth through 2.6 years of age to Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) for evaluation and appropriate services. We are also responsible for providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), which includes special education and related services to children with disabilities at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge to the parents. For all new students to the district, the classroom teacher will complete screening activities within 45 days of enrollment. The teacher will look at the child's ability in the areas of academics, vision, hearing, communication, social/emotional, adaptive development and motor skills. If any concerns are noted, the child may be referred for additional help.

Children, birth through 2.6 years of age, who are receiving early intervention services and will be participating in preschool programs for children with disabilities, will be assured of a smooth transition into that program. We will ensure that: transition conferences for children aged 2 years 6 months to 2 years 9 months will be held; by the child's 3rd birthday an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) will be developed and implemented; and for the child who turns 3 during the summer, the IEP team will determine the date for services to begin, including eligibility for Extended School Year (ESY) services. Parents may review Special Education Policies and Procedures at schools and at the District Office. If you have any concerns about a child you know, please contact the Maricopa Unified School District 20 office at (520) 568-5100 for more information.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the District receives request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible students of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students may ask Maricopa Unified School District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the District will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception permitting disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. Upon request, the district will provide the parent or eligible student a copy of the records sent.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:
Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 202O2-5920

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Annual Nondiscrimination Notification

Maricopa Unified School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, age, or disability in its program or activities. Maricopa Unified School District's Career and Technical Education department does not discriminate in enrollment or access to any of the programs available, such as Agriculture, Communications, Business Management, Education & Training, Hospitality & Tourism, Information Technology, Law & Public Safety, Marketing, Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics. The lack of English language skills shall not be a barrier to admission or participation in the district's activities and programs. Maricopa Unified School District also does not discriminate in its hiring or employment practices. The following people have been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies: Tom Beckett, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources &Title IX Coordinator: (520) 568-5100 ext. 1003, tbeckett@musd20.org.
Dr. Lindsay Stollar Slover, Director of Exceptional Student Services & 504 Coordinator: (520) 568-5100 ext. 1018, lstollarslover@musd20.org.

Notificación anual contra la discriminación

El Distrito Escolar Unificado de Maricopa no discrimina por motivos de sexo, raza, color, origen nacional, edad o discapacidad en sus programas o actividades. El departamento de Educación Técnica y Profesional del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Maricopa no discrimina en la inscripción o el acceso a ninguno de los programas disponibles, como Agricultura, Comunicaciones, Administración de Empresas, Educación y Capacitación, Hospitalidad y Turismo, Tecnología de la Información, Leyes y Seguridad Pública, Mercadeo, y Ciencia, Tecnología, Ingeniería y Matemáticas. La falta de habilidades en el idioma inglés no será una barrera para la admisión o participación en las actividades y programas del distrito. El Distrito Escolar Unificado de Maricopa tampoco discrimina en sus prácticas de contratación o empleo. La siguiente persona ha sido designada para manejar consultas sobre las políticas de no discriminación: Tom Beckett, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources &Title IX Coordinator: (520) 568-5100 ext. 1003, tbeckett@musd20.org.
Dr. Lindsay Stollar Slover, Director of Exceptional Student Services & 504 Coordinator: (520) 568-5100 ext. 1018, lstollarslover@musd20.org.

AFIA Academies-

What are AFIA Academies?

At our school, every child belongs to an industry-relevant academy, a vibrant multi-age community of 90–130 learners where collaboration and curiosity thrive. Each academy is guided by a core team of educators—one program architect and three team teachers—joined by special education experts, specialized instructors, paraeducators, and community partners who bring real-world perspectives into the classroom. Together, this team ensures that learning is personalized and differentiated, so every student receives the support they need in English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Core subjects come alive through project-based experiences that connect directly to industries shaping our future, making learning both rigorous and relevant. Students remain in their academy for up to two years, building strong bonds and continuity in their learning journey. Along the way, they rotate through exciting, industry-focused electives that spark new passions and skills. For those who want variety, students may swap one elective rotation (two semesters) for one of our traditional electives, ensuring every learner has the freedom to design a pathway that excites them.

