



**Madison County Schools**

**Middle School Course Offering  
Description Guide**

**2016-2017**

**This guide is designed to explain the basic requirements for successful steps sixth through eighth grades plus give the tools to prepare for a smooth transition into high school. Each middle school has developed its own extracurricular portion of the catalog that is appropriate for that campus. Because of enrollment differences and student individuality, each campus may have some differences in these course offerings.**

## Sixth Grade Course Description Guide

### **Advanced Courses:**

Students will be placed in advanced courses or learning strategies based on multiple data points.

### **Courses:**

**Language Arts:** In this course, students will receive instruction in the following critical areas: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. Grade specific skills increase with difficulty to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and application.

**Mathematics:** In this course, students will receive instruction in the following critical areas: ratios and proportional relationships, the number system, expressions and equations, geometry, statistics and probability. Grade specific skills increase with difficulty to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and application.

**Social Studies:** Using geography as a framework, this course focuses on the cultural and historical developments of the Western Hemisphere with emphasis on the neighbors of the United States. Other skills developed are the differing physical landscapes, the interpretation and application of maps, graphs, charts, and other social studies tools. Also included is a study of people from self, families, communities, cities, regions, the United States, and the world. Literacy skills will be embedded in the social studies curriculum.

**Science:** Sixth grade science builds upon concepts introduced in kindergarten through the fifth grade. Students will explore structure and function in living systems, populations and ecosystems, diversity and adaptations of organisms, earth's history, the structure of the earth's system, earth's place in the solar system, and other physical sciences. As an inquiry-based science, an emphasis is placed on the ability to ask questions, observe, experiment, measure, problem solve and reason, and use the tools of science to gather data and communicate findings. Common Core literacy skills will be embedded in the science curriculum.

**ICT I:** Information and Communication Technology is an innovative instructional program that prepares students to effectively use technology in learning, communication, and life. Students will study interpersonal and self-directional skills; basic technology operation and concepts; social, ethical, and human issues in technology; technology communication tools; technology resource tools; multimedia presentation applications; word processing applications; spreadsheet applications; and design applications.

## Seventh Grade Course Description Guide

### **Advanced Courses:**

Students will be placed in advanced courses or learning strategies based on multiple data points.

### **Courses:**

**Language Arts** – Seventh grade language arts places emphasis on the continuing development of communication skills. In this course, students will build on previous knowledge, expanding the depth and scope of their abilities, purposes, and audience. Students will learn to understand differing points of view, distinguish between fact and opinion, become more adept language users by participating in classroom discussions, and learn appropriate group communication skills. Students will plan, draft, revise, and edit narratives, descriptions, and explanations with attention to composition and style, as well as sentence formation, usage, and mechanics. Particular attention is given to word choice, organization, grammar, and spelling in the context of meaningful activities. Students will also read and gather information from a variety of sources appropriate for adolescents, including classic literature, contemporary novels, technological sources, and interdisciplinary themes. Students will be challenged to develop individual and collaborative skills through participation in independent and group activities in a positive, risk-taking environment. Students will reflect on their processes and growth in language arts through self, peer, and teacher evaluation.

**Mathematics** – This course is designed to prepare students for 8th Grade Math. According to the Standards, critical areas that will be addressed include ratios and proportional relationships, the number system, expressions and equations, geometry, and statistics and probability. A variety of problem-solving techniques, real world applications, and technology are used when exploring these concepts.

**Compacted Mathematics** – This course is designed to prepare students for 8th Grade Compacted Math/Algebra I. This course includes all of the 7th Grade Math content, as well as roughly the first half of the 8th Grade Math content. Because of the pace and depth of the course content, it is recommended that students enrolling in this class have demonstrated deep understanding of the mathematical content and flexible problem-solving skills in their prior course work.

**Social Studies (Eastern Hemisphere Studies to 1750)** – Using geography as a framework, this course focuses on the cultural and historical developments in the Eastern Hemisphere with emphasis on Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, and the Pacific Islands. The course is structured to provide a foundation for understanding global affairs. The differing physical landscapes of the eastern Hemisphere will be examined. Skills developed will include the interpretation and application of maps, graphs, charts, political cartoons, primary documents, and other social studies tools. The theme that is incorporated in this course refers to a curriculum progression in the study of people from self, families, communities, cities, regions, the United States, and the world.

