

**Stafford Middle School**  
**2009-2010**  
**7th Grade**

**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

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**Required Courses**

**English (Full Year):**

Seventh graders will strengthen their ability to communicate effectively through a program which stresses the importance of written communication. Sentence building, improved word usage and standard grammar skills will be emphasized. Students will learn how to compose several types of essays and apply composition skills to enhance their form and content. Students will explore various forms of literature to gain an understanding of literacy elements and an insight into themselves and others. Effective communication is the key to understanding!

**Pre-Advanced Placement English (Full Year):**

Pre-AP English provides qualified students with a foundation course designed to prepare them for the rigorous Advanced Placement program. Emphasis will be on literary analysis of classic and contemporary selections. Sophisticated research and writing processes will be introduced and applied extensively throughout the year. Students should expect an additional time requirement for this class and be willing to work independently. Student admission will be based on previous academic performance, standardized test scores and teacher recommendations. Please be sure to read the Pre AP Guidelines found at the back of this catalog.

**Reading: (Full Year):**

Seventh grade students will be guided through a program that will integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Applied vocabulary, comprehension strategies and critical thinking skills will be the emphasis of the program. Students will analyze literary genres and be given the opportunity to work on individual and group projects and research.

**Gifted and Talented Reading and English (Full Year):**

Seventh grade students who are currently identified in the Frisco ISD Gifted and Talented program will be guided through a challenging course that will expose them to a large variety of literature. Students will be required to read and analyze both classic and contemporary novels, participate in thematic units, conduct in-depth research, complete individual and group projects and write extensively throughout the year. Critical thinking skills will be emphasized to prepare students for future advanced classes.

**Mathematics (Full Year):**

This course consists of a balanced program of problem-solving strategies and computation skills. It involves intensive study in the four fundamental operations with whole numbers, integers, rational numbers, decimals and percentages. Also included are the basic concepts of geometry and the metric system.

**Pre-Advanced Placement Math (Full Year):**

Pre-Advanced Placement Math 7 will include the following concepts: the number system and its development, geometric figures and their properties, math operations on whole numbers, fractions and mixed numbers, algebraic expressions, probability and statistics and conversion of U.S. customary and metric systems of measurement. This challenging class will prepare students for Algebra I. Student admission will be based on previous academic

performance and standardized test scores. Please be sure to read the qualification requirements for this course found at the back of this catalog. Students will **not** be enrolled in this course unless they meet **all requirements**.

**Science (Full Year):**

Seventh grade science is a TEKS concept-based program (Texas Essential Knowledge Skills.) Topics include physics, chemistry, space and biology. The interconnection among these sciences and topics will be demonstrated throughout the year. Students also learn and practice scientific measurement, lab skills and scientific record keeping.

**Pre-Advanced Placement Science (Full Year):**

Pre-Advanced Placement Science provides qualified students with a foundation course designed to prepare them for the rigorous Advanced Placement program. Emphasis will be placed on chemistry, physics and biology. Lab experiences will be taught using an integrated math/science approach. Students should expect an additional time requirement for this class and be willing to work independently. Student admission will be based on previous academic performance, standardized test scores and teacher recommendation. Please be sure to read the Pre AP Guidelines found at the back of this catalog.

**Texas History (Full Year):**

Texas History is designed to provide an opportunity for students to appreciate and understand the heritage, value and traditions of the state. Emphasis is placed on the various cultural groups, which contributed to the state's history. Significant events, heroes and places are studied and the state's geography is examined.

## **Physical Education Courses**

**Physical Education (Full Year):**

The Physical Education program provides students with opportunities to develop skill and sportsmanship through a variety of team and fitness activities.

**Athletics (Full Year):**

UIL Athletic Competition and Off-Season Conditioning are the focus of our Athletics program. Participation sports for boys include Football, Basketball and Track; participation sports for girls are Volleyball, Basketball and Track.

Students are required to maintain passing grades and above average behavior to participate in these programs. Additionally, in order to meet UIL age requirements, students in Athletics CAN NOT have reached their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.