*Industry electives will rotate on a semester basis over the course of two years. Students opting out of an industry relevant elective, will not be able to select which elective they opt out from. This will be determined based on availability and rotation of electives.

Classroom Structure

- Multi-grade level cohorts
- Blended for all 4 core subjects
- Approximately 90-130 students between 4 teachers
- Stay in same cohort for up to two years
- Flexible seating to meet a variety of work styles

CARE ACADEMY

Caring for People, Protecting the Planet:
Stewards of Our Community

In the CARE Academy, we empower 5th–6th grade students to become compassionate leaders and responsible stewards of their communities and environment. Rooted in Arizona State Standards across all core subjects, our interdisciplinary approach blends rigorous academics with real-world relevance, preparing students to thrive as thoughtful problem-solvers and service-oriented citizens.

The CARE Academy integrates three instructional pillars—Community Wellness, Public Safety & Emergency Prepareness, and Natural Resources & Sustainability—into a cohesive learning experience. Through hands-on projects, inquiry-based exploration, and leadership development, students engage in meaningful study that connects science, civics, and ethics to industry-aligned practices.

Below are a list of rotating electives students will take as part of the CARE Academy-

Junior First Responders

In this course, you will learn the basics of first aid and how to communicate clearly in emergencies. Through hands-on drills and simulations, you'll practice staying calm, making safe choices, and helping others during crisis situations. This course builds confidence while introducing the world of public safety and emergency response.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Practice basic first aid techniques like bandaging and splinting.
- Develop clear and effective communication skills for emergency situations.
- Apply safe decision-making strategies in age-appropriate crisis simulations.

Community Health Advocates

Explore how the human body works and how healthy habits protect our community. You will create posters, campaigns, and mini-lessons to teach your peers about hygiene, germ prevention, and wellness, becoming a positive health ambassador in your school.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Describe the major systems of the human body and how they support wellness.
- Model proper hygiene and germ-prevention practices to promote community health.
- Create health messages to educate your peers on healthy habits.

Integrated Environmental Explorers

This hands-on course empowers you to become an environmental steward by blending natural science, sustainable agriculture, and ecological engineering. You will investigate local ecosystems, practice field data collection, and apply design skills to solve real-world ecological challenges, from enhancing soil health through composting to building thriving habitats.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Investigate local ecosystems by identifying plants and animals and collecting field data.
- Apply sustainable agricultural practices like composting or container gardening.
- Use the engineering design process to propose solutions for local environmental issues.
- Demonstrate ecological stewardship by designing and building a small-scale habitat, such as a pollinator garden.

Nutrition Lab: Food Science & Cooking Basics

Discover where food comes from and how nutrition fuels your body. You will practice safe food handling, create no-heat recipes, and participate in tasting labs and menu-planning challenges. This course builds lifelong skills around healthy eating and food literacy.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Identify key nutrients and explain how they support the body's functions.
- Follow safe food-handling procedures in hands-on cooking labs.
- Create simple, balanced menus based on nutrition guidelines.

Education Exploration: From Student to Teacher

Students will explore what it’s like to work within a school setting. Students will learn how younger children grow and learn, practice leadership skills, support in younger classrooms, and create simple activities for younger students. The course focuses on teamwork, communication, responsibility, and understanding how people learn and the different roles within a school system.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Shadow and assist experienced teachers in various classroom settings.
- Engage in instructional practices to support younger learners and explore effective teaching methods.
- Investigate professional roles and pathways within the field of education.

Safety Detectives: Risk Management for Kids

Learn how to spot hazards, plan for emergencies, and make safe choices in different environments. Through school safety audits, mapping activities, and building emergency kits, you will practice real-world risk management skills and learn how to protect yourself and your community.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Identify common hazards in homes, schools, and outdoor environments.
- Demonstrate basic disaster preparedness strategies for your age group.
- Create safety maps and plans to reduce risk in real-world settings.

