

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Course Descriptions 2017-2018

**Aide positions:** Aide classes require a signature from a teacher, the librarian, or the office.

**Remember:** A parent needs to sign your elective choice form, and if it is not turned in on time, your electives will be chosen for you.

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### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Core Courses

#### LANGUAGE ARTS 8:

Eighth grade language arts emphasize the four areas of language arts: writing, reading, speaking and listening. In writing, the primary emphasis is on the writing process, leading – among other things – to the 5-paragraph literary essay and a fully annotated term paper, done in conjunction with the science department. The principles of grammar, mechanics, spelling and usage are taught to facilitate the writing process. Reading again focuses on vocabulary and comprehension with exposure to various genres, literary techniques and terminology. Group work and individual presentations are the main emphasis in speaking. Listening skills are developed as a vital part of all learning.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES 8:

Eighth grade social studies are an introduction to the various areas that a student may study in the senior high school social studies program. Such areas as anthropology, psychology, economics, and government will be examined in an exploratory manner; current development in these areas will be integral to the course. Multicultural perspectives and issues will be infused throughout the course.

#### SCIENCE 8 (Integrated program):

This is an integrated thematic program that teaches science the way it really is – a study of nature in which common principles operate in relationship to one another. Our program seamlessly interweaves major scientific disciplines such as life science, earth science, chemistry, physics and space science into a thematic framework. The program encourages technological and computer literacy as well as keeping abreast of scientific innovations. Students are required to plan, research and create a major term paper that sharpens and reinforces their intellectual skills. Students are encouraged to participate in the Science Olympiad, Alaska Science Fair, and other mentally stimulating competitions. Hands/minds-on activities are provided throughout the year.

#### MATH COURSES:

##### **Math 8:**

Students will continue to practice and improve their number sense, measure sense, and estimation skills, review and extend their arithmetic, calculator, and thinking skills by working with fractions, decimals, percents, large and small numbers, and negative numbers. Students will study variable, expressions, equations, multiple representations of data, and other algebra topics. Students will extend their understanding of geometry, including transformation and two and three dimensional figures, and their knowledge of probability and statistics. They will investigate the uses of mathematics outside the classroom. Successful completion of Math 7 and Math 8 will prepare a student to take algebra.

##### **Algebra:**

This course reviews and extends the use and understanding of the fundamental operation on real numbers as well as expressing quantitative statistics in the language of algebra and solving equations and inequalities. The second semester covers factoring polynomials, the use of rational expressions in equations, coordinate graphing, irrational numbers and the solution of simple quadratic equations. To be eligible for Algebra as an eighth grader, a student must have completed pre-algebra with a grade of “B” or higher. Students successfully completing this course will usually be placed in high school geometry.

##### **Geometry:**

This course covers the study of plane and three-dimensional geometry. There is an emphasis on clarity and precision of language and the logical development of geometric principles in deductive reasoning and proof. This will include work with points, lines, planes, angles, congruent triangles, circles, polygons, and transformations.

##### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH (Integrated):**

Physical Education is a curriculum that emphasizes life span fitness and the latest development in Sports Science. Traditional team sports such as basketball, volleyball, and soccer are offered as well as recreational units such as ping pong, dancing, and pickleball. Anatomy, cardiovascular fitness, sports nutrition, and basic exercise physiology are infused into instruction. Running, aerobics, strength training and personal fitness planning units are also integrated throughout.

The health portion of this class is designed to help students explore the human environment, including interpersonal relationships, personal decision making, and understanding emotions, mental health, anatomical and physiological aspects of sexual development and behavior, drug use, preparation for medical emergencies, nutrition and physical fitness, and personal hygiene, violence as a public health issue, parenting, personal safety, and related issues.

### Core Electives (Year Long)

**Band Advanced:** Prerequisite is previous band experience or director approval. Class is a sequel to intermediate band for those students wishing to continue their musical growth in a basically performance-oriented setting. This will include a study of music theory and history relevant to the music being learned and continued work on more advanced technique of the instrument. Annual performance includes a minimum of two school concerts and festival. Participation at the solo/ensemble festival is also possible. Placement will be dependent upon band director’s approval. Home practice is required.

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**Choir Advanced:** Advanced Choir is designed for students who have considerable singing experience. A challenging class - this ensemble will be expected to perform multiple concerts throughout the school year which may involve several performances community wide. Open to audition for boys and girls, the Adv. Choir is designed for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Depending on current membership, the choir may also be made up of only the higher voices. Advanced Choir members will also be performing all songs prepared in the Intermediate Choir. Students wishing to join must audition and receive the instructor's signature.

**Choir:** This class is designed for students who wish to explore the art of singing or continue membership in a vocal performance ensemble. Emphasis will be the basics of proper singing technique: posture, breathing, pronunciation, quality tone production, and projection. Music theory and history will be introduced as well as song in multiple languages. Multiple performances will be presented in this yearlong course including festivals and special appearances. All singers have the option of participating in our annual out-of-state spring tour if and when a tour is approved. Students may participate in solo/ensemble with permission of instructor. Open to all levels of singing and both grade levels.