**Tennis**

The Tennis program is designed to help students acquire and improve the skills needed for competitive tennis. Our goal is to create an atmosphere of enthusiasm and interest for the sport for those who desire to make a serious effort to be a part of an athletic tennis program and potentially work towards becoming a competitive player. Beginning tennis is a semester long class. At the end of the first semester the tennis coach will evaluate all the beginning students and choose those that have shown ability and interest in going to intermediate tennis the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. All players not chosen for the intermediate class will be placed in a PE class the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. This system will allow the tennis coach to spend time with the intermediate group and also allow the other students to go back to PE and work on their basic athletic skills.

## **Elective Courses**

### **Orchestra**

#### **Beginning Orchestra (Full Year):**

Beginning Orchestra is open to all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who would like to further their musical knowledge or begin instruction on violin, viola, cello or bass. No prior experience is necessary. (*Students with prior string experience read NOTE below.*) These classes meet daily and focus on establishing and developing basic musical and performance skills. During the year, all string students will combine on two or more occasions to present concerts for the parents and public. The students will also perform at one music contest. Students will be placed in classes according to instrumentation (i.e. violins/violas or cellos/basses). Prior to enrollment, a "try the instrument night" is scheduled to allow the student to have a "hands on" trial time. The director is always available to answer questions on instrument selection, instrument sizing, rentals, reconditioning of previously owned family instruments, instrument purchase and scholarship opportunities. (It is strongly recommended that parents meet with the director *prior* to purchasing an instrument.)

NOTE: Students with previous string experience or those students with previous musical experience (i.e. piano, band instrument) may elect to study privately during the summer and audition in early August for placement in Concert Orchestra (Level II) or Symphonic Orchestra (Level III).

#### **Intermediate Orchestra (II) (Full Year)**

Intermediate Orchestra (Level II) is open to all students (primarily 7<sup>th</sup> grade students) who would like to further their musical knowledge and continue instruction on violin, viola, cello or bass. This orchestra meets daily and focuses on continuing the development of musical skills in an ensemble setting. During the year, the Intermediate Orchestra will combine on two or more occasions with other performing groups to present concerts for the parents and public. The Intermediate Orchestra will perform as a non-varsity orchestra for adjudication at the Spring UIL Contest. NOTE: Students *may* be placed in this orchestra according to ability or scheduling conflicts rather than grade level.

#### **Symphonic Orchestra (III) (Full Year)**

Symphonic Orchestra (III) is an **auditioned** ensemble of serious middle school string students (mostly 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who study privately) who understand and are able to demonstrate correct bowing, hand positions, intonation, scales, shifting & sight-reading skills. Symphonic Orchestra meets daily and focuses on continuing the development of musical skills using a repertoire ranging from the classics to Broadway. The Symphonic Orchestra will perform as a varsity orchestra for adjudication at the Spring UIL Contest. During the year, the orchestra will combine on two or more occasions with other performing groups to present concerts for the parents and public. NOTE: Students *may* be placed in this orchestra according to ability or scheduling conflicts rather than grade level.

### **Choir**

#### **Concert Choir (Full Year)**

Concert Choir is open to all 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys who would like to further their musical knowledge and sing in a performing ensemble. ***No prior singing experience is required.*** Classes meet daily and focus on establishing and developing good vocal technique, reading musical notation and performance skills. During the year, all choir students will combine on two or more occasions to present concerts for the parents and public, as well as perform for special presentations (Revolution Night, PTA, etc.). The Concert Choir may perform for adjudication at the Spring UIL Contest. Students in Concert Choir also have the opportunity to participate in both UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest and the TMEA Region Choir auditions.

#### **A Cappella Choir (Full Year)**

A Cappella Choir is an audition choir, opened to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls who seriously want to further their musical knowledge and performing skills in a middle school performing ensemble. Classes meet daily and focus on establishing and developing good vocal technique, reading musical notation, sight-reading skills and performance skills. A Cappella Choir will perform for adjudication at the Spring UIL Contest, and students in the choir are highly encouraged to participate in both UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest and the TMEA Region Choir auditions. During the year, all choir students will combine on two or more occasions to present concerts for the parents and public, as well as perform for special presentations (Revolution Night, PTA, etc.).

NOTE: Students with previous choir experience or those students with previous musical experience (i.e. piano, band instrument) may elect to study privately during the summer and audition in early August for placement in A Cappella Choir.