Animal Care & Welfare

Learn the basics of animal anatomy, behavior, and proper care while exploring careers in veterinary science and animal services. You will participate in simulations, build habitat models, and meet experts who work with animals every day, fostering empathy, responsibility, and respect for living creatures.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Identify the basic needs, behaviors, and anatomy of common animals.
- Demonstrate safe and responsible practices for caring for animals.
- Design healthy and supportive animal habitats.

Consumer Economics/Personal Finance (Required)

Consumer Economics/Personal Finance courses provide an understanding of the concepts and principles involved in managing one’s personal finances. Topics may include savings and investing, credit, insurance, taxes and social security, spending patterns and budget planning, contracts, and consumer protection. These courses may also provide an overview of the American economy.

IDEA ACADEMY
From Concept to Creation —
Designing and Building the Future

IDEA Academy offers 7th–8th grade students a dynamic, future-focused learning experience that blends imagination with execution. Rooted in Arizona State Standards across all core subjects—English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies—our instructional model ensures academic rigor while connecting students to industry-relevant practices in design, engineering, and applied arts.

IDEA Academy is built around the full cycle of innovation: from initial concept to final creation. Students engage in project-based learning that integrates Arts, Media, and Digital Communication with Engineering, Manufacturing, and Applied Design, allowing them to explore both the creative and technical dimensions of production.

Creative Media & Digital Communications

In this course, you will explore digital storytelling, basic animation, photography, video production, and audio editing. You will learn to use various digital tools to create original media projects and produce clear, engaging messages.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Demonstrate basic skills in digital storytelling, including sequencing and visual elements.
- Create original media projects using photography, video, and audio editing tools.
- Apply communication principles to produce clear and engaging digital content.
- Collaborate with peers to plan, script, and publish a short digital media production.
- Creation of the school yearbook

Product Design and Entrepreneurial Manufacturing

This project-based course guides you through the complete product development lifecycle, from an initial idea to a physical product and market plan. You will learn entrepreneurial skills to identify market needs alongside technical skills like digital design, prototyping, and safe operation of maker lab technologies, empowering you to become a creative problem-solver.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Develop a product idea and create a business plan, considering sales and supply chains.
- Use digital design tools, like 3D modeling software, to create a testable prototype.
- Gain advanced fabrication skills using technologies like laser cutting or CNC machines.
- Outline the steps for production and develop a marketing plan for your finished product.

Community Connections: Organization & Event Leadership

This course introduces students to the skills and responsibilities involved in leading and organizing community-focused events. Students explore how events strengthen communities, learn the fundamentals of planning and communication, and practice leadership through hands-on, collaborative projects. By developing event concepts, coordinating roles, and presenting their ideas, students build confidence, teamwork abilities, and an understanding of careers in community leadership and event coordination.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Explore how community events support schools, neighborhoods, and local organizations.
- Practice leadership skills such as communication, delegation, teamwork, and decision-making.
- Create event plans that outline goals, logistics, roles, timelines, and needed resources.
- Develop and deliver presentations or announcements using professional communication skills.
- Work collaboratively to organize or simulate a community-focused event and reflect on their leadership growth.

Resort Innovation & Guest Experience

Students step into the world of themed entertainment as they explore how resorts and theme parks are imagined, designed, and brought to life. Through creative, hands-on projects, students learn how designers use storytelling, layout planning, and visual design to shape memorable guest experiences. Working in teams, they develop their own themed resort or park concept, gaining early insight into careers in hospitality design, architecture, engineering, and entertainment development.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Explore how resorts and theme parks are designed, including layout, theming, and guest experience.
- Use storytelling and visual design techniques to create themed attractions and environments.
- Develop sketches, maps, or simple models to communicate design ideas.
- Work in teams to plan and build a cohesive resort or theme park concept.
- Present their design concepts using clear and professional communication skills.

Applied Engineering and Fabrication Lab

This project-based course introduces the full lifecycle of physical design, from foundational engineering principles to advanced fabrication. You will learn the mechanics of simple machines, develop skills in 3D modeling, and safely operate lab equipment like CNC machines and laser cutters.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Apply the principles of simple machines and mechanical advantage to build functional systems.
- Utilize 3D modeling software to design and iterate on a product prototype.
- Demonstrate proficiency with maker lab technologies to construct a high-quality physical object.
- Translate a real-world problem into a structural plan using sketching and blueprint reading skills.

