Berkshire Middle School

Eighth Grade Course Catalog

2026-2027



21707 West Fourteen Mile Road
Beverly Hills, MI 48025

REQUIRED COURSES

American History (all year, every day)
The 8th-grade social studies program delves into American history, providing an in-depth exploration from the period of the U.S. Constitution through to the Reconstruction Era following the Civil War. This course goes beyond mere historical facts, integrating economics, civics, and geography to offer a comprehensive understanding of each era. A key component of this curriculum is the focus on equipping students with essential skills for academic success, including organizational strategies, study techniques, and critical thinking skills. These are designed to prepare students for the rigors of high school academics, ensuring they have the tools necessary to analyze historical events, understand their implications, and appreciate their relevance to contemporary issues.

Language Arts (all year, every day)
The 8th grade Language Arts course is a comprehensive exploration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Integrated into an engaging curriculum that spans across the year with projects in research, literary analysis, and personal narrative writing. Emphasizing sentence structure, grammar, usage, and vocabulary. This course dives into the study of poetry, historical fiction, realistic fiction, and science fiction texts. Designed around thematic units such as culture and belonging, approaching adulthood, and impacting the world. Students will connect deeply with the material, fostering a sense of empathy, understanding, and self-awareness. Through a blend of interactive projects and literary exploration, students will develop critical thinking and effective communication skills, preparing them for the complexities of the world around them.

Integrated Science (all year, every day)
In the 8th Grade Science course, students will leverage the knowledge gained in previous years to delve into more complex scientific concepts, including changes in the Earth, energy transformations in chemical reactions within living systems, genetics, the impact of environmental conditions on organisms, and the principles of force, energy, and motion. This curriculum emphasizes the application of science and engineering practices and crosscutting concepts as outlined by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), encouraging students to plan investigations, collect and analyze data, and use models for constructing explanations. By actively engaging in these scientific processes, students will develop a deeper understanding of the world around them, enhancing their analytical, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. This course is designed to empower students to apply scientific principles to real-world situations, fostering a generation of informed and inquisitive individuals ready to tackle future

Mathematics (all year, every day)
Math 8 is a comprehensive, engaging course that covers all Grade 8 standards. In this course, students tackle exciting new ideas and concepts in preparation for the next level of mathematics. They extend earlier understandings of proportional relationships to study linear relationships and work with linear equations with one and two variables. Among other things, they are also introduced to the idea of functions and have their first encounter with irrational numbers.

Integrated Math 1 aims to deepen and extend student understanding built in previous courses by focusing on developing fluency with solving linear equations, inequalities, and systems. These skills are extended to solving simple exponential equations, exploring linear and exponential functions graphically, numerically, symbolically, and as sequences, and by using regression techniques to analyze the fit of models to distributions of data.
Prerequisites: 8th grade math (or equivalent Math 7/8)

ELECTIVE COURSES

World Language – Spanish 2 and French 1B (all year, every day)
(Prerequisite: Spanish 1/French 1A)
Students will continue their studies of French or Spanish from the seventh grade. Emphasis will be on continuing the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as the understanding of the French or Spanish speaking people and their culture. NOTE: Students in the full year French course will be expected to enter Level Two in high school. Spanish students are expected to enter Level Three in high school.

French Grades 6-8 = Level One at BPS High Schools (1 HS Credit)
Spanish Grades 6-8 = Level One and Two at BPS High Schools (2 HS Credits)

Course Name	Grade Level	Length	Content	Credit
Intro to French	6th	Every other day all year	French 1 Semester 1 Q1	N/A
French 1A	7th	Semester	French 1 Semester 1 Q2	0.5
French 1B	8th	All year	French 1 Semester 2	0.5
Intro to Spanish	6th	Every other day all year	Spanish 1 Semester 1	N/A
Spanish 1	7th	Semester	Spanish 1 Semester 2	1.0
Spanish 2	8th	All year	Spanish 2 Semester 1 & 2	1.0

World Language
These courses help students to recombine practiced material and interpret simple messages in speaking/ expressive communication, listening/receptive skills, reading, and writing. They deepen a student's understanding of the culture. Students will begin to speak and write in longer, more complex sentences and communicate about the past. They will be comfortable with detailed personal information, and will read and comprehend simple instructions and stories.

- French 1B
- Spanish 2

World languages taught at middle school follow the same scope and sequence, use the same textbooks, and administer the same common assessments.

Physical Education (semester)
Students will participate in activities that are designed to help them understand and value physical activity and physical fitness and its contribution towards a healthy, active lifestyle. The lessons will also develop skills and game strategies in a variety of team and individual sports/activities. Students will develop skills that emphasize different aspects of fitness in the areas of fitness, net/wall activities, striking and fielding, invasion sports, and aquatics. Activities might include but are not limited to fitness training (cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, agility, and flexibility), conditioning, frisbee golf, badminton, volleyball, soccer, basketball, floor hockey and swimming.