## **Band**

### **Beginning Band (Full Year):**

No previous musical experience necessary. Students in Beginning Band meet in like-instrument classes (i.e. clarinet, trumpet, etc.) daily to learn the basic fundamentals of their specific instrument. This course covers assembly and care of instruments, proper playing posture, tone production, music reading, and awareness of rhythm and pitch. Participation in band teaches students how to work together as a team, builds self-confidence, and creates a social outlet to make life-long friendships. Band students are invited to attend several social events throughout the school year. Students will be screened by a director for physical and facial characteristics to place them on the instrument that is best suited for their success. Students are expected to practice regularly and will perform in four (4) required concerts throughout the year. There are only four (4) outside-of-the-day practices the entire school year. Financial assistance is readily available to families in need. Available instruments: Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, and Percussion

### **Advanced Band (Full Year):**

Beginning Band is the prerequisite for Advanced Band. All Advanced students meet daily in a full concert band setting. Students will continue building upon the musical fundamentals learned in Beginning Band, as well as increasing their self-confidence, expressing themselves through music, and working together as a team. Students are expected to practice regularly and will have the opportunity to perform in a variety of events throughout the school year including five (5) mandatory concerts. Advanced Band students will meet once a week outside of the school day for their weekly sectional. This time will be scheduled around other school functions. Students will be invited to several optional social events throughout the school year. Participation in Advanced Band will properly prepare students for high school band. Financial assistance is readily available to families in need.

Please note: There is no conflict between students participating in both band and athletics. A vast majority of our students participate in both events successfully. The band directors and coaches work extremely well together to make sure students are successful in both endeavors.

## **Theatre**

### **Theatre Arts I (Full Year):**

Theatre Arts I is designed for any student who is interested in an introduction to acting and the theatre. The course is designed to introduce the student to acting through exercises in body control, concentration and relaxation. The student will work on improvisation skills both individually and in groups. The primary objective is to develop the student's creativity and ability for self-expression. Technical Theatre is introduced.

## **Art**

### **Art I (Full Year):**

Art I will emphasize drawing techniques and design principles while studying the elements of art and various artists. Students will also work with clay, paper collage and various painting media.

## **Spanish 1A (Full Year):**

Student success in core classes is essential to the acquisition of a foreign language. Spanish 1A begins the development of the basic language skills: listening, reading, writing through the use of oral drills, vocabulary building, simple composition, reading assignments, dialogue and creative writing. The course also stresses cultural awareness/understanding of the Spanish-speaking world and its impact on the United States. This course has a challenging curriculum requiring extra time commitment from students as well as the ability to work independently. Successful completion of both years, Spanish IA(7<sup>th</sup> grade) and Spanish IB(8<sup>th</sup> grade) , with a final grade of 80% or above each year, is required in order to receive the high school credit. Upon successful completion of both Spanish IA and B, students will receive foreign language credit toward high school graduation. Students who elect to take this high school level course designed to provide a solid foundation for success in Spanish II should expect high standards and an additional time requirement. Students may not retake Spanish I in high school if they receive credit for Spanish IA and IB in middle school. A student who earns a 79 or below in a six week grading

period will be placed on academic probation. If a 79 or below is earned for two consecutive six weeks, the student will be placed into an alternative elective.

**Multimedia I (One Semester) and Video Production I (One Semester):**

This course will introduce students to the basics of video production and multimedia. This course is recommended for students who are interested in taking Animation as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader.

**Robotics (Full Year):**

Students will learn to design, build, program and run NXT robotic brick using LEGO Mindstorms Kits for Schools. Students will download programs created in an exciting program developed by Carnegie Mellon Robotics Academy. Students will make their “robot” perform, successfully solving assigned, specific tasks.

**Skills for Living (Full Year):**

This is a comprehensive foundation course spread out over two semesters. This course provides opportunities to explore family relationships and personal development, personal management, and planning for the future. Emphasis is on the importance of the family, effective communication skills, management skills, how to get along with others including family members and peers, decision making, acceptance of responsibility, and child care practices that promote positive development. Other content addresses positive self-image, nutrition, wellness, personal appearance, managing multiple roles, and career options.