Sustainable Innovation and Systems Design

This interdisciplinary course challenges you to use design thinking and entrepreneurial skills to solve complex problems related to energy, community, and commerce. You will investigate renewable energy, urban planning, and sustainable business practices.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Analyze renewable energy systems by designing and testing a functional model device.
- Identify a market need and develop a basic business plan for a sustainable product.
- Apply design thinking and digital tools to propose a sustainable redesign for a community space.
- Evaluate the environmental impact of a system and propose steps for resource conservation.

Broadcast Journalism & Digital Newsroom

In this course, you will learn how to research, script, film, and edit news stories for digital platforms. Working in newsroom-style teams, you will produce reports, interviews, and segments while exploring careers in journalism and media production.

Expected Student Outcomes:

- Research and write scripts for news stories, interviews, and features.
- Operate basic video and audio equipment to record original content.
- Edit digital media to produce clear and engaging news segments.
- Collaborate in newsroom teams to publish compelling multimedia stories.
- Morning announcements

8th Grade Career Pathway Capstone

Required for all 8th Graders

In this final elective, you will design and complete a culminating capstone project that reflects your chosen career pathway. Through research, skill application, and real-world problem-solving, you will create a professional-quality product, presentation, or performance that demonstrates your learning and interests.

English Language Arts

MUSD offers both on-level and Honors-level courses in English Language Arts (ELA) at all middle schools, grades 5-8. All middle-level ELA courses align with the Arizona State Standards for English Language Arts. The Honors ELA courses build upon the on-level curriculum, engaging students in critical analysis, reasoning skills, and establishing a strong foundation for AP coursework and college readiness.

Note: Not all courses are able to be offered at all sites.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
5th Grade English Language Arts	**5**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
5th Grade ELA coursework aligns to the State Standards and focuses on four critical areas of student literacy: 1) the reading of grade-level appropriate literary and informational texts; 2) the writing of various modes, including narrative, informative and persuasive/argumentative; 3) the building of speaking and listening skills through independent and collaborative tasks; 4) the close study and development of language vocabulary. Through thematic Units of Study, students will develop skills in critical analysis and thinking, the writing process, research, and effective communication.			

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Honors 5th Grade English Language Arts	**5**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
This advanced course moves at a faster pace and challenges students with greater depth and complexity of literary and informational texts. Students engage in close reading, critical analysis, and academic vocabulary study while applying higher-level thinking skills across all units. Students conduct student-driven research that requires forming original conclusions through critical thinking and problem-solving. Writing instruction emphasizes clear, organized composition in multiple modes, including narrative, argumentative, expository, research, and responses to literature. Speaking and listening skills are strengthened through collaborative discussions and presentations, helping students grow as independent, confident, and effective communicators.			

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
6th Grade English Language Arts	**6**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
6th Grade ELA coursework aligns to the State Standards and focuses on four critical areas of student literacy: 1) the reading of grade-level appropriate literary and informational texts; 2) the writing of various modes, including narrative, informative and persuasive/argumentative; 3) the building of speaking and listening skills through independent and collaborative tasks; 4) the close study and development of language vocabulary. Through thematic Units of Study, students will develop skills in critical analysis and thinking, the writing process, research, and effective communication.			

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Honors 6th Grade English Language Arts	**6**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

This advanced course moves at a faster pace and challenges students with greater depth and complexity of literary and informational texts. Students engage in close reading, critical analysis, and academic vocabulary study while applying higher-level thinking skills across all units.