Physical Education- All Girls (semester)
In this course only for females, students will acquire the knowledge essential to enhancing and further develop healthy levels of physical fitness through both non-competitive lifelong activities and traditional sports. Throughout the semester, students will work to develop and increase self-esteem through participation in numerous, diverse, fitness exercises such as Pilates, aerobics, yoga, power walking, jogging, and strength training. Covered sports will include handball, soccer, basketball, volleyball, pickleball, tennis, softball, and swimming. Students will also have the opportunity to attend a Plum Market and Beverly Hills Club field trip.

Skills For Living (semester)
This is a semester course where students will learn various 21st century skills. It is a cooperative learning style class with opportunities for hands-on activities. Students will learn how to work well in a group as well as on their own. Students will complete many invaluable lessons on topics such as: Kitchen Safety, Food Labs and Cooking Basics, Nutrition, Chores, Growth Mindset, Handling Anxiety, Positivity, Stress Management, Establishing Healthy Friendships, Digital Citizenship, Email Etiquette, Teamwork, How Supermarkets Operate and Consumerism, etc. These are skills that will help students prepare for a successful future and create positive habits.

Skills for Success (semester)
Students in 7th and 8th grade Skills for Success will learn various 21st century skills. It is a cooperative learning style class with opportunities for hands-on activities. Students will gain independence, self-awareness and life skills. Students will complete many invaluable lessons on topics such as: Kitchen Safety, Food Labs and Cooking Basics, Growth Mindset, Digital Citizenship, Email Etiquette, Teamwork, Finance & Spending, SMART Goals, Career Exploration, etc. These are skills that will help students prepare for a successful future and create positive habits.

Adventures in Art (semester)
This course will expose students to a variety of two and three dimensional art work. Experiences in this class include: painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, graphic design, as well as many other forms of art. Students will increase their creative thinking skills, gain confidence and proficiency in working with a variety of mediums.

Art by Design (semester)
This course focuses on digital art: graphic design, digital photography, and computerized art. Students will utilize Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. Students will work with the elements of art and the principles of design. Some projects may include: typography, vector drawing, cover design, poster design, and digital photography. Students will create projects revolving around design for both new and existing products using traditional art media. Students will be able to take home professionally printed copies of their work created in class.

Explorations in Art (semester)
This course will increase students' skill levels in art. Students in this course will be exposed to and will work with two and three dimensional works of art. Projects may include: sketchbooks, color theory, painting, ceramics, and printmaking. Students may also have experiences working in graphic design using Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator.

Theatre Arts (semester)
Theater Arts, a one-semester elective for 7th and 8th graders, is an activity-based course. The objectives are for students to gain knowledge and experience in performing and to improve communication skills. The emphasis is on participation, individually and in groups. Students will create and perform improvisations and scripted scenes applying the skills and knowledge gained in the course. The students will participate in pantomimes; the use of voice, improvisations, extemporaneous activities, and planned performances.

Engage (semester)
The design and purpose of this course is to provide a collaborative space for students to inquire, design, and create through inquiry-based learning. Students will explore questions, challenges, topics, or technologies of interest, at their own pace, and in directions of their choosing with the guidance of the teacher. Students will plan and reflect on their creations, processes, successes, and difficulties through multimodal learning. The goal of this program is to prepare students for global learning opportunities by engaging their interest and imagination in science, technology,
engineering, arts, and math. Students will develop their cognitive processes of analysis, comparison, inference, evaluation, and synthesis applied to a range of academic domains and problem-solving contexts.

Exploring Engineering (semester)
The Exploring Engineering Technology class is for students interested in designing and building individual projects using the design process as a guide. After learning "shop" safety and how to properly use the design process to come up with a working, to scale design of their project, students will have the opportunity to build their project in the lab. Two projects commonly produced are a CO_2 race car and a wooden candy machine. Students will have the opportunity to use a variety of materials, hand tools, and power tools, to complete their projects.

Applied Engineering (semester)
The Applied Engineering Technology class is a hands-on experience where several different areas of technology will be explored. The course is designed where there will be more emphasis placed on group projects and designs emphasizing various industry environments. This class will explore major areas such as design simple and complex machines, and research development. A strong emphasis will be placed on problem-solving activities in which both individual and group efforts are developed. Projects may include robotics, 3D design, and more.

Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) (semester)
This course is for students interested in engineering drawing and design. Students will be exposed to a variety of drawing techniques and computer-aided 2-D and 3-D software design programs to learn the fundamentals of communicating engineering ideas. Students will have the opportunity to see their ideas and drawings come to life using a 3-D printer and laser cutter. Students will demonstrate their communication and engineering skills through the development of a series of projects.

Music Options

Choir 8A and Choir 8B (semester OR all year, every day)
8th Grade Choir focuses on advanced musicianship and vocal technique through diverse repertoire, including classical, musical theater, and popular music. Students will refine their skills with daily warm-ups, piano notation, ensemble work, and music reading. This intermediate choir is open to all students. Students who have previous middle school choir experience may take the class all year or one semester only. Students who have never been in choir must sign up for the "all year" option. One goal of this class is to prepare students for the high school choral program. Participation in Solo & Ensemble Festival and the MSVMA Honors Choir is encouraged at this level. **Attendance is required at all choir performances.** In order to participate in the end-of-the-year trip to Chicago, students must be enrolled in choir during second semester.