**French B:** Students continue to develop and expand their proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing of French. Thematic topics such as courtesy expressions, home, school, city, country, animals, nature, transportation, careers, nationalities and geography are continued. Communicative activities in French will involve students in a variety of practical situations for further development of their oral fluency and written language skills. More in-depth studies of French and Francophone cultures as well as grammatical structures are done to assist students in building a strong foundation for entry into the high school French II course. Prerequisite is the successful completion of French A.

**Orchestra Advanced:** This class is a sequel to String Ensemble for students wishing to continue their musical growth in a basically performance-oriented setting. (Advanced seventh graders may audition for this mostly eighth grade class.) Less individual help is given than in String Ensemble. Private lessons are highly desirable and strongly recommended. It is preferred that students enrolling in this class have had some experience in third position. Annual performances include two evening school concerts, three assemblies, an area festival, a solo/ensemble festival for selected students, a tour to surrounding elementary schools, and a mall performance. Auditions are held in the fall for the even more advanced double quartets. Students should provide their own violins and violas. Cellos will be available for school use. (Another cello should be obtained for home practice.) String basses are provided by the school. Entrance to this class is by audition or former orchestra teacher recommendation.

**Spanish B:** Students continue to develop and expand their proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing of Spanish. Thematic topics such as courtesy expressions, food, clothing, the body, nature, transportation, careers, nationalities and geography are continued. Communicative activities in Spanish will involve students in a variety of practical situations for further independent development

of their oral fluency and written language skills. There is a more in-depth study of Spanish grammatical structures as well as language and culture to assist students in building a strong foundation for entry into the high school Spanish II course. Prerequisite for this class is the completion of 1A (passing) or passing the Spanish A comprehensive final exam with 80% or higher.

**\*Special Classes:** There are specialized courses available to those students who qualify for Special Ed. or Gifted Ed. Services. Furthermore, students who have completed algebra I in 7<sup>th</sup> grade will be able to take geometry. You will be automatically registered for these courses if you are currently in one of these programs.

## Second Electives (quarter/semester)

**Alaska Driver:** In this class students will explore road and driving safety for various vehicles. The skills/knowledge acquired will support learner permit basics. Students will be expected to complete a series of written assignments on various topics. The Alaska State Division of Motor Vehicles Manual will serve as the "textbook." Final exam is administered at the end of the course.

**Applied Tech : (semester)** In this course students will learn about how to use technology to solve problems, design projects, and create products. Projects are assigned and students are challenged to design solutions by using information, teamwork, technology, and their creativity. Solutions will be constructed using a variety of materials, hand tools, power tools, and computerized equipment. Some examples of projects include CO2 dragsters, air foil design, bridge construction, egg drop design, computer aided drafting, power boat construction, and many, many more. Projects will be different for each semester.

**Art Expanded: (semester)** This class will expand upon simple drawings, ceramics, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and various art methods. Art History lessons are part of this broad exposure which this course provides. Students use existing techniques and develop their own interpretations to produce a variety of products from the art of various cultures of the world. For the serious art student.

**Beginning Guitar: (semester):** This class will introduce students to the traditional 6 string acoustic guitar. **This class is for the beginning guitarist.** In this class, the student will learn how to apply basic musical concepts, such as rhythm, harmony, and melody to the guitar. Concepts taught will include tuning, note reading, strumming, and chord reading. Student must provide his/her own **acoustic guitar**, set of strings and guitar picks.

**Business Ed: GV Graphics (semester)** Be a part of a small GV business! Learn the basics of running a business through business letters, interviewing skills, resume writing, accounting, advertising, marketing, and production. Students in this class will run the business of designing and producing team t-shirts and GV gear for the school and students.

**Computers:** This class is the same as Business Ed. but only lasts a quarter, and there will be less emphasis on writing business letters, and resumes for the job world.

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**Creative Writing (semester):** This elective will provide opportunities for students to write in a variety of forms including: poems, essays, stories, letters, and magazine/newspaper articles. This class will periodically publish anthologies.

**Debate (semester):** If you are competitive and like to argue, this class is for you! Students in this elective will choose topics, research evidence and give persuasive speeches. The research, writing, and practicing will be done mostly during class, though some out of school time will be necessary. There are two (2) interscholastic debates per semester which take place on Saturdays at various locations. Students taking the class must commit to participate in one of the Saturday debate competitions. A willingness to research, write, and speak is necessary.

**Drama: (semester)** Drama will focus on three of those forms: narrative, expository, and improvisation. The course will survey the history of drama and its forms. Students are expected to participate on a daily basis as developing actors. Students will be expected to write and work cooperatively, as the semester project ultimately leads to a movie that small teams write and produce.

**Family & Consumer Science: (semester)** This course is designed for students to work in small groups and individually to explore all areas of the family and consumer sciences: food preparation and nutrition, care giving, textile creations and clothing care, living environments, personal finances, strictly personal issues and careers. Technology in the home and organizational management will be integrated into the studies. Students will complete activities that include research and a variety of hands-on and computer activities.