Students conduct student-driven research that requires forming original conclusions through critical thinking and problem-solving. Writing instruction emphasizes clear, organized composition in multiple modes, including narrative, argumentative, expository, research, and responses to literature. Speaking and listening skills are strengthened through collaborative discussions and presentations, helping students grow as independent, confident, and effective communicators.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
7th Grade English Language Arts	**7**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

This course builds upon skills developed in 6th grade and creates opportunities for students to apply those skills through an increased focus on progressively more challenging texts and tasks. 7th Grade ELA coursework aligns to the State standards and focuses on four critical areas of student literacy: 1) the reading of grade-level appropriate literary and informational texts; 2) the writing of various modes, including narrative, informative, and persuasive/argumentative; 3) the building of speaking and listening skills through independent and collaborative tasks; 4) the close study and development of language vocabulary. Through thematic Units of Study, students continue to develop skills in critical analysis and thinking, the writing process, research, and effective communication.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Honors 7th Grade English Language Arts	**7**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

This advanced course moves at a faster pace and challenges students with greater depth and complexity of literary and informational texts. Students engage in close reading, critical analysis, and academic vocabulary study while applying higher-level thinking skills across all units.

Students conduct student-driven research that requires forming original conclusions through critical thinking and problem-solving. Writing instruction emphasizes clear, organized composition in multiple modes, including narrative, argumentative, expository, research, and responses to literature. Speaking and listening skills are strengthened through collaborative discussions and presentations, helping students grow as independent, confident, and effective communicators.

Course Title	Grade(s)	Duration	School Site: AFIA
8th Grade English Language Arts	**8**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

This course builds upon skills developed in 7th Grade and creates opportunities for students to apply those skills through an increased focus on progressively more challenging texts and tasks. 8th Grade ELA coursework aligns to the State standards and focuses on four critical areas of student literacy: 1) the reading of grade-level appropriate literary and informational texts; 2) the writing of various modes, including narrative, informative, and persuasive/argumentative; 3) the building of speaking and listening skills through independent and collaborative tasks; 4) the close study and development of language vocabulary. Through thematic Units of Study, students continue to develop and strengthen skills in critical analysis and thinking, the writing process, research, and effective communication, while preparing the students for the demands of High School coursework.

Course Title	Grade(s)	Duration	School Site: AFIA
Honors 8th Grade English Language Arts	**8**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

This advanced course moves at a faster pace and challenges students with greater depth and complexity of literary and informational texts. Students engage in close reading, critical analysis, and academic vocabulary study while applying higher-level thinking skills across all units.

Students conduct student-driven research that requires forming original conclusions through critical thinking and problem-solving. Writing instruction emphasizes clear, organized composition in multiple modes, including narrative, argumentative, expository, research, and responses to literature. Speaking and listening skills are strengthened through collaborative discussions and presentations, helping students grow as independent, confident, and effective communicators.

ESS (Exceptional Student Services)

The goals of Special Education are to help students become independent learners, to teach learning strategies to prepare them to be successful in school and to prepare them for post-secondary experiences in higher education or the world of work.

Maricopa Unified School District follows the guidelines established by the Arizona Department of Education. Middle School Counselors and ESS Case Managers will work collaboratively with students and parents to determine coursework that will meet middle school requirements by reviewing the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) annually. Students may be enrolled in some general education courses as well as courses designed for students with exceptional needs.

As part of the student's IEP, transition plans will be developed. Each transition plan will include goals and action steps to support students as they move from middle school to high school.

Placement in any special education course is determined by a partnership with the students and the Special Education team and is based on individual student strengths and needs. Courses will meet middle school requirements and will be aligned to the student's individual skills, interests and includes a post-secondary plan to reach career goals.

Students with disabilities receive designed instruction and services to meet their unique needs. This is not a one size fits all model. MUSD uses a variety of delivery models to provide specially designed instruction, services, and supports. Special Education at the resource level of support may be provided by a special education teacher within the general education classroom, in a special education classroom, or a combination of both. The location of the service is dependent on the level of support that the student requires and will be discussed by the IEP team.

Self-contained classrooms are designed to provide a more intensive level of special education instruction that may span several class subjects. Students may be included in some general education classes.

The location of the service and teacher is dependent on the level of instructional support that the student requires and will be discussed by the IEP team. The educational team will recommend programs based on the individual student needs, the complexity and/or severity of the student's disability.