**Science** – Seventh grade science builds upon science concepts introduced from kindergarten through the sixth grade. Students will compare and contrast structure and function in living systems, explore the processes of the reproduction and heredity of organisms, determine how organisms co-exist in their environment, explore how environmental factors of population influence the formation of an ecosystem, examine the survival strategies of organisms over many generations, explore the composition and changes of the Earth system, explain the causes of lunar phases, eclipses, and Earth seasons, and investigate the chemical and physical properties of matter. As an inquiry based science, emphasis is placed on the ability of students to ask questions, observe, experiment, measure, solve problems, reason, use the tools of science, gather data, and communicate findings.

**ICT II** – Students in Information and Communication Technology II, (ICT II) , complete study in interpersonal and self-directional skills; input applications; technology lab management and networking; publishing applications; graphic design applications; web design applications; database applications; and technology problem solving and decision making tools.

## **Eighth Grade Course Description Guide**

### **Advanced Courses:**

Students will be placed in advanced and learning strategies courses based on multiple data points.

### **Courses:**

**Language Arts:** Eighth grade language arts is designed to involve the student in applying reading, writing, listening, speaking, and observation skills in an independent manner through meaningful interdisciplinary tasks and assignments. Emphasis is placed on moving from the literal to the abstract in the student's critical thinking skills and in the use of language. The student will become a skillful interpreter of the persuasive strategies used in the mass media. Refinement in grammar and spelling skills will be demonstrated in written composition, word choice, organization, and style. Students will also read and gather information from a variety of sources appropriate for adolescents, including classic literature, contemporary novels, technological sources, and interdisciplinary themes. Students will continue to develop an appreciation for literature through the study of literary elements in classic and contemporary settings. Students will be challenged to develop individual and collaborative skills through participation in independent and group activities in a positive, risk-taking environment. Students will reflect on their processes and growth in reading through self, peer, and teacher evaluation.

**Mathematics** – This course is designed to prepare students for Algebra I. According to the Standards, critical areas that will be addressed include the number system, expressions and equations, functions, geometry, and statistics and probability. A variety of problem-solving techniques, real world applications, and technology are used when exploring these concepts.

**8th Grade Compacted Math/Algebra I** – This course is designed to prepare students for Geometry and Algebra II. The course includes roughly the second half of the 8th Grade Math content, as well as all of the content for Algebra I. Because of the pace and depth of the course content, it is recommended that students enrolling in this class have demonstrated deep understanding of the mathematical content and flexible problem-solving skills in their prior course work.

**US History to 1877** – This course focuses on the historical development of the United States from Pre-Columbian time through Reconstruction. Examining the events involving Native Americans and various European settlers, students will understand origins of political ideas which led to the development of our democratic society. Students will discover how conflicts over political and economic ideologies marked the course of US history through the Reconstruction period. Civics, history, geography, and economics are emphasized throughout the course. Civic concepts necessary for citizenship participation in a democratic society will be developed. The study of history will show how Americans have been affected by past events. Skill develop will include, but not be limited to, the interpretation and application of maps, charts, political cartoons, primary documents, and other social studies tools.

**Science** – Eighth grade science is designed to investigate properties and changes of properties of matter, motions and forces, energy transfer, structure and function in living systems, and the structure of the earth system. Throughout the teaching process, inquiry, safety skills, scientific method process, measuring, use of scientific equipment, current events, environmental issues, and hands-on activities will be emphasized.

**STEM** – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Applications is an innovative instructional program that prepares students to engage in future academic, career and technical courses of study in high school, community college, and institutes of higher learning. STEM will include study in technology literacy, the design process, emerging technologies, computer-aided design, sustainable design and technology, power and energy, robotics simulation, financial and economic literacy, and workplace skills for the 21st century.

## Elective Courses

**Physical Education:** Physical education for middle school students provides an opportunity for students to participate in a variety of competitive games and activities. Participation in competitive games is a developmental progression for teen-aged students. Fitness is a major component of this class. Students will participate in a variety of developmentally appropriate fitness activities. Students are expected to be highly engaged in each day's activities, not just "go through the motions." A student's participation, discipline, and sportsmanship are used to determine grades. Students who do not dress appropriately for the day's activities will receive a failing grade.