Band (all year, every day)
Band is an exciting and rewarding experience for students. Students will focus on preparing themselves for high school band and will focus on rhythm, instrument technique, improving tone, and performing challenging new music. Band has 4 performance opportunities throughout the year and **attendance at performances is mandatory.** Daily practice is expected for students who are enrolled in Band.
Prerequisites: 2–3 years of playing experience.

Orchestra (all year, every day)
Students will enjoy their musical experience in 8th Grade Orchestra! Enhance your instrumental skills and further your overall musicianship with periodic lessons in music theory and history. Students will focus on advancing their technique, including rhythm, bowing, shifting, and vibrato skills. Students will participate in approximately four performances throughout the year, including performances at MSBOA Orchestra and Solo & Ensemble Festivals. **Class requirements will include: averaging twenty-five (25) minutes of practice daily during the week, bi-monthly playing tests, and attendance at all performances.**
Prerequisites: 2–3 years of playing experience.

COURSES RECOMMENDED BY TEACHERS

Reading Lab (semester, every day or all year, every other day)
Literacy is a small group reading intervention that allows students to strengthen their vocabulary, practice fluency, and focus on using comprehension strategies (inferring, making connections, questioning, visualizing, etc.) within texts. Literacy allows students to learn and practice reading strategies through teacher modeling, cooperative learning, and independent practice. In this strategy-based course, students will benefit from this additional practice by using reading strategies for comprehension, decoding, and fluency when reading fiction and non-fiction texts. Students also have an opportunity to strengthen their writing skills through writer's workshop sessions. Students who qualify for this course typically fall below grade level in reading and would benefit from additional reading instruction. There is no additional homework in this class. A certified Reading Specialist, who is a member of the district reading department, will instruct this course.

Math Lab (all year, every day or all year, every other day)
Math Lab is taken alongside Math 6, 7, or 8 as a separate math class designed to support and strengthen students' math skills. This course focuses on pre-teaching and reinforcing key concepts and skills taught in Math 6, 7, or 8, while also addressing foundational prerequisite skills to help students build confidence and competence in math. By providing targeted instruction and practice, Math Lab prepares students not only for success in their current math class but also for future middle school and high school math courses. Assessments may be used to monitor progress and guide individualized support. Math Lab is taken in conjunction with College Prep Math (two math classes per day). **Teacher recommendation is required.**

Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals A (all year, everyday)
Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals A is a class for newcomers to the U.S. Students learn English in the four domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students learn interpersonal communication skills and begin developing the academic language needed to be successful in their content area classes. This class is based on English level rather than grade level, and students may be in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade.

Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals B (all year, everyday)
Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals B is a language arts class that is aligned with the BPS language arts curriculum, with modifications to meet the needs of English language learners. Students work on the same reading and writing strategies, genres, literary analysis, and themes and skills as their native English-speaking classmates. The goal of this class is to help students develop increased fluency in their reading and to read increasingly difficult texts in English for multiple purposes. This class focuses on the application of multiple reading strategies in a variety of genres, the continued learning of high-frequency vocabulary, note-taking in academic settings and further development of listening and speaking skills. Students develop increased skill in the use of more complex grammatical conventions, such as identification of all parts of speech, singular and plural nouns, verb usage in past, present and future, subject-verb agreement, and compound and complex sentences. Writing skills are developed from the paragraph to the essay level using various organizational patterns. Students increase their proficiency in the use of multimedia as tools for language development. This class is based on English level rather than grade level, and students may be in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade.

Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals C (all year, everyday)
Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals C is aligned with the BPS language arts curriculum, with modifications to meet the needs of English language learners. Students work on the same reading and writing strategies, genres, literary analysis, and themes and skills as their native English-speaking classmates. The goal of this class is to help students develop increased fluency in their reading and to read increasingly difficult texts in English for multiple purposes. This class focuses on the application of multiple reading strategies in a variety of genres, particularly with a focus on their ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and increase their independent reading. Furthermore, students continue to develop their mastery of academic vocabulary, note-taking in academic settings and more extensive listening and speaking skills. Students develop increased skill in the use of complex grammatical conventions, such as more sophisticated verb usage, comparatives and superlatives, prepositions, dependent and independent clauses, and compound and complex sentences. Writing skills are developed at the five-paragraph essay level using various organizational patterns. Students increase their proficiency in the use of multimedia as tools for language development. This class is based on English level rather than grade level, and students may be in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade.

Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals (LAEB) Tutorial (all year, everyday)
Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals (LAEB) Tutorial is an elective offered to English language learners in ESL A, B, or C. In this class, students receive help with their content area classes such as science, social studies, math, and language arts. The staff works in conjunction with the mainstream teachers to provide additional support. Tutorial may also be used for more instruction in the English language or in American culture.