**Film & Video: (semester)** This elective provides the opportunity for students to become familiar with the process of taping, formatting, editing, sound, and text overlay. **\*Application required.**

**Law Studies: (semester)** This course is patterned after the Anchorage Youth Court. Students will be trained in court procedure and specific positions. Enrichment field trips are scheduled for the crime lab and courthouse. With teacher approval this course may be taken for two semesters.

**Library Aide: (semester)** Library aides earn an elective credit by assisting the adult library staff. Tasks include checking books in and out with a computerized system, photocopying, laminating, videotaping, and shelving books and magazines. Grades are based on attendance, attitude and accuracy. Library aides develop useful job skills and library knowledge and fill a very helpful role in our school. Interview and signature required from librarian on elective choice form.

**Literature Book Club (semester):** Students who love to read for fun but are just too busy should sign up for this alternative elective. Book Club membership includes: being surrounded by a variety of exciting books, spending time in the library, seeing what's new in the publishing world via the Internet, talking about good books with others who love to read, writing a weekly journal entry, and participating in special literacy events. There is no outside homework in this class which makes it a relaxing way to end the day!

**Math Support: (semester)** Problems and concepts that you encounter in your daily math classes will be explored further in this elective to improve achievement and understanding. You will be able to choose each day to work in small learning groups or alone on the math assigned in your core math class.

**Office Aide: (semester)** An office aide performs a wide variety of assigned duties in the front office. These duties include the collecting of attendance, delivery of call slips, messages and filing. Regular attendance is required. Signature is required by office staff on elective choice form.

**Outdoor Adventure:** This course is the Official Hunter Education Program sanctioned by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Hunter Education course is divided into five main categories. These categories include: gun safety, wildlife conservation and management – including importance of good habitat, animal anatomy, outdoor survival and first aid, and hunting values and ethics. Successful completion of this course will result in a life-long certification for Hunter Education that is honored in all 50 states and Canada. It is now a requirement in all 50 states and Canada to show proof of successful completion of a Hunter Education course before being able to purchase a hunting license. **No** firearms are used or handled in this class! Course materials will be provided by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

**Percussion Ensemble (semester):** Percussion Ensemble offers music students the opportunity to play traditional and non-traditional percussion instruments in a group setting. Basic drum rudiments will be taught in addition to mallet percussion techniques. A wide variety of instruments will be performed including the snare drum, drum set, xylophone, vibraphone, marimba, including non-traditional instruments such as trashcans, brooms, chairs, and wooden poles. This group is offered by teacher approval only.

**School Business Partnership-Suns Café:** Learn how to run a real business! Students learn interviewing methods and are each given a specific job title; they fill out time sheets, are responsible for daily ledger entries, and actually work in the café before and/or after school. Revenues from sales are used for community service projects that the class selects, such as books for the homeless, funds for Science Olympiad, canned foods for one of the food banks, etc.

**Science Projects (semester):** This class is for you if you enjoy making things, working with others, and being a part of friendly competition! You will be given a task to do and materials to use for building your project. You and your talented partners will design and test your project then compete against other teams. Students will start by choosing which projects will be done each quarter, and then teams will be formed for each project. Come ready to share ideas and think creatively!

**Science Seminar (Forensics):** GV CSI Crime Lab! This class is primarily lab-based involving aspects of Forensic Science. Students will scientifically investigate crime scenes by collecting and analyzing data, performing experiments, determining the validity of tests, and forming conclusions based off of the evidence and facts collected. If you love science, experimenting, and solving mysteries, this class is for you! Lab fee involved.

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**Strategies of Success: (semester)** This elective is designed to assist students who are struggling in their core classes. Through careful monitoring of daily assignments and assistance from a core team teacher, students will learn to organize, manage time more efficiently, prioritize daily work, and plan for long-term assignments. Students will also learn a variety of study skills to apply in all of their classes.

**Student Government:** School spirit! Community Spirit! This elective provides students with the opportunity to identify and implement projects that benefit the school and community. Each week students will be involved in a formal meeting to brainstorm, discuss and ultimately implement project ideas that will benefit our school and community. Come ready to get involved and bring ideas.

**Teacher Aide: (semester)** Aides are selected by individual teachers. Teacher aides assist teachers in filing materials, bulletin board preparation and various other duties. Grades are based on attendance, attitude and performance. Teacher signature required on elective choice form.

**Game Development: (semester)** What is even more fun than playing a game? Making your own! In our Game Development course, you will learn the computer science behind building your own games, so you can unleash them on friends and family to play. Discover what goes into making a video game from building the computer, to developing the code, to playing the game. This project-based course will teach you programming languages professional developers use such as python, java, and HTML, all while playing through levels of an interactive game.

**Video Productions/ Announcements: (semester)** This course will introduce students to a variety of broadcast technologies as well as communication skills. Students will be producing and anchoring not only daily school-wide announcements, but also video clips including interviews and human interest stories, and short documentaries. Skills being emphasized include: public speaking, interviewing, storyboard organization, video technology, and basic communication skills. Students will be selected for the class through an interview process.

**\*Application required.**