**Team Sports (Girls):** Students in this class may participate in intramural competition in basketball, junior varsity track and junior varsity cross country. Students will be required to participate in all conditioning drills daily. Students who fail to participate in class or dress-out may be withdrawn from this class and reassigned to a PE class by an administrator.

**Team Sports (Boys):** Students who enroll in this class for cross country or track will participate in running classes during the fall semester that include a progression of distance running beginning with each student's individual capabilities and resulting in each student running a distance of 2-3 miles by the end of the school year. Students will train to compete in interscholastic cross-country meets. Students who enroll in this class for football will participate in intramural competition. Students who fail to fully participate in conditioning, drills, scrimmages or other scheduled competitions may be withdrawn from this class and reassigned to a PE class by an administrator

**Band:** Students must pass the Selmer Music Aptitude Test before enrolling in band. In addition to the music test, math, reading, and conduct grades are also considered to determine a student's eligibility to enroll in band. Basic notes, rhythm patterns, and scales are taught. Students are required to perform in a fall and a spring concert each year.

**Choir:** Students at the middle school level who choose to pursue choral performance identify with the sounds of singing and its expressive qualities. Vocal maturation results in an entirely different singing sound from earlier grades. Students must successfully complete an audition and parents must pay a fee for uniforms to be enrolled in the course.

**Gifted:** Gifted classes at the middle school level use a curriculum that includes 7 components: meta-cognition, creativity, research, communication, group dynamics, thinking, and self-directed learning. With access to multimedia software, and other instructional strategies, students are given the opportunity to discover new strengths, interests, and abilities. Students will build the capacity to effectively use their knowledge and experience in any situation. Students must complete testing in the Madison County Schools to determine their eligibility for enrollment in a gifted class.

**Spanish:** This course is designed to introduce students to the language and culture of Spanish-speaking countries. Students who enroll in this class must have an 80 average for 7<sup>th</sup> grade language arts.

**General Music:** This course focuses on singing unison and two-part songs, studying music theory, music history, and orchestral instruments. There is no performance requirement. A student's progress will be monitored through tests, projects, written work, and class participation.

**Drama:** This course will introduce students to plays. Students will study theater and theater artists and learn to respond appropriately to creative products. Students may create scripts based on personal experiences, imagination, literature, or history. At the end of this course, students will understand the relationships that exist between theater, other arts, other subject areas, and everyday life.

**Arts:** Through the study of visual arts, students respond to life experiences through images, structures and tactile works of art and design. This program involves production, critical analysis, history and culture, aesthetics, and connections among the visual arts, other content areas, and everyday life.

**Creative Writing:** This course is an elective class students may take in addition to English and Reading. This course provides extra experience in writing for various audiences and purposes. Creativity is encouraged and

accuracy, organization, and detail in expression are developed in this course. Students will conduct short research projects as part of the course. By the end of the course students should be able to write multi-paragraph pieces that may be in the form of fairy tales, tall tales, stories, descriptions, dialogue, letters, narrative of personal experiences, summaries, and other writing formats. Literature may be used to stimulate the students' imagination, focus attention, and to prompt writing activities.

**Learning Strategies:** Students will be placed by counselors and administrators in the specific subject area determined by the student's academic needs. This course may be used as a semester or full year course.

**Study Hall:** This course is a supervised prep period where students are encouraged to complete homework, catch up on missing assignments and study for tests and quizzes. Students can also utilize school resources during this time.

**Cheerleading:** This is a physical education activity course designed for students who participate in the sport of cheerleading. The course will provide opportunities for individuals to develop skills, techniques, and conditioning necessary to be a successful cheerleader. Various team building strategies will be implemented. To participate, students must be selected from tryouts.

**Dance Team:** This is a physical education activity course designed for students who participate in the sport of dance. The course will provide opportunities for individuals to develop skills, techniques, and conditioning necessary to be a successful dancer. Various team building strategies will be implemented. To participate, students must be selected from tryouts.