FINE ARTS

The MUSD Fine Arts programs offer diverse opportunities in both visual and performing arts for students at all experience levels. These courses are focused on both skill development and creative expression. Note: Not all courses are able to be offered at all sites.

Band

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Beginning Band	**5th- 8th**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
Beginning Band courses develop students' technique for playing brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments and cover a variety of non-specified band literature styles (concert, marching, orchestral, and modern styles).			

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Advanced Band	**5th- 8th**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
Prerequisite: Site approval At the advanced level, students will have the opportunity to experience creating and performing music, while applying specific skills and concepts to a Band instrument. Students will continue to develop their understandings of tone, technique, range, scales, rhythms, intonation, theory, history, performance etiquette, and collaborative skills. Students will have various educational performances and experiences.			

Orchestra

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Beginning Orchestra	**5th- 8th**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
Orchestra courses are designed to develop students' abilities to play string instruments, covering a variety of string and orchestral literature styles. Instrument choices include violin, viola, cello and bass.			

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Advanced Orchestra	**5th- 8th**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
This course is for the advancing string player with an emphasis on improving individual musicianship. This class will include Chamber Music ensemble experience and incorporate more advanced music theory. Students will prepare and perform concerts each semester, some of which will be outside of school hours. Instrument choices include violin, viola, cello and bass.			

Choir

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Choir	**5th- 8th**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
In this course students will have the opportunity to experience creating and performing unison, two-part, and basic three-part choral literature. Students will learn to sing expressively with accuracy. They will be exposed to Western and non-Western (multicultural) music. Students will have a basic understanding of sight reading, composition, music terms (vocabulary), and singing skills.			

Dance

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Dance	**5th- 8th**	**SEMESTER**	
Description			
Dance Technique courses provide experience in one or several dance forms (e.g., modern, jazz, ballet, and tap). Initial classes are usually introductory in nature, while the more advanced classes concentrate on improving students' technique and may offer or require experience in choreography and dance evaluation.			

Mathematics

In order to best prepare our students for college and careers, the study of mathematics continues to shift its focus from computational procedures to conceptual understanding and connecting it to the world. In an effort to ensure the most appropriate placement in middle level math, multiple criteria are used to identify students who may benefit from acceleration.

The math diagnostics tests given to all students in 5th, 6th, and 7th grades are aptitude tests designed to assess a student's readiness to accelerate in math. This allows students the opportunity to demonstrate readiness yearly. By using this test as one of the main indicators for math placement, we are identifying students who are indeed ready for more complex concepts.

Students are more successful in all mathematics courses if they have a solid understanding of the standards in math class prerequisites. Thus, decisions about recommending acceleration in math courses at the middle level are made very thoughtfully and in the best interest of students. It is important to note that the rigor expected in the Arizona Standards for Mathematics and the instructional materials in all K-8 math classes promote a deeper understanding of math for all of our students, regardless of the math class in which they are placed. Note: Not all courses are able to be offered at all sites.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
5th Grade Mathematics	**5**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
The instruction provided in this course of study follows the 5th Grade State standards and will focus on three critical areas: 1) develop understanding of ratio and rate and use multiplicative reasoning to solve ratio and rate problems; 2) develop competency of division of whole numbers and fractions and extend the notion of number to the system of rational numbers; and 3) develop understanding of expressions, equations, and inequalities.			

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
6th Grade Mathematics	**6**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

The instruction provided in this course of study follows the 6th Grade State standards and will focus on three critical areas: 1) develop understanding of ratio and rate and use multiplicative reasoning to solve ratio and rate problems; 2) develop competency of division of whole numbers and fractions and extend the notion of number to the system of rational numbers; and 3) develop understanding of expressions, equations, and inequalities.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Honors Pathway (5th &6th) Mathematics	**5th & 6th**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

This accelerated course blends the core standards of 6th and 7th grade mathematics and moves at a rigorous pace to prepare students for 7th Grade Pre-Algebra and Algebra I in 8th grade. Students deepen their understanding of ratios and rates, extend fraction knowledge to operations with rational numbers (including negatives), and apply these skills to real-world problem-solving.

Learners develop strong skills in writing and interpreting expressions and equations, analyzing variable relationships, and applying statistical thinking through data interpretation and measures of center and variability. In geometry, students reason about shapes and use formulas to determine area, surface area, and volume. Instruction centers on six major clusters: Ratio and Proportion, The Number System, Expressions and Equations, Functions, Geometry, and Statistics and Probability.

Through this enriched curriculum, students build the reasoning and problem-solving foundation needed for advanced middle school mathematics.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
7th Grade Mathematics	**7**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

The instruction provided in this course of study follows the 7th Grade State standards and will focus on two critical areas: 1) develop understanding of proportional relationships, and 2) develop understanding of operations with rational numbers and work with expressions, inequalities, and linear equations.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Pre-Algebra	**7**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

This accelerated course will follow all the State standards for 8th Grade math and selected State standards for 7th Grade math. The course will focus on four critical areas: 1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; 2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; 3) solving problems involving scale drawings and geometric constructions, and working with two- and-three dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area and volume; and 4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples. After successful completion of this course, students will be prepared for Algebra I.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
8th Grade Mathematics	**8**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
The instruction provided in this course of study follows the 8th Grade State standards and will focus on three critical areas: 1) develop understanding of expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; 2) develop understanding of the concept of a function and use functions to describe quantitative relationships; and 3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, congruence, and understanding, and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.			

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Algebra I	**8**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
This course is designed to introduce the skills, strategies, and vocabulary involved in algebraic problem solving. It includes algebra concepts, functions, probability, statistics, analysis of graphs and charts, number theory, and connections to geometry. Emphasis will be on skills and application of the concepts of algebra and building a strong foundation for continuing the study of mathematics. *High School credit can be earned			

Physical Education

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
General Physical Education - Grade 5	**5**	**YEAR-LONG**	
General Physical Education - Grade 6	**6**	**YEAR-LONG**	
General Physical Education - Grade 7	**7**	**YEAR-LONG**	
General Physical Education - Grade 8	**8**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
This course is a semester-long course but may be taken both semesters during any or all middle school academic years due to differentiated curriculum at each grade level. Physical Education students learn the value of exercise, proper nutrition, sun safety, cardiovascular fitness, health physiology, and how to incorporate fitness in their everyday lifestyles. A strong emphasis is placed on promoting a positive self-image for all students. Our objective is to assist each student to develop physically, emotionally, and mentally. We believe these skills will help students establish a lifetime appreciation of the value of fitness. Character and fair play are incorporated into all activities, including individual, team and lifetime sports, and fitness activities. Students take part in cross-curricular activities to consider how wellness integrates into other content areas. MUSD middle level physical education aims to promote the development of healthy habits and an awareness of wellness as students are encouraged to consider physical fitness plans for life.			

Science

Middle level Science courses offer rich context for students to develop as future ready learners, fostering the skills of critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration along with information literacy, through the study of engineering, making connections between Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM). MUSD's Middle School Science also embeds 3-Dimensional Learning as outlined in the Framework for K-12 Science Education and the Arizona State Science Standards: 1) Science and Engineering Practices; 2) Crosscutting Concepts, and 3) Disciplinary Core Ideas.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
6th Grade Science	**6**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
This course covers topics of Life, Physical, and Earth/Space Sciences. Life Science includes the analysis of the relationships among various organisms and their environment by studying populations of organisms in an ecosystem. The main concept in the Physical Science portion is energy and how it is stored and transferred. Earth and Space Science provides the foundation for students to understand the relationships between the atmosphere along with its layers and the earth's water, along with earth's relationship to the solar system. The process of scientific experimental design through the use of science and engineering practices, the history, and nature of science, which includes personal social perspectives, are interwoven throughout the course. This course is taught using standards-based research modules that highlight 3-dimensional learning and future ready skills including critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication, and high student engagement.			

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
7th Grade Science	**7**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
This course covers topics of Life and Earth/Space Sciences with the major focus being Earth and Space Science. Life Science focuses on the characteristics of living things, the diversity of life, and how organisms change over time. Topics covered in the Earth and Space domain include the structure of earth and its systems and processes. Physical Science introduces students to the physical concept of the relationship between force and motion. The process of scientific experimental design through the use of science and engineering practices, the history, and nature of science which includes personal and social perspectives are interwoven throughout the course. This course is taught using standards-based research modules that highlight 3-dimensional learning and future ready skills including critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication and high student engagement			

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
8th Grade Science	**8**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
This course covers topics of Life and Physical Sciences. Life Science focuses on how organisms change over time in terms of biological adaptation emphasizing diversity, behavior, genetics, and heredity. Physical Science introduces students to chemistry (physical and chemical properties of matter) and understanding physics and waves. The process of scientific experimental design through the use of science and engineering practices, the history, and nature of science which include personal and social perspectives that are interwoven throughout the course. This course is taught using standards-based research modules that highlight 3-dimensional learning and future ready skills including critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication and high student engagement			

History & Social Science

Middle grade History & Social Science will prepare students to be educated and engaged citizens. Preparing students for contemporary society cannot be accomplished without a strong emphasis on *civics, economics, geography, and history* – the core disciplines of history & social science. It is imperative that each generation gain an understanding of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to participate fully in civic life in a rapidly changing world. Note: Not all courses are able to be offered at all sites.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
6th Grade Social Studies	**6**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

This course examines Global Studies: World Regions and Culture of the Eastern Hemisphere from ancient civilizations to the Renaissance and Reformation. The content focus will be viewed through geographic and historical lenses. Sixth grade students will understand the cultural, religious, economic, and political systems of selected societies in the Eastern Hemisphere. Regions in the Eastern Hemisphere include the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, Asia (east, south, and southeast) and Oceania. The course will include content from the following historical era: beginnings of human society, early river civilizations, classical civilizations, rise and fall of empires, development of the feudal systems, and the Renaissance and Reformation. Students will be able to apply the lessons of world history to their lives as citizens of the United States and members of the world community.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
7th Grade Social Studies	**7**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

This course focuses on Integrated Global Studies from the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment to the present. The content focus will be viewed through historical and geographic lenses. Seventh grade students will understand the relationships and interactions between societies and cultures in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. United States History will be taught as it intersects with global issues. The course will include content from the following historical eras: Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, revolutions around the world, global imperialism, industrialization and the rise of organized labor, global depressions, World War I and II, Cold War, and global conflicts. Students will be able to apply the lessons of world history to their lives as citizens of the United States and members of the world community.

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
8th Grade Social Studies	**8**	**YEAR-LONG**	

Description

This course focuses on Citizenship and Civic Engagement in today' s society. The content focus will be viewed through civic and economic lenses. Citizenship and civic engagement will be taught through inquiry. Eighth grade students will make connections between historical and contemporary issues as a basis for implementing change in society. Students will recognize and practice their roles and responsibilities as both American and global citizens. United States History will focus on the major events that have their roots in the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and subsequent amendments. The course will include content from the following topics: landmark Supreme Court cases, Civil Rights movements, immigration, social movements and issues, human rights & genocide, environmental issues, information and literacy age, and terrorism. Students will be able to apply the knowledge and skills to help them participate fully in civic life in a rapidly changing world.

Technology

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Chromebook Repair & Robotics	**5th, 6th, 7th and 8th**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
Robotics: This course covers robotics platforms, coding, sensors, and automation. You will learn how these technologies are applied in real-world industries like manufacturing, construction, and logistics. Chromebook Repair: In this hands-on course, you will learn to repair your school's Chromebook fleet, developing valuable skills in high-quality tech support and exceptional customer service.			

World Language

Course Title	*Grade(s)*	*Duration*	***School Site:*** ***AFIA***
Spanish I (High School Credit)	**8**	**YEAR-LONG**	
Description			
This course is an introduction to the language and the culture of the Spanish-speaking world. The student learns vocabulary and grammar through listening, speaking, reading and writing. Emphasis is on simple conversation skills			